

The effects of televised alcohol advertising on young people's drinking lifestyle

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Abstract

Television has strong influence on its audiences. Young people are frequently exposed to advertised alcohol while watching television programmes. This study explored the effects of televised alcohol advertisements on young people in South Africa to identify factors influencing alcohol consumption among them. In selecting the geographical areas for this study; cluster-sampling technique was used. About Thirty (30) participants were purposively selected for this qualitative study and subjected for semi-structured in-depth interviews for data collections. The collected data was analysed using Thematic Contents, which was done manually. This study revealed that televised alcohol advertising induce changes in young people's behaviour due to their persuasive nature, convincing messages, and inciting dramatic scenes employed in the advertisements. Its use of celebrities manipulates them into drinking alcohol which may lead to excessive drinking and crime participation. It also indicates a link between high alcohol consumption and the persistent high prevalence rate of Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Their attitude towards alcohol is related to their beliefs about the effects of alcohol consumption. Other factors include peer pressure, socio-cultural background and family breakdown. Televised alcohol advertisement has an undue influence on young people's alcohol consumption, but that the extent of its effect on individuals differ due to some factors such as the manipulative nature of television alcohol advertisements, peer pressure, social media and celebrities, young people's curious and adventurous nature, easy lifestyle depicted in the advertisements, family breakdown, cultural background and family practices are strongly cited by this study. For recommendations; young people's choice of lifestyle can strengthen or weaken the effects of alcohol advertising on them. The National government, civil societies and private organisations need to develop initiatives to help young people overcome alcohol consumption

and its consequences. This government should increase the “sin” tax on alcohol beverages, introduce stricter regulatory measures for alcohol advertising, and curtail the allocation of licence for tavern business outlets.

Keywords: Alcohol, Alcohol advertising, Drinking lifestyle, Television effects, Young people.

1. Introduction and problem formulation

Alcohol consumption is a leading factor in death and disability and its excessive consumption contributes to an average of 4,300 deaths among people under the age of 21 each year (Chauke, Heaver and Hoque, 2015). World Health Organisation [WHO] (2011) states that South Africa is considered a high alcohol consuming country. The country consumes in excess of 5 billion litres of alcohol annually and the figure keeps on rising every year. The level of alcohol consumption in South Africa was estimated at 10.3 litres per capita, per year in 2004 (Rehm, Room & Montero, 2004), in 2014 it was 11, 0 litres (World Health Organisation, 2014) and in 2015, alcohol consumption was 11, 5 litres per capita. As a result, South Africa became the third biggest alcohol consuming nation in Africa (WHO, 2015). Studies indicate the contributory role of alcohol consumption in high rate of road accident in several countries, including South Africa. According to Global Status Report on Road Safety (2018), 58% of road traffic deaths in South Africa involved alcohol. A South African study by Du Plessis, Hlaise and Blumenthal (2016) reports that drivers represent the largest proportion of road accident victims (60.4%) with positive Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). Equally, a retrospective descriptive analysis of alcohol in 1455 medico-legal autopsied deaths in Pretoria over a 1-year period indicates that 63% of drivers tested positive for alcohol (Ehmke, Toit-Prinsloo & Saayman, 2014).

One of the contributing factors to the harmful use of alcohol is alcohol advertisements. A large amount is spent on television to advertise and promote alcohol products (White, Faulkner, Coomber, Azar, Room, Livingston, Chikritzh sand Wakefield, 2015). This marketing stimulates consumption by reinforcing alcohol related norms and creating positive expectations about drinking experiences (Morgenstern, Schoeppe, Campbell, Braam, Stoolmiller & Sargent, 2015). Young people (Within the age bracket of 18-35 years) appear to be easy target of such advertisements especially those broadcasted on television. This is due to the persuasive messages in such advertisements.

Television programmes depend on advertising for their financial sustainability. Over the years, television advertising has become the persuasive, powerful and highly demanded mode of marketing and a good platform to sell products globally and locally (Campell, Leyland, Parent & Berthon, 2013). Television alcohol advertisements often contain products that young people find appealing, for example, humour, music, story, people characters and animal characters. In this case, the love for alcohol advertisements influences consumption and the quantity consumed by young people (Chung, Garfield, Elliot, Ostroff, Ross, Jernigan & Schuster, 2010). Young people (within the age bracket of 18–35 years) consume a range of alcohol depictions in the television which may influence their attitude to alcohol and may lead to consumption

and change in behaviour (Atkinson, Elliott, Bellis & Sumnall, 2011). Moreover, the attitude assumed by young people when they decide if they want to drink or not may be related to the beliefs about the effects that alcohol produces – including making friends, being extroverted, forgetting about problems and being outspoken.

The effect of alcohol advertising on alcohol consumption is larger among those who usually consume more alcohol (Saffer, Dave & Grossman, 2016). It is a frequent cause of death (Morgenstern, et.al (2015).WHO (2015) further reveals that 58% of road related deaths were caused by excessive alcohol consumption. As for South Africa, the consumption of alcohol is limited to 50% of population age 15 and more (WHO, 2015).Alcohol consumption has been negatively associated with academic performance and heavy drinking has been linked with missing classes and poor academic performance achievement (Ansari, Stock and Mills, 2013).Newbury–Birch, Walker, Avery, Beyer, Brown, Jackson, Alock, McGovernand Kaner (2008) state that heavy drinking by college students is significantly associated with risky sexual behaviour, suicide and aggression.

There are many factors that influence young people to start drinking alcohol. Some of them include how they are treated at home, the media: movies and television that depict alcohol use, music that includes lyrics about alcohol use, and advertisements for different brands of alcohol (Monero, Furtner & Rivara, 2011). Many television commercials for alcohol employ some combination of rock music, young attractive models, and humour or adventure (Salkin, 2007). Therefore, young people who already have alcohol related problems become vulnerable to televised alcohol advertising.

Consequently, alcohol advertising manipulates young people by shaping their attitudes and perceptions with its appealing elements to young people (Anderson, Lau, Segal & Bishop, 2007). The exposure to alcohol advertising message either increases the drinking behaviours in drinkers or initiates drinking in non-drinkers (Miller, 2013:617). Anderson (2007) maintains that there is an enormous wealth of evidence that alcohol advertisements are related to positive attitudes and beliefs about alcohol amongst young people. The content of the advertisements is related to the experiences they expect to have in their everyday lives such as winning and succeeding.

In some families, there is ill-treatment of children and a lot of household substance abuse. In some instances, parents get divorced. As a result, the children start drinking alcohol to forget their problems (Anda, Feliti, Bremner, Walker, Whitfield, Perry &Giles, 2006:174). Behaviours such as lack of the ability to create intimacy and the tendency to seek feelings of power through drinking can contribute to alcohol consumption.To many people, drinking alcohol is a good way to cope with grief such as death of loved ones and other traumatic life events (Fikowski, Marchand, Palls and Oviedo–Joeques, 2014:73-78).Drinking alcohol is both normal part of the daily routine, especially in rural areas, and an important part of rituals, business, occasions, festivals and special events. The ability to consume alcohol without visible effects is admired but visible intoxication is considered a disgrace to one's family and friends (Hanson, 2009). Therefore, the following study objectives guided this study:

- Determining the effects of televised alcohol advertisements on young people.
- Identifying factors that influence alcohol consumption among young people.

2. Methods and materials

This study was confined to the selected areas under Polokwane Local Municipality within Limpopo Province, which is located on the northern part of South Africa. Cluster sampling technique was used to select three geographical areas, namely, Seshego, Mankweng and Polokwane for this study. They include two peri-urban centres and an urban centre respectively. Moreover, these areas were selected because of their uniqueness. Seshego is a large township, which is found in the Local Polokwane Municipality of the Capricorn district. According to Statistics South Africa [Stats SA] (2012), its 2011 census population was around 83,863. Polokwane is an urban area and one of the large but also, growing cities in South Africa. The population of this urban centre is approximately 130,028 (Stats SA, 2012). Mankweng is a growing township in the Polokwane Local Municipality with an estimated population of 33,738, Stats SA (2012).

This study adopted phenomenological research design. This is touted as a philosophical worldview aligned with the qualitative paradigm to transform the scientific knowledge into meaningful facts about particular events within a social setting. The perspectives on this paradigm suggest that it is an anti-positivist approach that upholds the natural scientific method as a norm in human behavioural research, by studying people's perceptions, cognitions, interpretations and beliefs regarding their immediate social setting (Matlala, 2012) and Maluleke (2016). According to Matlala (2012) and Maluleke (2016), a critical principle in social research is that novel knowledge must be grounded solely in individual experiences, accompanied by settings where many variables can be measured. For this study, this was achieved through the exploration of the effects of televised alcohol advertising on young people's drinking lifestyle in the selected areas of Limpopo Province. The data collected generated a number of themes that were analysed qualitatively.

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used to properly research the phenomena, challenges and effective responses to human trafficking. The adopted phenomenological research design was exploratory in nature, this allowed the researchers to listen to and understand the participants regarding their ideals and personal experience (Creswell, 2014:30). Qualitative research provides people with a means of attempting to understand a world that cannot be understood in terms of numbers and objectivity. Qualitative approaches provide ways of transcribing and analysing the discursive construction of everyday events and of exploring the historical nature of life within a social group or local setting, Maluleke (2020), Mokwena and Maluleke (2020), Maluleke (2016), Maluleke (2014) and De Vos (2011:108)

The Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to collect the data for this qualitative study. The research covered young people from all levels of education, and 15 males and 15 females were included in the sample in order to obtain balance perspective of both genders. The participants were selected purposively based on their alcohol drinking experiences and exposure to television alcohol advertisements.

A total of 30 participants were sampled and this was made up of ten participants from each of the three selected areas; Seshogo, Mankweng and Polokwane. This number was deemed adequate for in-depth qualitative study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Patton, 2002; and Morse, 1995). The areas are far from each other and have different communities and lifestyle.

As the data was gathered using a qualitative research approach, which had originally been used in earlier studies (Chen, Grube, Bersamin, Waiters & Keefe, 2009; and Hingson & Kenkel, 2004). As with the original studies, only one interview mode was used in this study; the adopted semi-structured in-depth interviews, which were conducted face-to-face. This provided an option for in-depth responses for the questions posed to the selected participants as guided by the designed Interview Schedule Guide. Qualitative data consists of the interviewees' thoughts, perceptions and opinions, presented in their own words (Richards, 2014). Ten interviews were conducted in each of the selected area, making a total of thirty interviews. The participants in each of the areas were five females and five males who consume alcohol and also watched the televised alcohol advertisements.

Each of the interviewees was exposed to clips of five popular television alcohol advertisements before the interview. The interviewers encouraged them to freely discuss their experiences in alcohol drinking and how televised alcohol advertisements influence them to drink more or less. The interviews were conducted in English language because all the participants are literate in the language. The semi-structured in-depth interviews consisted of three main questions which dealt with the effects of televised alcohol advertisements on young people's beliefs and behaviour, and the factors that influence their alcohol consumption. The questions posed to the selected participants were designed as follows:

- What are the effects of young people's exposure to television alcohol advertisement on their alcohol related beliefs and consumption behaviour?
- If you think television alcohol advertisement does not have effect on young people's alcohol related belief and consumption behaviour, please elaborate on your views.
- What are the factors involved in influencing young people to consume alcohol?

3. Literature review, data presentations and discussions

For this study; the researchers provided synthesis of the relevant literature on this subject to demonstrate that they were familiar with the key authors, texts and central concepts relevant for this discourse. The researchers knew how this study will contribute to what is already known in this field, to fill the niche/gap identified in as a problem under research. These researchers focused on situating this study within the academic domain to support the guiding objectives. The presented literature studies were deemed adequate for this purpose, as the seminal sources on this subject were only considered, with preference given to high academic standing. The consulted sources were integrated as ideas, not as separate writings on this research topic. This was coupled with the findings of this study categorised under the objectives of this

study, the adopted methodology and the conducted empirical research with the identification of study themes, Maluleke (2020) and Mokwena, Motsepe, Maluleke, Shandu (2020). The referencing method for the interviews in this study comprised a wording sequence, and an example of this notation is as follows: For the purpose of anonymity in this study, alphabets were used to identify participants instead of their names. All participants appear as participant A to participant J in the analysis.

The participants were drawn from three areas, labelled as S for Seshego, P for Polokwane and M for Mankweng. For example, participant A from Seshegowas labelled as (SA), participant A from Polokwane was (PA) and participant A from Mankweng was (MA). In this study, qualitative data consists of words portraying the interviewees' thoughts, perceptions and opinions, and presented in their own words (Richards, 2014:104-105). The data was analysed manually. The findings of this study are presented in the form of textual narratives. Equally, in some instances, direct quotations from the participants were included in the data analysis to support the findings.

Subsequently, the qualitative data analysis requires that much thought should be given to the process of the analysis and that the fruits of that thought should be clearly explained (Hofstee, 2006:117). The qualitative thematic analysis was applied in this study to arrive at the themes and subthemes. The thirty interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim. In order to understand fully the implicit and explicit meanings of the participants' responses, the researchers read and re-read the transcribed data. Then, the researchers were able to identify the main themes, and the sub themes, emerging from the responses. The transcriptions were analysed and the themes that emerged included the effects of young people's exposure to televised alcohol advertisement on their alcohol related beliefs and consumption, the none influential television alcohol advertisements, and the influencing factors for young people's alcohol consumption. The researchers then related the responses with the themes already identified in the literature review. (A wide range of potential themes had already presented itself during the examination of the existing literature). These themes were related to the interview questions asked.

This study presents some of the key findings generated during the pursuit of these themes of interest. An analysis of the main themes and the one that emerged from the semi-structured research interviews follows. Five (05) themes were identified by this study to be discussed in the following section; namely:

- 1) The effects of young people's exposure to televised alcohol advertisement on their alcohol related beliefs and behaviour.
- 2) The noneinfluential television alcohol advertisements, and the influencing factors for young people's alcohol consumption.
- 3) Factors influencing alcohol consumption among young people
- 4) Effects of televised alcohol advertising on young people's beliefs and behaviour towards alcohol consumption.
- 5) Extent of the effects of televised alcohol advertisement on young people's alcohol consumption

3.1 Effects of young people's exposure to televised alcohol advertisement on their alcohol related beliefs and consumption behaviour

Many of the participants (24) affirmed that alcohol advertisements affect young people's beliefs and behaviour towards alcohol consumption. In response to the question on these effects, the same number of participants stated that the messages are convincing and persuasive to young people while fewer participants refute that statement. Some of the responses and the subthemes are that televised alcohol advertisements:

- **Create love and pursuit of easy lifestyle among young people**

Participant SB said that *"alcohol does not have a significant message but young people just enjoy seeing others drinking and partying in beaches or different settings in the advertisements, and just want to identify themselves with such lifestyle"*. Most of the participants in Mankweng believe that television alcohol advertising affects their beliefs in very negative ways. One of them (Participant MF) said that *"a lot of young people fall behind in their schoolwork because instead of studying in the evening they spend time in taverns"*.

- **Influence Alcohol Consumption Among Young People**

Participant ME mentioned that *"alcohol advertising gives the idea that alcohol is good for their life and they accept the information as it is"*. For Participant MC, *"people think that alcohol drinking is a normal thing after seeing it on television. When they are with their peers they describe those who don't drink alcohol as boring and old fashioned"*. Participant MJ who is a student from one of the higher institutions within the area of this study said that *"most of the people who drink alcohol do not come to classes especially on Mondays; this is because they are drunk throughout the weekend and cannot wake up early on Monday morning"*. One of the Participants (MB) said that *"due to alcohol advertisements young people gain more knowledge of different alcohol names/ brands and develop the desire to switch alcohol brands. This leads to high volume of alcohol consumption"*.

- **Have strong persuasive and convincing power that influences young people to consume alcohol**

For Participant SI, the problem is the way television advertisements are packaged including *"their persuasive nature, convincing messages, and inciting dramatic scenes common in the advertisements"*. Most of the participants in Polokwane mentioned that television alcohol advertising makes young people to have positive beliefs about drinking alcohol. Participant PA said that *"young people think that alcohol advertising gives credence and general acceptance to the product being advertised"*. Participant PH added that *"most young people start to drink alcohol after watching the adverts on television and comparing the characters in the advertisements with themselves and what they are going through"*.

- **Escapism or alcohol consumption as solution to life challenges**

Participant PJ said that *“based on the extent of alcohol consumption by young people, one can safely say that they believe alcohol is the solution to their problems”*. Participant PJ also stated that *“after drinking alcohol they forget whatever that is troubling them for a while”*. Participant PG added that *“in the adverts, alcohol is shown as a weapon or tool which can help in solving our problems, and we believe it”*, For Participant MH, *“when we drink we only think of the good stuff. It gives us a sense of social well-being”*. Some of the participants contributed that when they drink alcohol, *“we find it easier to make friends and relate well”* (SH), *“we become very enthusiastic and free (MJ), and “one becomes fearless and outspoken”* (PB).

- **Alcohol consumption and vulnerability to risky behaviours**

For Participants PE, PI, PD, SB, SH, SI, MB and MF, heavy alcohol consumption among young people contributes to the high rate of new HIV infection in the country by making them to ignore sex related precautionary measures. Participants PJ, MC and ME also believes that *“it is causing a lot of accident and death on our roads”*. Also, participants SB and MB added that *“although, South African Police Force (SAPF) and the Government know that it is contributing to the high rate of crime in the country, they can't stop it because of economic reasons”*.

3.2 None effect of televised alcohol advertisements on young people's alcohol related belief and consumption behaviour

In analysing the data, the researchers found that few of the participants disagreed that alcohol advertisements affect young people's alcohol related beliefs and consumption behaviour. Their responses are categorised below, and are generally based on their conviction of the power of personal choice in human life. They also recognised that in some instances, external influences other than television alcohol advertising can make people to start drinking alcohol.

- **Supremacy of personal belief and conviction over external stimuli**

Particularly, some of the participants in Seshogo and Mankweng think that television alcohol advertising does not affect young people's beliefs and behaviour in anyway. Participant SD was of the opinion that alcohol advertisements don't affect their beliefs because *“your belief of alcohol being bad or good wouldn't change because of a certain alcohol advertisement”*. Participant SJ added that *“No, it is not always a fact that when a person drinks it is because of what he/she saw in different televised alcohol advertisements”*. Participant SA also stated that *“before a person tastes alcohol they already have certain beliefs about what alcohol can do for them, therefore, watching different alcohol advertisements doesn't change anything”*.

- **Choice of lifestyle and external influences**

For Participant MA, *“it is not the alcohol advertisements that make young people to change their behaviour, and some of them becoming alcohol addicts; but their choice of lifestyle”*. To Participant MH, *“there are some young people who do not watch Television regularly but they are still influenced by other factors to drink”*.

3.3 Factors influencing alcohol consumption among young people

The participants were given opportunity to mention the factors that can influence young people to drink alcohol. Some of the responses are below:

- **Televised alcohol advertising:** Many of the participants believe that the content and packaging of television alcohol advertisements are very manipulative. These include the *“messages that target self-esteem”* (ME), *“exciting images of the alcohol being advertised”* (SC), *“attractive lifestyle and partying”*(SG), and their *“use of celebrities”* (PF).
- **Social media:** Participant (MD) thinks that *“social media is dominant nowadays as it is a powerful source of communication. However, it doesn’t only communicate personal messages but also advertisements. Many organisations place their advertisements on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc., and these include alcohol advertisements”*. One participant (MC) mentioned that *“when we see people (particularly, celebrities) on Facebook advertisements with beer we copy them and also drink the exact brand they are drinking on Facebook”*. Another (MB), added that *“Internet is the major source of information in the world these days, we see alcohol everywhere and we end up drinking just because we cannot resist the temptation that is brought by exposure to different alcohol brands”*. For participant PB, *“young people are very curious and adventurous. We want to try something new, and it doesn’t matter if we get hurt at the end”*. Participant PD revealed that: *“Social media is used as a stress reliever by young people. Whenever they feel like things are not going well in their lives they go to social media. Therefore, when we see people drinking alcohol in social media platforms we believe that it can be a quick way to forget about our problems”*.
- **Cultural background:** Participant (PC) said that *“some people drink because of their cultural norms and practices. In some cultures, drinking alcohol is not considered a bad practice especially during ceremonies”*. Participant PI mentioned that *“some culture drink during ceremonies such as weddings, tombstone unveiling, funerals and birthday parties, and I cannot say no, it will look like I am disrespecting my parents”*.
- **Family practices:** Participant PH also stated that *“there are some families who believe that traditional beer is good for the health especially with boosting young men’s immune system. Therefore, the elders pressurize them to drink the beer”*.
- **Peer pressure:** One of the participant (SB) shared that *“peers always fool one another. Peer pressure is considered very strong and common among young people. It is normal for young people to believe what their peers say other than their parent’s views”*. Another participant (SG) mentioned that *“as young people, we tell each other what is good and what is bad but most of the time we lie. When it comes to issues such as alcohol and*

drugs, some of us lie to each other as a way of influencing our attitude and behaviour". However, another one (SI) added that "when peers are influencing you and you yield to their pressure and taste alcohol, it will likely result in excessive alcohol consumption in the future".

- **Family attitude and behaviours:** Participants (PH, PC and SB) mentioned that it is easy for a person to drink if their whole family drinks or if the family doesn't have any problems with alcohol or people who drink. Another participant (SE) believes that "family problems can influence alcohol consumption. Sometimes the fight in families makes people drink alcohol with the assumption that they are solving the problem. Yet, at the end of the day, such problems remain unresolved". On the same note, another (MD) added that "family issues can give you stress. These include some family related feuds that can make one worry about their safety or fights between parents that can lead to you ending up drinking to escape from high level stress". A participant (MG) added that some family issues can indeed have strong influence on alcohol consumption such as single parenthood and under-aged pregnancy". Participant ME mentioned that "being raised by only my mother made me to be disrespectful and to also feel like I can do whatever I want to do, this is the reason why I drink alcohol any time I want". Participant (SI) said that "sometimes, family breakdown or separation of parents or divorce can also contribute to the children in the family becoming heavy alcohol drinkers. Participant SD stated that "when my parents got divorced I was stressed and I saw alcohol as my only way to forget about the problems I was going through, especially when I didn't even know who I was going to stay with after the divorce"

This study revealed that the extent of the effects of televised alcohol advertisement on individuals differ due to some factors identified in this study. They are included in this section. This study indicates that the choice of lifestyle made by young people can strengthen or weaken the effects of alcohol advertising on them. However, televised alcohol advertisements make alcohol look attractive, enticing and appetising. They also portray it as a tool that can help in improving one's social life and also solve a person's life problems. This study also indicates that due to the convincing power of televised alcohol advertisements and their contents, young people accept alcohol drinking as a way of boosting their self-esteem and social well-being. Also, many of them go to local taverns with the aim of finding others who are lonely and looking for companionship. Therefore, they end up being addicted to alcohol and suffer from many problems like financial instability and poor academic performance.

The ubiquitous nature of social media and its easy accessibility to young people make it possible for advertisers to effectively target them with alcohol advertisements. Another factor is marriage separation or divorce in families. These create a lot of confusion especially for the children in such marriage and family. The thought of losing one of their parents create panic and feeling of insecurity in them. As a result, some of them resort to drinking alcohol in order to manage the resultant stress from such decisions and actions taken by their parents.

To this course; young people believe in the ideologies portrayed in alcohol advertisements and this is why it affects them strongly. For example, the information, words and phrases used by the advertisers in different platforms make young people

consume a lot of alcohol, especially during festive seasons. Some study participants also stated that many single parents find it difficult to control and stop their children from engaging in alcohol consumption. Therefore, many of these children end up being heavy alcohol drinkers because of the absence of a father figure in the family to contribute to the training of such children. Poverty may lead to many youth drinking and doing drugs, and involving in criminal activities in other to meet life needs. In addition; in many African culture, drinking beer is not seen as a problem or something that a youth can be punished for, especially during wedding ceremonies that are done in local villages. During such events, the elders make "*Mahafne*" (Traditional beer) that everyone can partake in while dancing and celebrating. This makes young people who grew up in such villages to view beer or alcohol drinking as a way of celebrating their culture and tradition. Additionally, most youth who consume alcohol think they will drink away their life challenges, but unfortunately, once the effect of the alcohol subsides, they return to reality. Thus, this makes them to drink more and more since there is no permanent solution in sight for the problems confronting them.

It is also noted that curiosity and love of adventure were identified as some of the factors that drive young people into high rate of alcohol drinking. According to one of the respondent, once there is a new alcohol brand in the market young people encourage one another to taste it without being mindful of the consequences it might have. Moreover, the interest of young people on any alcohol brand is heightened if the brand being advertised is popular or is praised by their peers. Hence, Siegel, Dejong, Cloffi, Leon-chi, Naimi, Padon and Jernigan (2015) stated that advertising for alcohol brands that are popular among young people contain elements that are more likely to appeal to underage youth and youth adults than adverts that are unpopular to youth drinkers.

3.4 Effects of televised alcohol advertising on young people's beliefs and behaviour towards alcohol consumption

Most of the participants emphasised that alcohol consumption depicted in various television advertisements manipulate young people to initiate or continue alcohol drinking due to their persuasive nature, convincing messages, and inciting dramatic scenes in the advertisements. They get easily influenced by mostly what they see on television screens. Their receptive attitude towards alcohol consumption correlates with their beliefs that alcohol consumption will enable them to make friends, become extroverted, forget their problems, and be outspoken. This association exists because of their conviction and acceptance of the idea that the power of alcohol portrayed in the televised advertisements will empower them to become the personalities they desire to become.

Many young people experience harsh life conditions including family breakdown and poverty, and resort to alcohol consumption to escape from such situations. Unfortunates, this doesnot produce the desired outcome, but rather, leads to more and more increase in the quantity of alcohol consumption. Moreover, the effects on their beliefs are strengthened by the high frequency of such broadcasts. The advertisements

promote false lifestyle and bad drinking behaviour, and provide various strategies to make more friends, make money and engage in parties. This false and easy lifestyle is very attractive to young people. For instance, one of Black Label adverts states that "A champion man deserves a champion beer" (With popular young celebrities drinking and endorsing the beer brand).

Equally, the participants indicated that televised alcohol advertisement promotes risky sexual behaviour as the famous characters used in the advertisements are popular with young people, respectful, rich, powerful, people of high social status, but particularly, many of the ladies wear sexually revealing clothes. Young people also take to alcohol consumption and related behaviour as they try to emulate their role models (Favourite characters) portrayed in televised alcohol advertisements. This study indicates that young people develop positive beliefs about alcohol consumption after watching alcohol advertisements and seeing people excited and happy. Clearly, the content of alcohol advertisements is related to the things they desire to see in their everyday lives such as engaging in parties, celebrating, making new friend, winning and succeeding. Hence, Anderson *et al.* (2007) maintains that there is an enormous wealth of evidence that alcohol advertisements are related to positive attitudes and beliefs about alcohol amongst young people. As a result, many young people end up drinking alcohol excessively which makes them to engage in crime, risky sexual behaviours and violence.

Moreover, this shows that alcohol also affect young people (Students) performances at school because those of them who drink alcohol perform poorly in their academic endeavours. Similarly, Ansari, Stock and Mills, (2013) found that alcohol consumption is negatively associated with academic performance and heavy drinking has been linked with missing classes and poor academic performance. This study confirms that students who drink heavily mostly report that drinking causes them to fall behind in their schoolwork and perform poorly on tests or other academic projects.

3.5 Extent of the effects of televised alcohol advertisement on young people's alcohol consumption

Televised alcohol advertisements influence young people negatively to consume alcohol, especially, because of their enticing contents and easy access to such advertisements. Young people's alcohol consumption is strongly attributed to televised alcohol advertisements and their inability to resist the allure of easy lifestyle. They perceive the advertisements as positive, leading to alcohol addiction in many cases. Additionally, high rate of alcohol consumption was indicated as a strong contributor to high HIV/AIDS incident rate (new infections) among young people in the country. Moreover, drinking and driving was identified as strong contributor to the high road accident and death on South African roads. This finding concurs with that by Parry, Burnhams and London (2012), that South Africa is among high alcohol consuming nations, and those of Global Status Report on Road Safety (2018); Du Plessis *et al.* (2016); and Ehmkeet *al.* (2014) which identified alcohol consumption as a strong contributor to the high rate of accidents in South African roads. However, this study also reveals that televised alcohol advertisements have a strong influence on young people only

when they choose to perceive the contents as real and influential. According to the participants that presented this view, if young people can view alcohol advertisement messages as something that is created to promote a particular alcohol brand, they will not be extremely affected by their exposure to such advertisements.

4. Study limitations

The size of the sample was 10 participants from each of the Three (03) selected area, making a total of 30 participants. More areas would have been included in this study, but this may not make any significant impact on the findings since in-depth interview was utilised in this study for data collection. This study was demarcated to individuals within the age bracket of 14-35 years.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusions; Alcohol advertisements affect both the beliefs and behaviour of young people towards alcohol consumption, and the extent of this influence is high. Messages in the advertisements excite young people and cause them to initiate or sustain alcohol consumption. The persuasive messages in the televised alcohol advertisements, peer pressure, social media, cultural background, personal experiences, the use of celebrities in such advertisements, broadcasting of the adverts during their favourite soap operas, sponsorship of sports competitions by alcohol producing companies, and the positive portrayal of alcohol in the advertisements are some of the contributing factors to the excessive alcohol consumption by young people. The high alcohol consumption among young people affects families negatively in various ways, contributes to the high rate of new HIV infection, crime, accidents and death on South African roads. However, the lifestyle of young people can strengthen or weaken the effects of televised alcohol advertisement on them.

This study recommends that alcohol advertisements should be excluded from television prime time broadcasts such as news and other popular programmes to reduce exposure of young people to such advertisements. Usually, programmes broadcasted within this time slots attract high viewership level due to their popularity with television audience. The National government should increase tax on alcohol beverages, and ensure that advertisers mention the side effects of the alcohol brand they advertise. Tavern licence must be strictly given and renewed based on adherence to necessary rules and regulations. Also, the community and local authorities should initiate Youth Empowerment Programmes (YEP) that will keep young people busy after school, raise peer mentors that will encourage others, and create job opportunities for those that are unemployed. The National government should establish clear and effective alcohol control policies.

Young people should endeavour to stay away from places where alcohol is sold, avoid those that drink too much alcohol, and clearly understand the consequences of alcohol consumption. They must choose their friends carefully based on good personal character in order to avoid being lured into alcohol drinking and related

consequences. Therefore, all stakeholders should endeavour to communicate messages on why young people should avoid alcohol consumption and how to change their alcohol related behaviour. These are necessary to influence them to change their beliefs about alcohol and help them understand the extent of their vulnerability to it. These will assist South Africa to avoid a future that involves an increasing burden of crime, death and disability associated with alcohol use.

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