

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed at investigating the risk factors of alcohol abuse among school boys and girls. This chapter highlights the problem statement and the background information on alcohol abuse among school pupils in Zambia. The chapter also presents the general objective and specific objectives of the study. In this study the term alcohol abuse is used to refer to the use of alcohol which is interpreted as a problem by the community concerned.

### **1.0 Background**

Research on alcohol abuse among youths in Zambia has a relatively short history as seen in the studies carried out by Smith (1973); Haworth, Mwanalushi and Todd (1981). For many years the major concern in this area of research in Zambia was to determine the prevalence and effects of alcohol and other drugs on selected populations. However, with the advent of Human Immunodeficiency virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), concerns have shifted to investigating the relationship between alcohol use and HIV/AIDS. For instance, some studies carried out by Mbulo and Nkandu (2006), paid special attention on the relationship between alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS. In these studies researchers have been more interested in the role of alcohol as a catalyst for high risk activities leading to lower likelihood of condom use when having sex. The Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes (ZCCP) (2006) also contextualised the effects of alcohol on HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, patient adherence to treatment and the disease resistance to treatment. Although researchers have of late concentrated on finding out the relationship between alcohol use and HIV/AIDS, the problem of alcohol abuse by adolescents is multifaceted and may differ from one context to another (Frischer, Crome, Macleod Bloor & Hickman, 2007; Spooner, 1999). For instance some adolescents who abuse

alcohol may face school failure while others may engage themselves in criminal activities. It is for this reason that the negative effects of alcohol on an individual's health and overall well-being may not be ignored because sooner or later the abuser may suffer from alcohol dependence by drinking excessively just to satisfy the unusual craving for alcohol or to run away from the effects of withdrawing. Alcohol abuse can take away from the users the power to reason clearly, to feel honest and to boldly meet the challenges and opportunities the world has to offer. According to Benett (1996), Worldwide, the negative effects of alcohol abuse experienced by society is a multifaceted phenomenon which differ from time to time, society to society, from one age group to another and from one individual to another .

In Zambia today, although youths are faced with a number of challenges such as lack of employment, poverty, crime, dropping out of school, HIV/AIDS, and physical/emotional neglect, alcohol abuse presents a much more serious problem according to the WHO, GSHS ( 2004). The abuse of alcohol by young people has reached worrying levels in all parts of the country. Underage drinking is widespread and is one of the leading public health problems in Zambia (ZCCP, 2006; WHO, 2004; Haworth, 1982). The Times of Zambia online edition (2009), reports how even with the minimum legal drinking age of 18 years many adolescents below this age have continued abusing alcohol. The same newspaper reports how juveniles as young as nine years have been patronizing drinking places and illegally consuming intoxicating liquor. The Post Newspaper online edition (2009), observed that underage drinking in Zambia is on the increase and is perpetuated by bar owners who do not abide by the law that restricts all those who are below the age of 18 from consuming alcohol.

Although alcohol abuse may take place at any stage, Getchell, Pippin and Varnes (1995), states that many people come to experience alcohol use during their adolescence and early adulthood stage. It is during this transitional stage that a good number of boys and girls get engaged in risky behavior like unsafe sex, alcohol abuse, cigarette smoking and other risky activities. During this stage the idea of reward and impression making becomes eminent and leaves adolescents more vulnerable to risk behavior (Zuckerman 1979). Risk taking is a normal aspect of adolescent development into adulthood although there are variations emanating from personal characteristics.

Since youths have different life circumstances their experiences about alcohol use will differ in accordance with those circumstances. For instance, Greaves (1974) carried out a study where he found that youths use alcohol as a self-medication for the problems of human life. The WHO (1993), report also shows how street kids view alcohol use as a relief for hunger pains.

Gunnarsson (2008) suggests that apart from looking at the consequences of alcohol abuse, the root-causes of alcohol abuse should be critically investigated and analyzed. All the risk factors should be put in perspective in order to find applicable solutions. Risk factors that increase the likelihood of alcohol abuse among adolescents can be categorized in three different domains. These according to Offord & Kraemer (2000) are the; environmental, interpersonal and personal domains. The environmental domain includes factors that are outside an individual's control, for instance living in a place which is highly tolerant to the availability and use of alcohol and attending a school with a very poor disciplinary environment. The interpersonal domain is linked with the adolescent's social interactions with friends, family and close relations and one's relationship with alcohol using peers (Coggans & McKellar, 1994). The third domain is the personal factor which is linked to the individual, for instance the personal factor of being male

(Tarter,2003). These domains do not operate in isolation, they are interrelated and their combination makes the alcohol abuse problem for adolescents a complex one (Spooner, 2009).

Although the existing literature (Kirkcaldy,Siefen,Surall &Bischoff: 2004 ) suggest several factors involved in alcohol abuse , this current study focused on the personal, structural and interpersonal factors as viewed by school pupils in relation to alcohol abuse. Apart from investigating the pupils' views in relation to the stated factors as causes of alcohol abuse the study also examined how pupils view the effects of alcohol abuse by school pupils.

Since the primary objective of the study was to investigate factors that lead to alcohol abuse among school pupils, a second group of respondents, which included their teachers, was introduced to participate in the study. It was hoped that the responses given by pupils and teachers, would shed light on the roles factors such as personal factors, interpersonal factors and environmental factors play in promoting alcohol abuse among school pupils.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Alcohol abuse by adolescents does not only confine itself in homes but also in schools especially in boarding schools where pupils for the first time experience independence from the authority of their parents. Within recent times schools have been struggling with issues of discipline which takes away a lot of learning time in many schools. The reported frequencies of school riots in the government schools and also public reports of underage patronage of bars, pupil suicide attempts, illegal abortions, pupil school suspensions and expulsions due to non compliance to school rules and drunken misbehavior while attending lessons could be pointing to the assumption that some pupils indulge themselves in alcohol abuse (Magnani,2000; Mukuka,2000; Zambia Global School Health Survey,2004 ; ZCCP,2006 ). The proliferation of alcohol outlets

creates even a higher temptation for pupils' involvement in alcohol abuse. Guidance and counseling teachers at Chibombo High School before this study was carried out expressed a felt need to try and look at underlying factors to drug use especially alcohol by pupils. The guidance teachers used to receive an average of two referral cases of alcohol abuse every week.

Although drinking of alcohol by school going children is socially unacceptable in Zambia the WHO (2004) estimated the abuse of alcohol among the pupils at 42.6%. While such a number of pupils is involved in alcohol abuse, Spear (2002) affirms that excessive intake of alcohol at an early age has long term effects on the brain, maturation and neuro-cognitive functions. Many studies especially those carried out in the United States of America have shown how the use of alcohol in early ages is associated with general health problems in adulthood, where high consumption in adolescence is linked to a substantially lower level of adult physical and mental health, higher reliance on monetary support from social services, higher rates of criminal convictions and higher premature deaths (Stenbacka & Stattin, 2007; Larm, Hodgins, Molero-Samuelsson, Larsson & Tengstrom, 2008). Consequently, the regular use of alcohol during the adolescence stage can be seen as a risk factor or an indicator of possible future health and social problems. It is for this reason that a concerted effort is needed to try and find workable prevention and intervention solutions to this problem.

## **1.2 Justification of the Study**

Although many studies on alcohol abuse among school going pupils have been carried out around the World, relatively few studies have been done in Zambia especially in the two schools in Chibombo District where the present study took place. The few studies that have been done in Zambia concentrated so much on drug abuse in general especially among vulnerable youths and adults in urban areas.

Even with government effort to prevent underage alcohol consumption the continued use and misuse of alcohol by the adolescents is still so high that there is need for continued effort to find appropriate solutions suitable to the prevailing problem (The Post News Paper of 28<sup>th</sup> November (2009). The current study focuses on how environmental, personal as well as interpersonal factors are connected with the probability of alcohol abuse by school going pupils. This approach has been recommended by previous researchers as one of the possible ways to help find a solution to the alcohol abuse problems faced by adolescents (Spooner, 1999). By consulting the youths on their experiences with alcohol abuse regarding its causes and effects, prevention strategies that are workable can be arrived at and this may help those adolescents who are in their initial or experimental stage of alcohol abuse leading to a greater opportunity for future sustainable prevention effort. Due to its diverse nature, no solution might work as a single factor for the reduction and elimination of alcohol abuse by youths. Therefore a concerted effort is required to try and fight the problem as early as possible.

### **1.3 Aim of the present Study**

The present study aimed at finding out views held by school pupils on risk factors they perceive lead to alcohol abuse among school boys and girls.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to identify:

- i. The prevalence of alcohol abuse among pupils in selected schools of Chibombo District.
- ii. Environmental risk factors viewed by school pupils as causes of alcohol abuse among pupils;
- iii. Personal risk factors that pupils perceive to be causes of alcohol abuse among pupils.
- iv. Interpersonal factors that school pupils view as causes of alcohol abuse;
- v. Effects of alcohol abuse as perceived by school pupils.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

1. Are there pupils from the selected schools of Chibombo district who abuse alcohol?
2. What views do pupils have with regard to the environmental, personal and interpersonal factors as causes of alcohol abuse?
3. What perceptions do pupils have with regard to the effects of alcohol abuse?

## **1.6 Definition of Terms**

### *Adolescence*

Although the term adolescence has no universally accepted definition, it is used to refer to the intermediary stage of growth between childhood and adulthood. It represents the period of time during which a person is subjected to an array of biological transformations and runs into a number of emotional tribulations. The ages, which are termed to be part of adolescence, vary by ethnicity and extend from the preteens to the twenties years. The term according to Durand and

Barlow (2007), refers to the period from the beginning of puberty to maturity; which usually starts at about age 14 in males and age 12 in females and goes on up to 20 years of age. Barley (1989), explains that it is a transition to adulthood that varies among cultures, but it is generally defined as the time when individuals begin to function independently of their parents. Adolescence is an unstable as well as a vibrant period of any person's life.

Psychological issues of adolescents may include maturity in body, which leads to curiosity about sexual activities, sometimes leading to teenage pregnancy. Apart from that, there is a tendency to experiment with drugs and alcohol. A person between the ages 15 – 20 years was considered as an adolescent in this study.

#### *Alcohol abuse:*

Conceptual: According to Segal (1994), it is the use of alcohol to the point where it interferes with one's health or social adjustment.

Operational: The use of alcohol in a way that goes against the prevailing social customs or standards.

#### *Risk factor*

According to Goldstein and Brooks (2006), a risk factor is a measurable characteristic in a group of individuals or a situation that predicts a negative outcome for a specific criterion. Anything that creates chances for someone to impulsively try and seek out potentially dangerous situations without recognizing the consequences of such an action is a risk factor.

### *Binge Drinking*

According to Wechsler (2000), binge drinking is the heavy consumption of alcohol over a short period of time with an intention of getting intoxicated. The same author further states that the taking of 4 or more alcoholic drinks for women and 5 or more alcoholic drinks for men in a row on one occasion in the previous two weeks is binge drinking. Drinking more than four or five standard alcoholic drinks within two hours for an adolescent is considered to be binge drinking. .

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews relevant literature on causes, effects and perceptions of alcohol abuse in Zambia and other parts of the World. The chapter is organized according to the following themes:

- Prevalence of alcohol abuse
- Causes of alcohol abuse
- Perceptions of alcohol abuse
- Effects of alcohol abuse

#### **2.1 Prevalence of alcohol abuse**

Worldwide, the WHO global status report on alcohol (2004) gave an estimated figure of about two billion people who had consumed alcohol beverages at that time. According to Plant and Plant, (1999), illicit alcohol use, for many years has been part of the social agenda of many countries. Illicit alcohol use amongst young people has risen steadily over the past 30 years in the United Kingdom and beyond. Miller and Plant, (2001) explain that young people in their early and mid-teens are experimenting with alcohol using it as a recreational drug and part of their leisure time.

The Web Med report (2009), estimated that between 12 and 14 million adults in the United States of America abuse alcohol or are chronic alcoholics. Nearly 100,000 Americans die each year as a result of alcohol related diseases and alcohol is a factor in more than half of the country's homicides, suicides, and traffic accidents. Alcohol abuse also plays a role in many social and domestic problems, from job absenteeism and crimes against property to spousal and child abuse (Web Med, 2009).

In Zambia there is evidence indicating the widespread consumption of alcohol. The Zambia Demographic Health Survey report (2003) reveals that 76% of men consumed alcohol at that time; 45% had consumed alcohol during the three months prior to the survey, while 31% had consumed alcohol at times further past than three months; 23% of women acknowledged that they consumed alcohol with 9% of them having consumed it in the month prior to the survey while 14% acknowledged having drunk it at a time more than one month in the past. The authors of the survey report noted that alcohol consumption varies with age and gender. The report shows that 5.3% of 15-19 year-old females consumed alcohol, while the figure for males in the same age bracket was 22%. Among women aged between 40-49 years the figure was 17% while that of their male counterparts was 57.3%. The Global News Wire of October (2010), reports that alcohol abuse among young people in Zambia has become increasingly common. Children as young as 9 years old can frequently be found in bars or consuming alcohol on the streets.

A study done in Kanyama and Chinyika compounds of Lusaka in (2001), by the Kanyama Youth Programme Trust found that 19.4% of youths between the ages of 10-21 drank alcohol and that the consumption rate among adults stood at 61%. The study indicated that 86% of the respondents commented on the easy access of alcohol. The same study reveals that 79% of adults and youths drank during special occasions like public festivals, weddings, parties and religious occasions.

## **2.2 Causes of Alcohol Abuse**

According to Ames and Sussman (2001), a wide range of causes of alcohol abuse may be interpreted at different levels. The factors may be operating at individual, interpersonal, institutional, community and societal levels (McLeroy et al, 1988). Each of these levels when properly investigated can give an indication as to why a certain individual got involved in the use or abuse of alcohol.

At the first level or domain is the personal factor which is attributed to the individual's personal characteristics for instance one's age, sex, level of education, and knowledge (Tarter et al, 2003). This domain is also linked to an individual's inherited genetic aspects from parents with alcohol use problems (Kendler et al, 2000). Also included in this domain is the individual's personal profile on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive styles and also personality traits such as hostility, low self-esteem and difficulties in controlling impulsive behavior (Walton & Roberts, 2004). Other elements of the personal domain are experience of traumatic events (Gordon, 2002), and psychiatric disorders (Hoffman & Cerbone, 2002).

The second level is the interpersonal domain which is linked with the adolescent's social interactions with friends, family and close relations (Coggans & McKellar; 1994). The interpersonal domain also looks at the poor early childhood upbringing in the family due to poor family life circumstances (Barret & Turner, 2005; Lysnskey et al, 2002). The same domain is also related to the low parental discipline (Chassin, 2004) and poor parental monitoring (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Included under the interpersonal domain is the family structure since this has an influence over an individual for instance being brought up by a single parent, or in a home where parents are divorced.

The third level is the institutional level. At this level the school culture seems to be one of the factors that influence pupil involvement in alcohol abuse. Jessor and Jessor (1975), reveal how at one time school officials especially at college level regarded drinking on campus as a rite of passage which did not have any serious effects on the students. The type of school especially the co-education boarding school may also have an influence on pupils' involvement in alcohol abuse (Wechsler, 1995). A study done by Hartford et al. (1983), found that students living on campus were more likely to drink in large groups and within the campus than students who were living at home.

The fourth level is the community level which has external environmental factors that may influence drinking. These factors according to Newman et al (1991) include the availability of affordable alcohol and the concentration of drinking outlets in the area surrounding the school. Chaloupka and Wechsler (1996), explain that the lower the price of alcohol, the more people will drink. Drink price specials, kegs, and other sources of low-priced alcohol encourage binge drinking and intoxication. At the same community level, alcohol advertising helps create an environment that suggests that alcohol consumption and over consumption are normal activities and contributes to increased alcohol consumption.

The last level involves the society and the type of policies that are used to curb illegal use of alcohol. Moskowitz (1989), and Gorman and Speer (1996), found that the effective implementation of the underage prohibition law yielded positive results in minimizing youth involvement in alcohol abuse related activities. Therefore in a place or country where the laws or regulations are relaxed the problem of alcohol use may continue. According to Spooner (2009),

the above domains or levels do not operate in isolation they are interrelated and their combination makes the alcohol abuse problem for adolescents a more complex one.

Generally, many authors have written about the causes of alcohol abuse. The Web Med, (2007) explains how genetic factors are considered crucial since a given person's risk of becoming an alcoholic is four to five times greater if a parent is alcoholic. Cloninger, Bohman and Sigvarndsson (1981), also reveal that there is estimated evidence alluding to the fact that genetic factors account for nearly 40-60% chances for the development of alcohol abuse.

A Global School Health Survey (2003), done in Kenya about perceptions on mental health reveals some major reasons attributed to alcohol abuse as: relief from stress, to forget one's problems, peer pressure, idleness, to feel good, media influence, availability of alcohol and a belief that alcohol is generally accepted.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) report (1995), many studies carried out in the United States of America in the period between 1975 and 1995 tried to determine the origins and pathways of alcohol abuse and addiction—how the problem starts and how it progresses. Many factors have been identified that help differentiate those more likely to abuse alcohol from those less vulnerable to alcohol abuse. Factors associated with greater potential for alcohol abuse are called “risk” factors, while those associated with reduced potential for abuse are called “protective” factors. However, the American Institute on Drug Abuse report (1995) also states that, a risk factor for one person may not be the same for another.

The NIDA report (ibid), further states that risk and protective factors can affect children differently as they grow. Different paths show how risks become evident at different stages of a child's life. For instance, early risks, such as out-of-control aggressive behavior, may be seen in

a very young child. If not addressed through positive parental actions, this behavior can lead to additional risks when the child enters school. Aggressive behavior in school can lead to rejection by peers, punishment by teachers, and academic failure. The same report further states that if not addressed through preventive interventions, these risks can lead to the most immediate behaviors that put a child at risk for alcohol abuse, such as skipping school and associating with peers who abuse alcohol. In focusing on the risk path, research-based prevention programs can intervene early in a child's development to strengthen protective factors and reduce risks long before problem behaviors begin.

Social pressures are a contributing factor to alcohol abuse by adolescents. According to Prior (2000), many young people first experience alcohol use in their homes. Adults in the family may drink at meals, at special occasions like parties and weddings or simply while at home watching television. The children come to view drinking as part of being an adult. Others begin drinking when adults send them to buy or deliver alcoholic drinks (Li, 2002).

Coggans and MacKellar (1994), blame peer pressure as one of the main reasons many young people start using alcohol. According to Coggans and MacKellar (ibid), some teenagers find it difficult to refuse a drink if it is offered by friends for fear of rejection or disapproval. The ZCCP (ibid) also reports that peers put pressure on their friends and induct some of them into dangerous drinking habits; the same report further explains that outings for school teens offer them the opportunity to drink, sometimes with damaging effects. The report makes it clear that the television advertisements about alcohol often aired at times of high viewer presence; do not come with public warnings. ZCCP (ibid) further observes that these advertisements stress the fascinating aspect of alcohol-lifestyles and are meant to impress young people, and to encourage them to drink even more. The report affirms that many advertisements carry messages that are

unreliable, suggesting that alcohol consumption boosts one's capacity to work or increase sexual performance. Frequently they send wrong messages of courage and strength to young men. The power of advertisements seems to be the main reason why breweries sponsor sports events and community celebrations (ZCCP, *ibid*).

Billingham et al (1993) show how gender contributes to different factors attributed to drinking. The author reports that girls drink to feel good, getting along with others during dates and to forget disappointments while boys on the other hand drink to get drunk.

### **2.3 Perceptions on Alcohol Abuse**

A longitudinal study known as Monitoring the Future, was carried out in the United States of America (U.S.A) from 1975 to 2005 and made a theoretical contribution to the general understanding that the perpetuating factor in young people's use of alcohol is beliefs and attitudes they have about the use of alcohol (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman and Schulenberg, 2006). The study gives statistical information showing how shifts in the levels of perceived harms affect alcohol consumption. The study shows how there was little systematic change in the latter half of the 1970s and how the perceived risks associated with alcohol use at various levels rose during the 1980s. The study reports that the proportion perceiving great risk of harm in having one or two drinks nearly every day increased from 20% in 1980 to 33% in 1991. The increase was attributed partly due to the publicity about the value of moderate alcohol consumption in protecting oneself against heart disease. The study provides more evidence showing how the increase in perceived risks tend to be followed by some decline in binge drinking behaviors while the decrease in the perceived risks tend to be followed by increase in binge drinking behavior. This, according to the research findings, is because of the influence

coming from the beliefs the users held. The increase in perceived risks during the 80s may have been due to many efforts aimed at discouraging drunk driving, confirms the same study.

The same study reports that the taking of one or two drinks nearly every day was disapproved of by 71% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders yet 67% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders disapproved of weekend drinking. The explanation for such findings is that a good number of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders were weekend binge drinkers rather than daily drinkers. This showed that they were expressing attitudes that were consistent with their beliefs about possible consequences as seen from the social acceptability of weekend alcohol use in parties portrayed by advertisements. This study clearly shows how young people will disapprove the use of alcohol if it does not suit their pattern of life or approves its use when they do not see any risks in its use.

According to Perkins (1997), the theoretical explanation of the causes of misconceptions about alcohol abuse points to the phenomena operating at cognitive, social, and cultural levels. At the cognitive level, psychologists have demonstrated that humans are prone to error in exceedingly ascribing actions of others to their personality rather than to environmental contexts in which behavior occurs because the observer lacks information to make accurate attributions about the cause of the observed behavior. Therefore, when an adolescent is drunk the peers quickly attribute his or her drunken state to his or her typical life style.

Perkins (1985), found that peer norms were stronger predictors of adolescents' levels of intoxication. These peer influences involve perceived friends drinking norms. Orcutt (1991), did a study among undergraduate students and found that students who were disposed to drink alcohol did so among friends. The presence of others seems to have encouraged and provided support to show that the habit was normal. Martin and Hoffman (1993), in a study of

undergraduate students also found peer influence in terms of the number of friends who drank together and this was seen as a significant predictor of personal consumption more than positive expectations associated with alcohol use.

Although peer influence appears to be at play, research has shown some pervasive differences between what students believe to be their peer norms and what the actual norms are. This can be seen in the commonly held attitudes about correct behavior and the actual exhibited behavior concerning alcohol use. Most adolescents wrongly think that their friends drink heavier than what is normal. In a study carried out by Perkins and Berkowitz (1986), it was found that students believed that intoxication was only acceptable in limited circumstances yet the same students thought that their peers believed that intoxication that interferes with academic work was acceptable. So drinking always was not accepted and yet occasional drinking was allowed even when it stood to disturb someone's academic work. The same authors show that young people perceived their drinking habits as being normal and acceptable than what the adult world was doing. So this perceived norm created social support and acceptance of alcohol use within campus.

Page et al. (1999), carried out a study among university students and found that both males and females overestimated the extent of heavy drinking among their peers. Perkins et al (1999), in a co- institution survey on alcohol and drugs found that at every one of the 100 colleges and universities in the study most students perceived much more frequent use of alcohol among the peers than what actually occurred at their school. Perkins et al. (ibid), concluded that the patterns of exaggerated perceptions have been found to be consistent for all other types of drugs found in the substance abuse research. Furthermore, Beck and Trauman (1996), explain that misconceptions about alcohol use are not unique to college or university students but that they

can be found in secondary school settings and even among non school going young adults. On the social level when a student gets drunk it may be quite entertaining as one acts out in a comical way but it may be disgusting if a drunken student gets sick or starts vomiting in front of others. However no matter whether the affective experience is negative or positive for the observer, these occurrences involving peer drinking are easily remembered and frequently talked about in subsequent social conversations with friends (Sternberg, 2008). Like anybody else adolescents do not get accurate accounting of all behavior in social situations. They simply retain what is most memorable and give it a disproportionate weight in subsequent estimates of what is typical in social conversations, which further exaggerate the drinking norm among students (Spooner, 1999).

On the cultural level, MacAndrew and Edgetone (1969) explain that the popular entertainment of misperceptions through films, television shows and advertisements unrealistically emphasize heavy drinking as part of youth culture. Once entrenched in the minds of most students these overstated perceptions of student drinking norms are likely to have considerable effects on personal use, as students feel under-pressure to conform to mistakenly perceived expectations of peers.

Several studies have revealed that perceived social norms could significantly correlate with students' personal drinking behavior (Clapp and McDonnel, 2000; Nagoshi, 1999; Page et al, 1999; Perkins and Berkowitz 1986; Perkins and Wechsler, 1996; Woods et al 1992). It is a common belief that if situations are perceived as real, they are real in their consequences therefore perceptions of reality can ultimately produce behaviors leading to self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1957). Furthermore, students who drink usually fail to out-rightly condemn drunkenness of their peers for fear of being alienated from peers since their attitude may be seen

as decrepit. What appears to be lack of opposition to heavy drinking further extends and reinforces the misperceived peer norm about what is acceptable behavior?

Johnson (1994), states that perceptions shape people's understanding of situations and people around them. What youths perceive to be true and enjoyable may influence their behavior yet this perceived reality might be different from what is actually true.

#### **2.4 Effects of Alcohol Abuse**

According to the Web Med (2009), the immediate physical effects of drinking alcohol range from mild mood changes to complete loss of coordination, vision (sleepiness), balance, impaired judgment and speech. These stated physical effects which can be signals of acute alcohol intoxication, or drunkenness usually wear off in a matter of hours after a person stops drinking. Many law-enforcement agencies in the world for instance in South Africa regard a 0.08 percentage of alcohol in the bloodstream as evidence of intoxication (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009). Getchell, Pippin and Varnes (1995), state that larger amounts of blood alcohol can impair brain function, cause liver damage, and eventually cause unconsciousness. The same authors further point out that an extreme overdose can cause alcohol poisoning and this can be fatal. They further explain that chronic alcoholism is a progressive, potentially fatal disease, characterized by an incessant craving for increased tolerance of physical dependence upon and loss of control over drinking alcohol. The physical dependence on alcohol may or may not be obvious to other people. While some chronic alcoholics get very drunk, others exercise enough control to give the appearance of coping with everyday affairs in a near-normal way. The Web Net (2008), amplifies on the fact that alcohol abuse if it develops into alcoholism can lead to a number of physical ailments, including hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, brain and heart

damage, and end-stage liver damage, enlarged blood vessels in the skin, chronic gastritis, and pancreatitis.

The DSM IV in Barlow and Durand (2007), gives a list of alcohol related induced disorders as persistent dementia, psychotic disorders with hallucinations, psychotic disorders with delusions, mood disorders, sleep disorders and sexual dysfunction.

In a review paper on the basics of understanding alcohol abuse for the Psychology Today Diagnosis Dictionary (2009), alcoholism can also lead to impotence in men, damage to the fetus in pregnant women, and an elevated risk of cancer of the larynx, esophagus, liver, breast, stomach, pancreas and upper gastrointestinal tract. The paper further indicates that since alcoholics seldom have adequate diets, they are likely to have nutritional deficiencies and that heavy drinkers typically have impaired liver function, and at least one in five develops cirrhosis. The review concludes that alcoholics' continued craving for alcohol makes total abstinence as an important goal of treatment, extremely difficult and that conditions are also complicated by denial since alcoholics employ a range of psychological maneuvers to blame their problems on something other than drink, creating significant barriers to recovery.

The ZCCP (ibid), Literature Review identifies a larger set of issues that are linked to misuse of alcohol: abuse of alcohol has contributed to some of the most violent crimes, accidents and deaths that Zambia as a country has experienced over the years. It has contributed to the levels of domestic abuse, especially wife-battering and divorce. Battering associated with alcohol consumption may be more severe and result in greater injury. In addition some women turn to alcohol in response to battering.

Alcohol abuse affects adolescents in a number of ways. According to Levy (1999), people who begin drinking early run the risk of developing serious alcohol related problems including alcoholism later in life. They are also at a greater risk of involving themselves in risk sexual behavior and poor school performance, Donovan (2004), reiterates this fact by stating that teens that begin drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin at 21 years. Such individuals, Donovan (ibid) goes on to say, fail to manage their drinking habits and their drinking is usually associated with violence. Grant and Dawson (1998), reveal that adolescents who involve themselves in binge drinking at least once in a week face problems in their transition to adulthood; for instance they face educational attainment problems, fail to secure proper marriages and may be financially dependent. Apart from this Johnston (2004), highlights other several mental health problems that those who abuse alcohol can face. He points out that such mental problems like depression, anxiety, and antisocial personality disorders are very common among those adolescents who abuse alcohol. Johnston (ibid), further explains that adolescents who abuse alcohol are associated with considering committing suicide.

In Zambia, the Post Newspaper of 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2009 reports the revelations made by a pupil of Kabwe High School during the first African youth day celebrations that youths who abuse alcohol have ended up involving themselves in vices such as prostitution and early pregnancies, HIV/ AIDS, foul language and involvement in the use of strong drugs. The newspaper report goes on to highlight on the consequences of adolescents involvement in alcohol abuse as: dropping out of school, ill-health, serving jail sentences for criminal behavior and finally early death.

Dondero (1991) emphasised the point that there is a correlation not just between the misuse of alcohol and drugs and unsafe sexual practices which facilitate the transmission of the HIV virus, but also between it and the management of the infection. According to Dondero, (ibid), drinking contributes to the high rates of infection because one effect of alcohol is to suppress the usual inhibitions a person uses to guide behavior and the drinkers end up exhibiting the risky behaviors that are associated with the transmission of the HIV virus. In turn these high rates of infection have seriously reduced the levels of expected returns on huge financial investment and hard work, to limit infection rates. Treatment for alcohol and drug misuse, therefore, finds a place in the drive to control and reduce levels of HIV infection. Additionally, according to ZCCP, (ibid) the use of alcohol seriously inhibits the efficacy of anti-retroviral medicines, due to their impact on the human immune system. Alcohol-use thus contributes to the incidence of treatment failure and complicates the problems patients have with adherence to their treatment schedule. A sharp increase in the number of deaths is an expectable consequence of non-adherence.

Population based evidence exists for the link between sexual behavior and alcohol (Lugalla, Emmelin, Mutembei et al, 2006). Alcohol use is particularly problematic among groups that are at increased risk of HIV infection such as mobile populations, commercial sex workers and youths (Amayo, 1996; Ao, Sam, Nasenga et al, 2006). Nevertheless, in the recent past HIV prevention programmes had ignored or only minimally addressed the transmission factor (Morris, Levine, Nkandu-Luo et al, 2006). This situation is now changing and health workers on HIV/AIDS programmes are now showing a measure of interest in highlighting and dealing with the role alcohol abuse plays in facilitating unsafe sexual behavior, accelerating progression to disease, reducing the effectiveness of HIV treatment and reducing adherence to drug schedules. Alcohol intoxication affects women and adolescents more than it does on adult men because of

their lower body weights and lower body water percentages. As for adolescents their still developing bodies and lack of experience makes them more vulnerable to intoxication and alcoholism (Anderson, 2006).

## **2.5. Summary of the Reviewed Literature**

The review shows that although there is abundant literature on alcohol consumption among adolescents in many parts of the world not much has been done in Zambia. The literature indicates how alcohol consumption in many parts of the world Zambia inclusive has assumed an alarming dimension. The prevalence rate of alcohol use among adolescents in different parts of the world gives room for concern. The reviewed studies are mostly based on global and national house hold surveys on drug abuse conducted by the World Health Organization and other organizations of national nature. These surveys show that there is high prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents and there is high probability that the frequency of alcohol drinking will continue to increase. The dangers associated with alcohol consumption make it a serious threat not only to the health of individual consumers but also to that of society as well. The reviewed literature is showing that teens that drink regularly also engage themselves in activities that can put them or those around them at risk for harm. Such behaviors include use of illegal drugs, fighting, carrying weapons and having unsafe sex. Evidence from many studies suggests that drinking leads to increased aggressiveness because it lowers inhibition, including those that would normally prevent aggressive behavior. Alcohol also impairs judgment and may cause people to overreact to perceived threats or to fail to consider the future risk of an impulsive violent response.

The pertinent issue raised by these studies is that there is something that is sustaining or reinforcing the use of alcohol among adolescents despite the awareness of the potential dangers it constitute to healthy living. The studies no matter where they have been conducted point out at the important roles personal, interpersonal and environmental factors play in influencing alcohol consumption among adolescents. The available literature for the *Zambian* context show the same pattern of alcohol abuse by school going adolescents like other studies done elsewhere in the World. It is important therefore to examine the views youths have on their experiences with alcohol abuse especially regarding its causes and effects so that prevention strategies that are workable can be arrived at and thus leading to a greater opportunity for future sustainable prevention efforts.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains how the study was carried out by describing the population, the procedure followed in the pilot and main study, the sample, how participants were recruited and the analysis of data.

#### **3.1. Study Population.**

Since the focus of this study was to investigate the pathways of alcohol abuse by school going adolescents, the study population consisted of 162 participants from Kafushi and Chibombo High Schools. Thus there were 160 in boarding boys and girls aged between 16 and 20 years doing senior secondary school education. Others involved were the guidance and counseling teachers one from each school.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

The research study combined both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection.

#### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

In the qualitative approach 48 volunteers were requested to participate, 24 from each school. This sample had 28 boys and 20 girls. In each school one group came from grade 10 and 11 and 2 groups from grade 12 since the latter were assumed to have more school experience. Each group had six (6) volunteers from each grade (grade 10, 11&12). According to Krueger and Casey (2000), focus groups can be conducted with 6 – 10 members with similar nature for instance similar age and status in programme. The first five groups of six were homogeneous thus 3 groups of boys and 2 groups of girls and the other 3 groups were heterogeneous with 2 groups of 3girls and 3 boys and 1 group of 4 boys and 2 girls .

Participants were given the full details of the study and anonymity was guaranteed. This meant that the volunteers were free to withdraw from participation at any time they wanted. The discussions were held in selected classrooms during the afternoon school sessions.

The sample in the survey was randomly picked from three classes of grades 10, 11 and 12. The researcher ensured that there were more grade 12 participants as it was assumed they had more school experience on alcohol related issues. Since participants were randomly picked, those participants who were aged slightly above 20 years participated in the survey although their responses were not included in the analysis.

The two teachers were purposively selected with an assumption that by virtue of being guidance and counseling teachers they had more information concerning problems pupils were faced with more so with alcohol abuse within the two schools.

### **3.4. Data collection tools and materials.**

In the qualitative approach question guides were used in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The questions in the guides were produced from the earlier conducted pilot study whose questions were extracted from permitted studies on alcohol abuse by adolescents especially from global school health surveys. In the focus group discussions the question guides focused on the following subjects concerning pupils' perceptions on the

- Prevalence of alcohol consumption and abuse by pupils.
- Causes of alcohol consumption and abuse by pupils.
- Types of alcoholic drinks consumed and abused by pupils
- Effects of alcohol consumption and abuse by pupils

In the in-depth interviews the question guides equally focused on the teachers' views concerning the above topics that were tackled by the pupils.

In the quantitative approach a self administered survey questionnaire which came after the focus group discussions was used. Since the questionnaire was designed from the data generated from the group discussions the same topics were also reflected in the questionnaire. The variables in this questionnaire were not manipulated since they were meant to show the views held by a slightly large sample on the same topics investigated in the focus group discussions. So the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of percentages.

### **3.5. Data collection procedure**

In the qualitative stage a total of eight (8) focus group discussions, four (4) from each school were conducted. The researcher assumed that in order to get great deal of information from a diverse group four (4) focus groups were adequate from each school.

Each session lasted for forty-five minutes. The information was recorded through written notes and tape recording. The audio tape recording was done with the consent of the participants. The questions in the focus groups were used in a flexible manner allowing other questions which were arising from the discussions to be asked. The formulated questions were used only as a guide to avoid deviations in order to cover the relevant and examinable aspects of alcohol abuse by school going adolescents. The researcher acted as a facilitator who made sure that each question was reformulated according to what was coming out of the discussion taking into account the objectives of the study and topics that were under investigation.

In-depth interviews were held with two guidance and counseling teachers at the conveniently arranged time in their offices. It was difficult to interview pupils who were regular or current users of alcohol since both schools argued that they did not tolerate such pupils as they are usually sent on forced transfers.

The questionnaire was distributed to 112 pupils (56 from each school) in the afternoon session by the researcher who helped in giving details of what each question was asking for. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately at the end of each class period. Out of the 112 distributed questionnaires 10 were not completed thus 102 valid questionnaires were returned. Then 10 of the 102 were removed at the analysis stage since these respondents did not meet the age condition as they were above 20 years of age. The survey questionnaire assured anonymity by not including any identifying information. Participants who took part in the focus group discussion were excluded from completing the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

Great care was taken to protect the research participants. First, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants, allowing them to choose whether or not to participate. They were informed that since participation was voluntary each individual was free even to withdraw at any point during the study. Informed consent was then obtained from all those who agreed to participate in the study. Participants were assured that no harm would come to them as a result of their participation or refusal to participate in the research. They were also assured about the confidentiality of all that they would say in the study. Lastly the researcher assured the participants that the resulting research and publications would not be used in any way that might bring harm to them as a group. The questionnaires did not have any slot for the name to assure anonymity in the sourcing of information.

### **3.7. Pilot Study**

The questionnaire and the interview guide were piloted before the main study was undertaken.

The goals of the pilot study were to:

- Highlight pitfalls and possible misinterpretations of the questions.
- Determine how long it would take to complete both the group discussion and answering the questionnaire.
- Check whether or not all instructions were clear.
- Remove any item which did not yield any usable data.
- Determine the best way of administering the instruments of the final study

A total of twelve pupils (6 girls and 6 boys) aged between 15 and 20 from Chibombo High School were picked from grades 10, 11 and 12 participated in the pilot study. After the pilot study it was determined that the language to use in administering the questionnaire and question guides was English adjusted to the level of understanding of the pupils.

### **3.8. Main Study**

Prior to the commencement of the study, permission was sought in person from the authorities of Kafushi and Chibombo high schools. The topic and purpose of the study were clearly made known to the school authorities who allowed the study to be carried out. Convenient time-tables on the times when research activities would take place were jointly designed by both the researcher and the guidance and counseling teachers.

### **3.9. Data Analysis Procedure.**

Data from the focus group discussions and in- depth interviews were first transcribed and the resulting transcripts were compared. The comparison of the transcripts helped in bringing out the similar themes across the groups. Themes related to the objectives were identified and findings that best represented each theme were selected to verify the objectives. After all information had been collected, the data were coded according to themes that had been developed. The coding was revised and modified, as the analysis progressed. Patterns that developed were noted especially those that were consistent across groups. Quotes that exemplified themes were recorded noting details about the speaker, like grade and gender. After the re-coding, analysis of data was done in comparison with the study objectives and questions.

The resulting data from the survey came from 92 respondents and were bench-marked against the research questions to find out views pupils had about the prevalence, causes and effects of alcohol abuse. The responses by the pupils were categorized according to the alcohol consumption status of the respondents. Those who indicated having taken alcohol before were put in one category. This group was further split into two groups representing those who had continued drinking and those who had stopped. Their pattern of answering questions was noted. Those who indicated that they had never taken alcohol before were also put in their own category. The resulting data from each of the three categories was benchmarked against the study questions. The responses to the questions which were general were analyzed for the whole group for example questions on access and availability of alcohol. Depending on the weight of responses the questions were either affirmed or rejected. Since the study was descriptive by nature the resulting data was processed using Microsoft excel and then presented in terms of percentages.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The results are presented according to the topics the research questions were investigating starting with the focus group discussions which are backed by the responses from the survey questionnaire.

**TABLE. 1: Demographical structure of the sample.**

	<b>K A F U S H I</b>		<b>C H I B O M B O</b>		
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
G10	13	9	11	10	43
G11	15	12	16	11	54
G12	17	14	20	12	63
TEACHERS	01	00	00	01	02
<b>TOTAL</b>	46	35	47	34	162

In this study 160 pupils and two teachers constituted the sample. Participants were put into three categories of participation – 48 participated in the focus group discussions two teachers participated in the in-depth interviews and 102 participated in the survey.

The pupils who participated in the survey were further distributed according to their age as shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Demographical distribution of respondents**

K A F U S H I							C H I B O M B O					
GENDER	M A L E			F E M A L E			M A L E			F E M A L E		
AGE	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
13 - 15	2	2	0	2	4	1	4	1	1	5	1	0
16 - 18	5	8	10	2	2	9	3	8	11	0	1	1
19 - 21	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	7	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

To find out the pathways to alcohol abuse by adolescents in boarding schools, each group was asked questions that explored their knowledge about alcohol consumption and abuse depending on their observations, experiences, media influences and what they learn from school. In their responses, the term ‘sir’ was commonly used by pupils just as a way of salutation since the researcher was older than all the pupil participants and it is included in the quotes just to show that it was a response to certain questions. The participants were relaxed, open and focused. In order to find out whether pupils had an understanding of the topic under discussion each focus group was asked to define the term ‘alcohol abuse’. The participants gave a general definition that; it is the use of alcohol by pupils and anyone under the age of eighteen (18) years. Few pupils defined it as taking alcohol more than the way it is supposed to be taken.

*The taking of alcohol by pupils is all abuse because we are not supposed to take alcohol unless one has a certificate from the doctors. It is abuse in anyway because the mind does not concentrate and you may end up getting used to beer. (Grade 12 girl).*

#### 4.1. Prevalence of alcohol use.

In both schools participants in the focus groups acknowledged that there were pupils who take alcohol within the school premises. In every discussion group five out of six or four out of six admitted having taken alcohol on different occasions. They also indicated that at least one or two pupils especially boys were drunk every day. The usual time of drinking was at night especially after night class preparations, on Saturday especially during entertainment and on Sports days or other days with big events.

*Everyone takes it even prefects do drink. (Grade 12 boy)*

*I took it and I felt very 'high' like I was Barrack Obama even my English changed and I thought I would continue. (grade 11 boy)*

*I took it and it 'did me', I felt drowsier and cried (Grade 11 girl).*

*You can take beer anytime even during prep just pretend by using a water bottle yet there is beer inside (Grade12 boy)*

A similar question was asked in the survey to find out who had ever taken alcohol. The responses given by the participants indicated that out of 92 participants 60 had taken alcohol before.

Participants named a number of alcoholic drinks commonly taken by pupils as Chibuku shake-shake, Tujirijiri, Lusaka beer, Pushkafee, skippers, and Mosi. They also disclosed that the type of beer one drank depended on how much money they had. Tujirijiri is very easy to use because it can easily be mixed with some common juices like Apple Max and other drinks like Havana Cola.

*It depends on your pocket sir; girls drink expensive beer because big guys buy for them. Us, we can take any beer especially tujirijiri, they can take you fast and the 'timbwi' (chibuku shake-shake) is a food supplement but not Kachasu of course. (Grade 11boy).*

The survey also revealed the type of alcoholic drinks pupils have taken before. The number of those who responded to the statement on the type of alcoholic drink one had taken before was 75 while 17 left it blank. Chibuku was chosen by 69% of the respondents as the highest commonly used alcohol by pupils followed by Tujirijiri which was chosen by 52.1% of the respondents. Mosi was chosen by 41%, traditional brew by 20%, Push-kafee by 15% while 45. % indicated that there are other brands of alcohol that they had taken before and Kachasu was only chosen by 1.96%.

**TABLE 3. Types of Alcohol consumed by pupils (N=92)**

TYPEOF BEER	PERCENTAGE
CHIBUKU	69
TUJIRIJIRI	52.1
MOSI	41
TRADITIONAL BREW	20
PUSH-KAFEE	15
KACHASU	1.96
OTHERS	45

The survey also revealed the frequency of alcohol intake by the respondents. The number of those who answered this question was 60 while 32 left it blank. Out of the 60 with alcohol use experience 42% indicated that they take it regularly, while 33% take it occasionally and 21% indicated that they had stopped. The questions on frequency purposely did not allow the alternative for others because they were meant for those who had taken alcohol before. The term occasionally was interpreted to the respondents by the researcher as taking of alcohol sometimes depending on the situation and regularly as consistent pattern of drinking which has become a

habit. The findings from the questions in table 4. Reveal that there are pupils who have developed a habit of consuming alcohol regularly.

**TABLE 4: Frequency of alcohol use by pupils**

Frequency	N	%
Regularly	25	42
Occasionally	20	33
Have stopped	15	25
Total	60	100

The table below show how long ago respondents had an alcoholic drink. Out of 65 respondents who answered this question, 17 (26 %) reported having taken alcohol a day before the survey was conducted while 12 (18%) took it one week before the survey, 5 (8%) took it one month before the survey, 7 (12%) took it three months before and 9 (15%) took it one year before the survey while 10 (16%) stated that they did not remember the last time they drank. This evidence points to the possibility that there are pupils who take alcohol during the school term.

**Table 5: The last time participants took alcohol**

Last time alcohol was taken	N	%
One day ago	17	26
One week ago	12	18
One month ago	5	8
Three months ago	7	12
One year ago	9	15
Don't remember the last time	15	25
TOTAL	65	100

The survey also reveals how much alcohol respondents use per drinking occasion. The information given shows that there is a possibility that pupils are involved in binge drinking. The table below shows that 24% of 92 reported having seen friends taking 5 or more alcoholic drinks per drinking bout while 22% of 92 indicated that they can take 5, while 22% as much as is available, 18% indicated 2 and 14% indicated that they can only take 1 alcoholic drink per occasion.

**Table 6: Amount of alcohol consumed per drinking bout.**

<b>Quantity of alcohol consumed</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
One drink	13	14
Two drinks	17	18
Five drinks	20	22
As much as friends offer me	20	22
Seen friends take 5 or more	22	24

#### **4.1.1 Reasons for Alcohol Abuse**

The identified reasons which show the increased likely-hood of alcohol use are presented as risk factors which are categorized into three domains. Each domain will be subdivided into the actual factors attributed to alcohol use.

##### **4.1.1.1 Environmental Risk Factors for Alcohol Abuse**

**Question 1:** What perceptions do pupils have about the availability and easy access to alcohol outlets in relation to alcohol abuse?

The following are some of the environmental risk factors identified by the participants:

**(a) Availability of extra pocket money.**

Participants in all the focus discussion groups disclosed that some pupils got money from unsuspecting parents by pretending that there would be education tours or there was an outstanding payment for the damaged school property or by just inflating the school requirements from different subjects for instance money for projects or pretend friends stole their

belongings. It was also revealed in some groups that some parents gave their children too much pocket money thereby creating the temptation for alcohol consumption.

*Some pupils behave like big bosses because they have too much money and would want to show off by buying beer for the friends. (grade 12 girl)*

### **(b) Having parents, friends or siblings who misuse alcohol**

Adolescents in the discussion groups hinted that homes where pupils came from had a bearing on their consumption of alcohol. If parents or guardians used alcohol then it would be easy for the child to start also. Some participants pointed out that it was difficult to avoid drinking if the community one came from was full of taverns and people younger than them were in the habit of consuming alcohol.

*I started from home whenever I was sent to buy beer by my uncle I could serve myself and he never complained even after discovering what I was doing. (grade 11 boy)*

*Sir, it also follows the family tree, if your mother and father drink then you can also try. (girl grade 10)*

*In the 'hood' (shanty compound) beer is plenty and a matter of choice, nobody will stop you. (grade 12 boy)*

### **(c) Societal laissez-faire attitude on alcohol use by adolescents.**

In both schools, participants revealed that alcohol was taken in groups in the nearby bush, local homes surrounding the school, in bars at the roadside for Chibombo High School and Mutonyo and Jamaica for Kafushi High school. Bar owners and others who sell alcohol in different outlets do not care much about the social status of their clients. Some pupils with courage were said to be drinking alcohol within the school boundaries.

*Oh! No, even in your uniform nobody will stop you as long as you have cash. (Grade 12 boy). You can take it anywhere even in a booked local hut with some local people or in the hostel in your bed just pretend you are sick. ( Grade 11boy)*

***(d) Easy access to alcohol***

Members of different groups observed that one of the causes of alcohol use by pupils was the easy availability of beer which in most cases was cheap and affordable for youths. It was also revealed that alcohol especially tujirijiri sachets can be kept in the trunks and can safely be taken when needed since nobody was allowed to search anyone's belongings as that was a violation of human rights.

*Beer is sold anywhere even by our fellow pupils who keep it in the trunks. During the weekend you can buy the whole container of 20litres from the chibuku container delivery truck and drink it without any problem. (grade 12 boy)*

Easy access to alcohol was one of the stated reasons for alcohol abuse by adolescents. Respondents indicated that alcohol was readily available and easy to obtain from bars, shops and even sending older persons to buy it on their behalf. Some respondents affirmed that there were teachers who drink with their pupils.

The table below shows how easy pupils felt it was to obtain their alcoholic drink with 58% showing that it was not at all difficult. The obtained information answers the question in the affirmative.

**Table 7: Access to alcohol**

QUESTIONS	Not at all difficult		Slightly difficult		Somewhat difficult		Extremely difficult		Didn't answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How difficult is it for pupils to buy any type of beer at the shops?	53	58	17	18	1	1.1	10	10.8	12	13
How difficult is it for pupils to order beer at a bar?	52	56	15	16	1	1.1	20	21.7	4	4.3
How difficult is it for a pupil to get an older person to buy alcohol?	42	46	18	19	3	3.2	17	18.4	11	12

*(e) Advertisements and their influence on alcohol abuse*

Participants were of the view that the alcohol campaigns like the one on Mosi for football incited their interest for beer. They also lamented that it was a contradiction to use a youthful looking person on television to show how exciting beer can be and later tell the young ones not to drink.

*Why use us not the old men to show how good beer can be? They know we are the 'big buyers' and it is us they are looking for because we are the majority.(grade 11 boy)*

#### ***4.1.1.2 Personal Risk Factors for Alcohol Abuse***

In order to ascertain the perceptions of adolescents on reasons for alcohol abuse, members of each focus group were asked to explain why they thought pupils took alcohol. Some of the reasons given were as follows:-

##### ***(a) Excitement***

Participants disclosed how their quest for entertainment during certain occasions leaves them helpless to avoid risky behavior especially during big events. They reported that the quest for pleasure creates high chances of pupils indulging in anything thought to increase that elation.

*There are certain moment's sirs, when you are so happy that you can do anything and beer drinking is not a bad idea. It just comes automatically especially when the beer is made available to you 'nikuciliza cabe'. (grade 11 girl)*

##### ***(b) Curiosity***

In the focus group discussions it was assumed by the participants that some pupils took alcohol just to experiment. They were not forced by anyone but would just want to have an experience to find out if what they had heard, seen, or had been thinking about could be true. At Kafushi High School it was revealed that a year before this study was carried out there was a boy who was so admired by the colleagues because of his drinking. He was nicknamed after Tujirijiri sachet beer known as 'Officer' which he was fond of. Up to now there are some pupils who mimic him when they drink, it was said. The participants also observed that the curiosity about alcohol consumption was usually accompanied by ignorance in the experimenter.

*Some people begin drinking just to see whether they can be the star they have been admiring and then they find the beer sweet so they continue. (grade 10 boy)*

***(c) Age and alcohol consumption***

Some participants in the groups stated that there were some pupils who were above the age of eighteen (18) years although they were still in school. These were treated as big people at home and were allowed to drink beer as a result they might continue with the habit even at school.

*Imagine you are twenty two (22) years old and some of your friends you were with at primary school are working and they invite you to drink, why can't you drink?(grade 12 boy)*

***(d) Alcohol consumption as a coping mechanism***

Participants in all discussion groups alluded to the fact that there were times when one was passing through difficulties and would want to just have a temporal break from these problems. Alcohol consumption was cited as the fastest way of resolving certain problems.

*Sir, imagine you are accused of stealing someone's money and you are punished for it yet you are not the one. You can as well drink beer to forget about it.( grade 12 girl)*

*Sometimes you have just lost your parents what can you do to forget about this? Just drink a bit and sleep. ( grade 11boy)*

***(e) Boredom and alcohol consumption.***

Participants also observed that boredom is one of the factors contributing to pupils trying prohibited things like alcohol consumption. They explained how in the third term when grade 12s are writing their final examinations no grade ten (10) and eleven (11) pupil is allowed to go for classes since the classrooms are occupied by those who are writing. The only game available is football and yet not everyone participates in it. This is the time pupils resort to alcohol consumption to occupy them with something.

*It is so boring when the 'sugos' (grade 12s) are writing because we have nothing to do and they say no 'under sugo' (grade 10&11) is allowed around school so we create our own entertainment. (grade 11 boy)*

In the survey as shown in table below alcohol use is not seen as a means of relieving stress in many situations as indicated for instance by 78% of the respondents who did not agree to the statement that alcohol consumption can be taken when someone has lost parents. On the other hand although the number of those who didn't answer the question on whether someone can use alcohol to reduce boredom is low (22%) most of the respondents (48%) answered in the affirmative to the same question.

**TABLE 8: Alcohol as a means of relieving stress**

S T A T E M E N T S	YES	%	NO	%	DIDNT	%
	N		N		ANSWER	
	N		N		N	
You can take alcohol when you are bored	44	48	27	29	21	23
Some boys drink alcohol to have courage to propose girls.	33	36	49	53	10	11
You can drink alcohol when disappointed by your mate	24	27	44	47	22	49
You can take alcohol in order to forget your problems	22	24	50	54	20	22
You can take alcohol when you have lost your parents	15	16	72	78	6	6
You can drink alcohol when subjects become difficult	9	10	69	75	14	15

**(f) Beliefs about the enhancing effects of alcohol use.**

Some participants in the focus discussions indicated that the effects of alcohol depend on who you are and the type of alcohol you are using. It was said some pupils perform well in academic work even if they drink. They explained how alcohol can be used to remove shyness when one wants to perform an activity where he may feel nervous, for example, when a boy is trying to propose love to a girl he fears. It was also said that if one wanted to dance without feeling shy alcohol creates the right mood for entertainment. Some of the participants in the focus group discussion also mentioned how using a small amount of alcohol can make someone perform well in sports.

*.You can read the whole night for a test and if you are reading history it is like you are watching a film where you are seeing the pictures (Grade 12boy). During entertainment you can even dance like Michael Jackson (grade 11 boy)*

Some participants indicated that if a person started taking alcohol in the early years of his life he may be a stable drinker in future. One focus group agreed that alcohol consumption cannot make someone stop school because school depends on individual interest. Some participants disclosed that alcohol helps them to avoid sexual activities.

*Sir, if you drink smartly you can't admire any girl. (grade 12 boy)*

The table below presents factors emanating from the adolescents' perceptions about the effects of alcohol use. The total number of participants was 92. Notable among these factors is the idea that pupils who drink can control their drinking which was rated by 58% of the respondents. The percentage that reported that alcohol does not affect someone's thinking was 53% while 34% indicated no, only 22% ticked yes that alcohol improves academic performance while 76% chose no, 18% indicated yes that alcohol can enhance performance in sports while 76% showed no as shown in the table below.

**Table 9: Perceptions about the effects of alcohol use**

S T A T E M E N T S	YES		NO		DIDN'T ANSWER	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
You can take alcohol just to taste how it feels	56	61	23	25	13	14
It is very easy to control your own drinking habits.	53	58	25	27	14	15
Alcohol does not change someone's thinking	49	53	31	34	12	13
Pupils who drink have self control	48	52	42	46	2	2.1
You can drink alcohol for medical reasons	34	37	44	48	14	15
You can drink alcohol to improve your academic performance	20	21	70	76	2	2.1
You can drink alcohol to improve your performance in sports	17	22	70	76	5	5.4
Learning under the influence of alcohol is okay	15	16	61	66	16	17
Alcohol enables an individual to think clearly	17	18	62	67	13	14

#### ***4.1.1.3 Interpersonal Risk Factor for Alcohol use***

**QUESTION: what social factors influence pupils' behavior towards alcohol use?**

***(a) Peer pressure***

In every discussion group, peer influence was cited as a major reason for alcohol abuse. Many participants explained how difficult it is to refuse a drink offered to them by their good friend for fear of disapproval and being suspected as a spy in the group. They drink the alcohol in order to please their friends.

*You don't say no to good friends 'bazakuoneramo', (shunned) They will think you are a 'niggaz bitch' (traitor). You are a guy and they are guys so where is the problem? Just drink! (Grade 12 boy)*

The table below shows the participants responses on how they view the social context as a contributing factor towards alcohol use.

Adolescents have a variety of reasons for engaging in alcohol consumptions. Many reasons incline so much on socialization with peers. There was evidence rated by 59% respondents that one can drink alcohol in order to be popular among friends. Some respondents (47%) indicated that they took alcohol in order to socialize although 49% disagreed to this statement while 42 % indicated that they just do it to have fun with friends while 76% indicated that they cannot take alcohol simply because others did so. The information presented in table presents an affirmative answer to the research question.

**TABLE 10: Social context and alcohol consumption**

FACTORS	YES		NO		DIDN'T ANSWER	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
You drink alcohol to be popular among friends	54	59	33	36	5	5.4
You can drink alcohol in order to socialize	43	47	45	49	4	4.1
I drink alcohol just to have fun with my friends	39	42	36	39	17	18.4
I can drink alcohol when it's given to me by a friend.	26	28	45	49	21	23
If others drink alcohol then I can also drink	15	16	76	83	1	1

#### ***4.1.2 Perceived Negative Effects of Alcohol Use***

Participants revealed that alcohol has negative health effects on the user. They cited health problems like loss of appetite, poor memory, stomach ulcers, red lips, red and drowsy eyes and foul smell. Other problems were social problems such as sexual misconduct for those who experiment with alcohol, bad language, lack of respect for school authority, violence, misuse of school fees, stealing from friends, unpredictable moods and dumping friends. Poor academic performance was also cited as a negative effect of alcohol abuse. Participants explained how alcohol abusers skip lessons, sell important books, lose note books, sleep during lessons because of hang-overs, make careless mistakes in tests and forget relevant information during examinations. Some participants acknowledged that alcohol is addictive and can compromise one's self control.

*Beer is dangerous sir, it can completely change your life from being good to being immoral and it can kill you, 'tujirijiri' (sacheted beer) killed someone in Chongwe. ( grade 12 girl)*

*You stop thinking and can die fast through diseases and accidents.(grade 11girl)*

*You can become irresponsible and start stealing money from your parents and friends. (grade 10 boy)*

**Table 11: Negative effects of alcohol use experienced at school. (N=92)**

E F F E C T S	YES	
	N	%
Sickness	56	61
Accidents	54	59
Absenteeism from school	53	58
Use of bad language by a drunk friend	49	53
Skipping lessons	49	53
Sexual temptations	47	51
Poor school performance	43	47
Suspension from school	35	38
Expulsion from another school	24	26

In the survey questionnaire respondents were asked to choose the type of negative experiences they had experienced with alcohol use. Verbal instructions were given by the researcher to the participants asking them to indicate not only what they personally experienced as been involved themselves but even what they witnessed happening to their close friends. The experiences were chosen in this order as can be seen from the table above; sickness 61%, accidents 59%,

absenteeism 58%, use of bad language 53%, skipping lessons 53%, poor school performance 47%, suspension from school 38% and expulsion from school 26%.

#### ***4.1.3 Prevention and Control of Alcohol Abuse***

A question was posed on whether the taking of alcohol should be banned in a Christian nation like Zambia. Participants, even some of those who said they do not take alcohol answered “no” to this question giving reasons that life would be very boring. Only a few supported the statement.

*That should not happen because beer is business, some of us our school fees come from the sale of beer. (grade 12 boy) Yes there will be no jobs for some people (grade 10 boy). Can you imagine all of us carrying Bibles everywhere, No! Life will be bad. (grade 11 girl)*

When asked about the severe punishment to be meted by the school on pupils caught drinking, a good number of participants opted for lighter punishments for example digging a pit than being suspended. Some preferred counseling to expulsion. Participants did not like the idea of involving the police in school problems. It was only those who had earlier indicated that they do not drink who opted for stiffer punishment for pupil alcohol abusers.

*Sir, these are just children. You don't have to be too harsh on them.*  
*If they are caught drinking just give them community work like sweeping the streets.*  
*(grade 10 boy)*

**Table12: Pupils' views on the control of alcohol abuse**

STATEMENTS	YES		NO		DIDN'T ANSWER	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pupils who are caught drinking alcohol should be strongly advised and forgiven by the school.	62	67	30	33	0	0
Drinking rules should be strongly enforced in my school	45	49	35	38	12	13
Schools are not doing enough to reduce the alcohol problem.	45	49	35	38	12	13

In the survey as shown in table 12 above, 67% of the participants indicated that pupils should not be severely punished if they are caught drinking alcohol although 49% wished school rules against alcohol abuse could be strengthened. Such a wish is an indication that the present school regulations system is not adequate to eradicate alcohol abuse in. The results also show 49% of participants indicating that schools were not doing enough to help reduce alcohol abuse.

Focus group participants in both schools confessed that it was difficult to stop the problem because it was so complex. They also brought up the contradiction involving those who are supposed to execute the school rules especially the prefects, cadets and some teachers, but take alcohol. According to some participants it is only the unfortunate pupils who are caught. They also pointed out that some children of the rich are usually protected when they are caught. At Chibombo High School pupils pointed out how a certain teacher was arrested together with pupils at a drinking place a week before this study.

*When cadets catch you they will punish you severely but when they go for 'chilayilayi' (road-run) some of them drink. So no one will stop. (grade 12 boy)*

The participants revealed that schools have been so much involved in matters of HIV/AIDS programs so that beer consumption is not seen as a big problem. They indicated that schools did not have anti drugs clubs. They only learn about the dangers of alcohol and drugs in Biology and Civic Education which is not enough, according to them.

*Sir, there are no such programs here and if a pupil preaching at the assembly mentions the dangers of alcohol, pupils will just boo at him or her. (grade 12 girl)*

Participants also revealed how the rule of age limit cannot work because some adolescents who are as young as sixteen (16) years may have grown so fast and may look like they were twenty-four (24) years. It was also suggested that the legal drinking age be reduced to sixteen (16) years instead of the current eighteen (18) years.

*Sir, people are now physically growing fast, how can you tell how old one is?  
We cannot be carrying identity cards to the bars, "nimawani" (embarrassing).  
So age limit is not the best. (grade 12 boy)*

#### **4.1.4 What should be done to Control Alcohol Abuse by Pupils?**

The participants in the discussion groups pointed out that the government should regulate access to liquor licenses and beer should only be sold in proper bars. The time of opening and closing bars should also be controlled. They suggested more recreational activities like pool games, video games and a range of sporting activities not just football to be introduced in schools. They also suggested that beer should be expensive.

*Not everyone who drinks planned for it. Some people just want to play pool but end up trying the stuff ( grade 11 boy)*

## **4.2 In-Depth Interview Results**

Two guidance and counseling teachers were interviewed in their respective schools. The two teachers acknowledged the fact that pupils abused alcohol especially in the third term of the school calendar. At Chibombo High School the popular place where pupils bought alcohol was the roadside junction while at Kafushi High it was at Mutonyo. The reasons given by the two teachers were not very different from what the pupils had given. The only differences were that teachers pointed out the fact that poor school performance in some cases caused pupils to abuse alcohol. Teachers emphasized how the home background influenced pupil's intentions to abuse alcohol. Teachers indicated that pupils who came from homes with problems were more vulnerable to alcohol abuse.

*One pupil when he was found drunk he threatened to commit suicide if people were forcing him to go home not that he was afraid of anybody at home but that he didn't just like home ( female guidance teacher Chibombo High School).*

On cases of addiction to alcohol both schools mentioned isolated cases and argued that such cases may not be tolerated in schools.

The teachers indicated that the local communities surrounding both schools were not helping the situation since some community members allow school children to use their huts or houses for alcohol drinking. The teachers underscored the fact that anti-drugs programmes were not strong in both schools. Pupils learn about the effects of drug abuse in the Civic Education lessons and Civic education is compulsory for everyone. The impact of this Civic education is not so

significant since the pupils were still involved in alcohol abuse. Teachers suggested that the public should be made aware through radio programmes about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Discussion:

In this section, research results from the focus group discussions and the survey have been combined in order to show how environmental, personal and interpersonal risk factors are associated with alcohol abuse by adolescents and also their experiences of the effects of alcohol abuse.

Results from this study are consistent with many earlier studies which reveal that peer influence, availability of alcohol, poor social coping skills and misconception about the enhancing effects of alcohol have a bearing on adolescents' involvement in alcohol abuse. (Wechsler et al 2003, Weitzman et al 2003 and Dent et al 2005). The results from this study show that there are pupils who use alcohol in the two schools where this research was carried out. This information is seen from the responses given by the pupils especially on questions asking the last time participants had an alcoholic drink. Although this information is showing the prevalence of alcohol use among pupils in the two schools, the prevalence rate cannot be said to be high or low since no similar research was done before for a comparison to be made. The results show that school going adolescents have knowledge about alcohol through the brand names they were giving and which type they felt was popularly used. There are also indications that some pupils who take alcohol do abuse it at times depending on the frequency and intensity of intake. The study also reveals that pupils are aware about the negative effects of consuming alcohol.

Pupils in this study acknowledged that alcohol consumption reduces concentration on learning which results into poor school attendance and overall academic performance. Since alcohol is addictive such behaviors as alcohol use may be difficult to control and may lead to alcoholism at a later stage. As a result many government schools do not tolerate the use of alcohol by pupils.

## **5.1 Causes of Alcohol Abuse According To Pupils' Responses**

### **5.1.1 Environmental Risk Factors of Alcohol Abuse**

The current study revealed that environmental factors such as easy access to alcohol were viewed as one of the causes of alcohol use by pupils. Like many other studies have shown (ZCPP 2006, Frischer et al., 2007) easy access to alcohol is one of the factors adolescents attributed to alcohol abuse. Participants in the focus discussion groups of the current study pointed out that any person of any age can obtain alcohol anytime from shops and bars. Beer like tujirijiri can be bought at any outlet and is seen to be cheap, easy to carry and keep.

Access to alcohol is so open due to the way the schools are geographically integrated in the surrounding communities which have high density of alcohol retail outlets and undesignated distribution points of opaque beer. This situation creates a favourable environment for adolescents' experimentation with alcohol especially those who have a positive view of alcohol consumption. This is supported by Wechsler et al (2003), who stated that where access to alcohol is easier the adolescents tend to drink even more. Participants in the focus group discussions revealed how easily underage alcohol users successfully obtained alcohol from any outlet. The retailers seem not to request for age identification. The implementation of the underage law seems to be problematic and weak. The underage give false age especially those who are 16 and 17 years old. Based on the responses given in this study it is evident that easy access to alcohol outlets is seen as one of the mediating factors for alcohol abuse by adolescents.

The findings suggest that those pupils who drink confess having started drinking at home. Participants in the focus group discussions as shown on page 37 of this document revealed that the influence of parental behavior is likely to have an effect on the way children feel about alcohol use. According to Donovan et al (2004), children's expectations are linked to what they observe from parents. Therefore a child from a home where parents use alcohol may find it easy to use alcohol also. If parents show tolerance towards alcohol abuse then their children will easily fall in the trap of alcohol abuse more so if parents involve their children in their alcohol consumption behavior such as sending a child to buy beer for them.

The relationship between parents and children is also important in influencing children towards the use of alcohol. In this study the interview held with teachers revealed a situation where one child who used to take alcohol did not want to go back home to his parents in times of problems. Such a situation could be an indication of a poor child –parent relationship because in times of problems children use their parents as peace havens. A child who is facing parental negligence may find comfort from alcohol using peers. Therefore a positive relationship between parents and their children can act as a protective factor by minimizing chances for adolescents to be influenced by peers.

The study results also show that some parents do not monitor what their children do in school. This can be deduced from the group discussions where pupils indicated that some pupils inflate school requirements and some parents easily accept this. The inflated school fees are later used as extra pocket money to buy alcohol among other things not related to school requirements. Apart from money purported for school requirements some parents give too much pocket money to their school going children who in the end misuse it on alcohol.

The current study revealed that the school environment itself has elements that make it easy for pupils to abuse alcohol. For instance one discussion group revealed that some teachers, cadets and school prefects are seen abusing alcohol during school days and nothing is done to correct this but when ordinary pupils are caught using alcohol they are instantly punished as a result this sends wrong signals to other pupils who in their reaction opt to be more sophisticated in their alcohol use behavior.

The responses given by pupils point to the fact that school rules concerning alcohol abuse are not effectively enforced and this answers the question on how pupils viewed the school rules. The participants in the discussion groups from one of the schools explained how in the third term of the school calendar they are subjected to idleness during the grade 12 examinations and this could lead to pupils finding alcohol drinking activities suitable to occupy themselves. This is a management problem where the school lacks proper programmes that can keep pupils busy in a meaningful way. Focus group participants felt that to play or watch others play football for three weeks was not appropriate for them.

### **5.1.2. Personal Risk Factors for Alcohol Abuse**

#### **(a) Sex and vulnerability to alcohol abuse**

One of the questions which were asked was whether boys would be more vulnerable to alcohol abuse than girls. It was generally agreed by many respondents in the discussions that boys are seen to be more involved in alcohol use than girls. This finding seems to be supported by many studies that have shown that a higher percentage of boys drink more than the girls (Engs and Hanson, 1993).

#### **(b) Coping Skills and Stress**

The current study also reveals that adolescents who have problems in stress coping skills are more likely to abuse alcohol. These pupils it was revealed that they do not believe that they can handle any of their problems and disappointments without using alcohol to gain the courage to do so. For instance in the focus group discussions some participants indicated that some pupils take alcohol when people wrongly accuse them of stealing. The reasons given for alcohol abuse concur with what other studies have shown on how stressful life events are associated with adolescent's alcohol abuse (Conger et al, 1991, Hoffmann & Su 1997). Similar studies done by Brennan et al (1986) support the current study that loneliness, frustration, depression and boredom were related to frequency of drinking especially among female pupils.

The number of those who indicated that they had stopped abusing alcohol gives support to those who claim they took alcohol just to taste how it feels to be drunk. This information shows that not all those who experiment with alcohol will develop a habit of regular use of alcohol. Some may take it just to experiment and thereafter abandon the idea. The implication of experimenting with alcohol can lead to continued use because there is no guarantee that if one intended just to taste he / she will immediately stop the habit after getting the experience.

Some responses given by the pupils on the effects of alcohol indicated perceived benefits of alcohol abuse. Participants revealed that those who drink expect to get certain benefits from being drunk. Notable benefits among others are to dance well and to read for a long time. The aspect of seeking for positive effects of alcohol is supported by Boys et al (1999), who state that the intentions of alcohol consumption arises from the individual's expectations about the functions of alcohol.

In the focus group discussion the view that if one started early he or she will be a stable drinker in future is a sign that the respondents are ignorant of the real effects of alcohol abuse as other studies have shown that those who start early before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol dependents at some point in their lives (Reinherz et al, 2000. Wadsworth et al, 2004).

### **5.1.3. Interpersonal Risk Factors for Alcohol Abuse**

Participants in the focus group discussions show how interpersonal risk factors are responsible for adolescents' alcohol consumption. According to the participants they engage in impulsive decision making and anything that is believed to enhance this excitement is easily chosen without taking into account the negative effects that may result thereafter. It is at this point that peer pressure becomes irresistible. The decision of the group in such moments is easily accepted by all the group members.

The survey results support this where 55% of the respondents felt they could drink just to have fun with friends. Arising from their quest for amusement, pupils need company to do this especially on special days such as Christmas day. Alcohol is seen as a good catalyst for their socialization. The survey results also show 42% number of respondents who feel that as they socialize alcohol may be used to gain popularity. This is in line with motives for drinking found by Brenhan et al (1986). Drinking as a social activity is done in groups and adolescents select those adolescents they feel have a similar mind with them (Bucholz 1990). Apart from selecting similar minded peers, adolescents tend to conform to group influences just to fit in. The evidence obtained from the current study suggests that peer pressure is one of the perpetuating factors of alcohol abuse. The evidence given is in support of what was postulated by Wechsler et al (2003), that peer pressure may be responsible for alcohol abuse by adolescents. However peer pressure

does not operate in a vacuum; there must be a conducive atmosphere for this to happen. For instance Coggans and McKeller (1994), state that an adolescent who associates with peers who have a positive perception about alcohol use is more likely to engage in alcohol use due to peer pressure than an adolescent who associates with non drinkers.

#### **5.1.4. Perceptions on the Negative Effects of Alcohol Abuse.**

The survey results indicate that respondents acknowledged having experienced problems associated with the use of alcohol. For instance 55% of 92 respondents indicated that alcohol can cause sickness. The sickness indicated could be as a result of binge drinking as revealed by the pupils themselves that there are some of them and even themselves who take five or more alcoholic drinks at one drinking occasion within a period of two weeks. This shows that although adolescents use alcohol they know some of the serious consequences of alcohol abuse. The tujirijiri beer such as Officer has 40% of alcohol content. According to the WHO Expert Committee Report (1980), 90% of the alcohol taken by someone is detoxified by the liver at the rate of 30cc. of pure alcohol per hour and 10% is eliminated with the water that carries it. The liver eliminates alcohol as a poisonous substance at the stated rate but if it is beyond that then the liver becomes inflamed and injured a situation which can cause cirrhosis. Cirrhosis according to the same report can be very fatal. The same report indicates that alcohol intoxication can lead to complete unconsciousness, so deep with weak pulse that a drinker can go into a coma.

In the focus group discussions pupils explained how those who abuse alcohol perform poorly in school work yet the teachers indicated that it was academic failure that puts some pupils at risk of alcohol use. In this study it cannot clearly be concluded whether it is alcohol abuse that cause poor school performance or vice versa although habits like absenteeism from school, skipping of lessons and expulsion from school arising from alcohol abuse can be mediating factors towards

poor school performance. The results of a study done by Cox et al (2007) indicate an inverse relationship between alcohol use and academic performance.

Many studies show that adolescents who perceive certain norms as permissive for drinking become heavy drinkers in the long run (Brennan et al 1986). Although in the initial stage of intoxication Brennan et al (1986), states that a drinker may appear stimulated yet in the long run one can lose proper judgement and common sense, can fail to walk and start vomiting. .Adolescents may rate sociability as important ignoring all the known negative effects. This shows that being an adolescent may be a risk factor by itself and if this factor finds an environment that tolerates the risky behavior then the adolescents will engage themselves in dangerous activities like alcohol abuse.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The results of the current study reveal that some pupils at the two boarding school use alcohol. Although not all those who use alcohol abuse it, incidental abuse through the frequency of use and amount used can be deduced from the information the research participants gave. Although the existence of those who abuse alcohol can be inferred their number cannot be so high within the school because according to the views expressed by the interviewed teachers pupils who are addicts are not tolerated by the schools. Although it is not easy to state whether pupils just use or abuse alcohol, alcohol consumption by school going pupils is socially unacceptable. Therefore by the Zambian social standards any pupil found or seen using alcohol is classified as an alcohol abuser. Activities like taking alcohol for experimentation are not tolerated by both society and schools.

The findings and messages from the pupils presented in this report show the pupils understanding of how the environmental factors such as easy access to alcohol, availability of alcohol, home environment, geographical position of the school and the school set up can be mediating factors for alcohol use and abuse by pupils. The findings also show how interpersonal factors like peer pressure, quest for socialization and being friends with those who use alcohol were viewed as risk factors for alcohol use by pupils. The findings further indicate how personal factors of having extra pocket money, negative emotional state, expectations about the function of alcohol and thrill seeking was perceived as causes of alcohol use by pupils. These stated three risk factors are interrelated. For instance a pupil who is in a boring school environment where school activities are not motivating, may find a friend who has money who may lead him or her to a place where alcohol is available and the two may start drinking from there. In this instance the personal factor of being bored is affected by the interpersonal factor of being a friend of someone who has money and a positive attitude to alcohol use and the environmental factor of easy access to alcohol will make it easy for the two pupils to buy beer.

Although some pupils indicated that they use alcohol, the negative effects of alcohol use according to their views seem to be more than the expected benefits. These negative effects may affect the normal functioning of an individual making him or her addicted obsessive and compulsive drinker. The excessive use of alcohol may lead to brain damage and also to criminal activities which may end up eroding one's self-esteem (Billingham et al, 1993, Bradley et al, 1992 & Cronin, 1997).

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study are that there was an element of underreporting of alcohol consumption by those who responded to the survey questionnaire. This information is arising

from the comparison made on how the participants in the discussion groups reported their experiences with beer against those who responded to the survey questionnaire. The responses entirely depended on the truthfulness and the insight into them since no variable was manipulated in this study.

The other limitation was that the proposed in-depth interviews with the referred cases of alcohol abusers was not easy to conduct because both schools indicated that such pupils are not tolerated in school and this affected the sample since it reduced the number of participants by 10 leaving 102 where further ten who didn't meet the age criteria of an adolescent were also removed. The results of the current study may not be generalized to all boarding schools in Zambia due to environmental differences. The other limitation is that the study was narrow as it didn't include all the school youths doing special programmes like Academic Production Unit and Day scholars at the same schools.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Since dangerous behaviors started in the adolescence stage of someone's life may raise the chances of such behaviors persisting even in the later stages of their human development and can put the individual and others at risk, there is a great need to try and find workable solutions to prevent and control the excessive use of alcohol by the adolescents. The recommendations go to the following stake-holders;

- vi. The schools because of the risk factors that pupils indicated within the school environment.
- vii. Drug Enforcement Commission since they have the responsibility of ensuring that youths are made aware of the negative effects of alcohol abuse.

- viii. The government because it decides on the policy of how alcohol should be produced, distributed and used.
- ix. The bar owners because they are the ones who are at the point of sale of alcohol.
- x. Future researchers to fill in the knowledge gaps revealed from this study.

## **Schools**

In the two boarding schools where the study was carried out there were no specific school based programme dealing with the prevention of alcohol abuse by pupils. This calls for the introduction of new school based prevention programmes. In addition to this the schools need to come up with a clear school policy on the use and abuse of alcohol and any other drug. Such a policy should be a result of an integrated effort by the parents through the Parent Teachers' Association, the school management board, teachers, pupils and the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC). Such a policy should among other things look at the necessary prevention strategies, referral procedures to the DEC and school regulations.

- Train prefects through peer educators and other pupil leaders to be aware of the problems of alcohol drinking and to serve as role models for other pupils.
- Promote a variety of pupil activities through co curricular and other outdoor activities.
- Coordinate with the communities around schools to prevent alcohol abuse by pupils.
- Just as schools have statements on HIV/AIDS they should also have statements on alcohol abuse in relation to the school mission and vision. The teachers in the guidance and counseling departments should be given refresher courses with a focus on counseling experimenters of alcohol and also on how to detect early signs of alcohol abuse.
- Pupils who are found abusing alcohol should depending on their drinking frequency of alcohol abuse should be counseled or referred to the drug enforcement Commission for rehabilitation. Forced transfers do not fully solve the problem as they just transfer

problems to other schools as shown in the survey results that some of those who drink were transferred from other schools.

- In both schools teachers, prefects, pupil religious group leaders and school cadets should be role models so that their behavior does not send mixed messages to the rest of the pupils.
- The school should equip pupils with life skills through drama, debate and cultural dances on how to resist peer pressure and how to cope with stressful situations.

### **Drug enforcement Commission**

- The Drug Enforcement Commission should come up with programs on peer education so that some pupils or youths who have completed grade 12 can be stationed at every school to help teach pupils how to resist peer pressure by developing social skills that can help on how to cope with stress.
- Train community leaders to be aware of the negative effects of alcohol abuse.

### **Government**

- The fact that alcohol can cost as low as k1000.00 is an indication that alcohol is cheap. This may call for the government to raise the excise duty on all alcoholic beverages so that it can be expensive for pupils to buy.
- Increase law enforcement through the councils on the legal drinking age and restrict the issuing of liquor licenses.
- Reduce density of retail outlets

### **Bar owners**

- Be stricter on observing the enforcement of the underage law.
- Have self regulation on the opening and closing time of bars

## **Future research**

- There is need to investigate the relationship between school performance and alcohol abuse.
- Investigations can be made to identify the protective factors against alcohol abuse by adolescents.
- A comparative study can be done to ascertain the actual alcohol abuse prevalence rate among the school going youths.
- An evaluation of alcohol abuse assessment tools can be done so that a standardized data collection tool for alcohol use among secondary school pupils in Zambia can be designed.

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## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am talking to people about alcohol abuse. The information you tell me will be used to write a report to plan alcohol abuse prevention strategies in the future.

I will ask you a number of questions about alcohol abuse and related issues. Some of the questions will be about personal behaviors such as alcohol taking.

I am interested in your experiences and opinions. There is no right or wrong answers. You are free to refuse to answer any questions.

You have been selected to participate because you are a member of this school and you may have an idea of what goes on in this school concerning pupil behavior related to alcohol abuse.

Your participation is anonymous and identifying information will not be recorded or reported in any way. Things that you will say may be reported as anonymous quotations.

You may withdraw your participation in the project at any time without consequences.

The interview will last about 45 minutes. If there will be some important issues to be clarified, I may ask to interview you again.

May I have your permission to undertake this interview? Yes / No

If you do not want to participate, why.....

Signature of the interviewee that a verbal consent was obtained:

.....

## **APPENDIX II: ALCOHOL ABUSE GROUP DISCUSSION**

### **GUIDELINE.**

Group : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start time: \_\_\_\_\_

School : \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_ End time. \_\_\_\_\_

### **INTRODUCTION**

A general discussion concerning the use of alcohol will be initiated by the researcher who will act as a moderator in the group discussion.

The questions will be in this order though not to be followed strictly.

1. What is alcohol use and abuse?
2. Which type of alcoholic drink is commonly used by pupils in this school?
3. How many of you have at one time tasted alcohol and what was the first experience like?
4. Why do you think pupils start using alcohol? How do they usually start?
5. What are the main reasons for pupils to abuse alcohol?
6. Are there other reasons?
7. What is the right age for starting alcohol use?
8. How often do you think pupils use alcohol in this school?
9. When do pupils like abusing alcohol in this school?
10. Which places do you think youths consume their alcohol from?
11. What do pupils of your age say about those who drink alcohol?
12. Under what circumstances in your opinion do you think it is normal for pupils to use alcohol?
13. How would you describe a pupil who abuses alcohol?

14. How do you find out whom among the pupils abuses alcohol?
15. With whom do pupils take their alcohol?
16. What are the observed effects of alcohol abuse?
17. Are there any benefits for using alcohol?
18. What common problems do pupils who abuse alcohol usually face?
19. Is it everyone who drinks who has a problem? Explain.
20. For those who drink how is their performance in class?
21. How would you imagine a world without alcohol?
22. Do you have any questions?

Thank you!

Other questions will rise from certain pertinent contributions from the group.

### **APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS.**

1. Do pupils abuse alcohol in this school? If yes when and where?
2. What factors would you attribute to be the causes of alcohol abuse by pupils in this school?
3. Which alcoholic beverage is commonly used by pupils in this school?
4. How serious is the problem of alcohol abuse among your pupils?
5. How do you deal with problems related to alcohol abuse presented to you by your pupils?
6. What type of guidelines from the Ministry of Education do you have on how to deal with alcohol problems?
7. Do you have pupils who are addicted to alcohol?
8. How do you deal with such problems?
9. What are the observable effects of alcohol abuse among your pupils?
10. Do you have an anti-drug club in this school?
11. Do you offer drug health education to your pupils?
12. If yes how is it taught?
13. Is it helping the situation?
14. What is the role of the community in this problem?
15. What would you recommend to be done to reduce the abuse of alcohol by school pupils?
16. Do you have any question?

*I thank you for your contributions.*

#### **APPENDIX IV :ALCOHOL ABUSE QUESTIONNAIRE**

This survey is about alcohol use and abuse. It has been designed for you so that you can tell us what you know about alcohol abuse that may affect the health of the user. The information you give will be used to develop better prevention and intervention programmes initiatives for young people like yourself.

DO NOT write your name on this survey. The answers you give will be kept private. No one will know what you write. Answer the questions based on what you really see, hear or do.

**Completing the survey is voluntary. Whether or not you answer the questions will have no effect on your life in this school if you are not comfortable answering a question, just leave it blank.** The questions that ask about your background will be used only to describe the types of students completing this survey. The information will not be used to find out your name. No names will ever be reported.

Make sure you read every question... When you are finished, follow the instructions from the person who is administering this questionnaire to you.

*Thank you.*

**1.0 This information will be used for statistical purposes only.**

**Please mark your answers in the appropriate boxes.**

**1.1 What is your age?**

- 13-15
- 16-18
- 19-21

**1.2 What is your Sex?**

- Male
- Female

**1.3 What grade are you?**

- 10
- 11
- 12

**2.0 Please tick YES or NO on the following statements according to your experience with alcohol –**

I have taken alcohol before	YES	NO
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**2.1 I have taken the following alcoholic beverages before:-**

Chibuku	YES	NO
Tujirijiri	YES	NO
Push kafee	YES	NO
Mosi	YES	NO
Kachasu	YES	NO
African brew	YES	NO
Others	YES	NO

**2.2 Please tick YES or NO on the following statements**

I only drink occasionally	YES	NO
I drink regularly	YES	NO
I have stopped taking alcohol	YES	NO

**2.3 Please tick YES or NO on the following statements.**

It is one day ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
It is one week ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
It is two weeks ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
It is one month ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
It is three months ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
It is one year ago since I took alcohol	YES	NO
I don't remember the last time I took alcohol	YES	NO

**2.4 Please tick YES or NO on the following statements.**

I consume only 1 drink of alcohol per drinking occasion	YES	NO
I consume only 2 drinks of alcohol per drinking occasion	YES	NO
I take only 5 drinks of alcohol per drinking occasion	YES	NO
I can take as much as friends offer me	YES	NO
I have seen friends who take as much as 5 or more drinks per drinking occasion	YES	NO

## 2.5 Do you support the following?

It is okay for pupils who are above 18 years to take alcohol	YES	NO
It is okay for anyone regardless of their age to take alcohol	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol in order to socialize	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol in order to forget your problems	YES	NO

You can take alcohol when you are disappointed by your boy or girlfriend	YES	NO
Some boys drink alcohol in order to have courage to propose love to girls	YES	NO
I drink alcohol just to have fun with my friends	YES	NO
I cannot refuse to take alcohol when it is given to me	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol for medical reasons	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol to improve your academic performance	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol to improve your performance in sports	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol in order to dance well during entertainment	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol when subjects are becoming difficult for you	YES	NO
You can take alcohol when you have lost your parents	YES	NO
You can drink alcohol in order to be popular among friends	YES	NO
You can take alcohol just to taste how it feels	YES	NO
You can take alcohol when you are bored	YES	NO
Alcohol does not change someone's thinking. Those who misbehave do so because that is how they are even when they are not drunk	YES	NO

If others drink alcohol then I can also drink	YES	NO
You can take alcohol in order to forget your problems	YES	NO
It is very easy to control your own drinking habits.	YES	NO
Where I come from, drinking among teenagers is acceptable	YES	NO
Learning under the influence of alcohol is okay	YES	NO
Pupils who drink have self control	YES	NO
Alcohol enables an individual to think clearly.	YES	NO

## 2.6 Have you ever faced the following problems due to alcohol abuse?

Suspension from school	YES	NO
Expulsion from another school	YES	NO
Fighting with a friend	YES	NO
Use of bad language by a drunk friend	YES	NO
Accidents	YES	NO
Sexual temptations	YES	NO
Poor school performance	YES	NO
Sickness	YES	NO
Absenteeism from school	YES	NO
Skipping lessons	YES	NO
Punishment	YES	NO

**2.7. Please respond accordingly to the following questions regarding access to alcohol.**

<b>FACTOR</b>	<b>Not at all difficult</b>	<b>Slightly difficult</b>	<b>Somewhat difficult</b>	<b>Extremely difficult</b>
How difficult is it for pupils to buy any type of beer, at the shops?1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How difficult is it for a pupil to get an older person to buy alcohol for them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How difficult is it for pupils to order beer at a bar.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How difficult is it for pupils to sneak alcohol into school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How difficult is it for pupils to drink alcohol with some of their teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>