

**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL ABUSE
AMONG THE YOUTHS IN INDUSTRIAL DIVISION, MBALE CITY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

August, 2025



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I **AKELLO BARBRA** hereby declare that this Research Dissertation is my original work and that it has not been submitted to any other University or higher institution of learning for the award of any academic or professional qualification.

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APPROVAL

I certify that the candidate carried out this research and wrote the research dissertation under my supervision. I further certify that this research has been presented for examination with my approval as the candidate's supervisor.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA - Alcohol Abuse

ID - Industrial Division

IDMC - Industrial Division, Mbale City

MC - Mbale City

SDF - Socio-Demographic Factors

YY - Young Youths

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among youths in Industrial Division, Mbale City, against a backdrop of rapid urbanization, economic hardship, and entrenched cultural norms. Despite national regulations aimed at limiting underage drinking, local reports indicated that alcohol was readily available and widely consumed by young people within peer groups and at community events. By examining the interplay of peer pressure, cultural acceptance, income dynamics, and employment status, the research aimed to identify the key drivers of youth alcohol use in order to inform context sensitive intervention strategies.

A cross-sectional survey design was employed, gathering data from 102 randomly selected youths through a structured questionnaire that captured their perceptions of peer drinking behaviors, cultural attitudes toward alcohol, personal income and spending patterns, and employment status. These quantitative findings were enriched by qualitative interviews with the Community Development Officer and local LC1 Chairpersons, whose insights provided depth to the statistical trends. Descriptive statistics summarized the prevalence and patterns of use, while thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed community narratives around hospitality rituals, the role of elders, financial coping mechanisms, and workplace cultures that tolerated or even encouraged drinking.

The findings demonstrated that alcohol abuse among youths was firmly rooted in social and economic contexts: peer influence and group norms drove initiation and frequency of use; cultural ceremonies and silence from community leaders legitimized consumption; availability of disposable income modulated drinking levels, with spikes following earnings and reductions during financial strain; and both unemployment and permissive workplace environments contributed to elevated use. The study concluded that multi-pronged interventions encompassing peer-led education, culturally informed dialogues, financial literacy and economic empowerment programs, and workplace policy reforms were essential to address the complex web of factors sustaining youth alcohol abuse. Future research was recommended to assess the long-term impacts of these integrated approaches and to track the social, educational, and health outcomes of affected youths over time.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement the purpose and objectives of the study, research questions and the significance of the study. The conceptual framework for the study is also presented.

1.2 Background to the study

Globally, alcohol consumption is a significant risk factor for diseases and disabilities among young people. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that alcohol use is linked to several health conditions, including liver disease, injuries, and mental health disorders (WHO, 2021). Socio-demographic factors such as socio-economic status, family structure, and peer influence play critical roles in determining alcohol use patterns (Babor et al., 2019). Studies show that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those raised in single-parent households are more likely to start drinking at an early age and are more susceptible to alcohol abuse (Gupta et al., 2018). Despite extensive research on alcohol consumption globally, a gap exists in understanding how these factors intersect in different cultural contexts and the role of global economic shifts in influencing drinking behavior (Glynn et al., 2020).

In developing countries, alcohol abuse among youth is exacerbated by rapid urbanization, poverty, and limited access to education. The International Centre for Alcohol Policies (ICAP) highlights that in many developing nations, alcohol is often more accessible and less regulated, leading to higher consumption rates (ICAP, 2020). These regions also face high levels of youth unemployment, which may contribute to alcohol consumption as a coping mechanism (Parker et al., 2019). However, there is a lack of longitudinal research that explores the long-term effects of socio-demographic factors on youth alcohol consumption in these countries. Most studies focus on short-term interventions without considering the structural challenges that young people face in these settings (Schafer et al., 2019).

In Africa, alcohol consumption patterns among young people are shaped by a combination of traditional practices and the increasing availability of alcohol. Research shows that alcohol consumption is becoming more normalized among the youth in many African countries, with an

increasing number of youths starting to drink at a younger age (Chikozho, 2018). A study in Uganda found that 25.2% of children aged 6 to 13 had consumed alcohol in the past year (Nsubuga et al., 2020), demonstrating early initiation into drinking. This early exposure increases the risk of developing alcohol use disorders later in life. However, there is a notable gap in research and how early initiation influences alcohol abuse during adulthood (Akinyemi et al., 2021).

In East Africa, alcohol abuse among youths is heavily influenced by socio-economic status, family structure, and peer dynamics. Studies from Kenya and Tanzania show those youths from lower socio-economic backgrounds and single-parent households are more likely to engage in alcohol consumption (Hossain et al., 2021). In addition, peer pressure and social circles also play a major role in youth drinking habits. However, there is insufficient research examining the long-term impacts of urbanization and modernization on alcohol abuse in East African youths, especially considering how the changing socio-economic landscape influences alcohol consumption patterns (Mekonnen et al., 2022).

Uganda is among the countries with high alcohol consumption rates, particularly among its youth population. The WHO's Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health (2018) found that Uganda has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption in Africa. A study in Mbale District, Uganda, revealed that 25.2% of primary school children aged 6 to 13 had consumed alcohol, with socio-demographic factors like single-parent households and low caregiver education playing a role in early alcohol initiation (Nsubuga et al., 2020). However, limited research exists on the 18 to 24 age group in Uganda, particularly in urban settings, where consumption patterns might differ due to factors such as peer influence, urbanization, and accessibility (Kalyesubula et al., 2019).

The Industrial Division of Mbale City, located in eastern Uganda, presents unique socio-economic and cultural contexts that may influence alcohol consumption among young people. Factors such as unemployment, peer influence, and economic hardship contribute to a higher risk of alcohol abuse in this region (Amin et al., 2020). In this area, alcohol is often used as a coping mechanism for stress and economic difficulties. Despite this, specific studies focused on alcohol use among youths in Mbale's Industrial Division remain scarce, creating a critical gap in

understanding the socio-demographic factors that influence alcohol abuse in this region (Kabagambe et al., 2021).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Alcohol abuse is a significant public health issue in Uganda, with studies indicating alarming rates of consumption among young people, particularly in urban areas like Mbale City. According to the Uganda National Drug Authority (NDA), alcohol abuse is the most prevalent form of substance abuse in the country. A 2023 survey revealed that 25% of adolescents engage in alcohol consumption, with a significant number of these youths coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. In urban centers such as Mbale, the problem is even more pronounced due to easy access to alcohol, peer pressure, and cultural practices that encourage drinking. The high levels of alcohol consumption contribute to a range of social and health problems, including mental health issues, family breakdowns, and increased crime rates (Uganda National Drug Authority, 2023).

In Mbale City, particularly within the Industrial Division, alcohol abuse has reached disturbing levels. A 2023 report by the Ministry of Health highlighted that nearly 40% of youths in Mbale City have consumed alcohol, with a significant portion of this group engaging in binge drinking. This statistic reflects the broader trend of alcohol abuse in Uganda's urban centers, where youths, particularly those with lower socio-economic status, are more likely to be exposed to and influenced by alcohol consumption. A 2024 study by Caroline Naula on drug abuse in the Industrial Division revealed that peer pressure and parental alcohol use were among the leading factors driving young people toward alcohol abuse. The prevalence of drinking among youths in the Industrial Division is exacerbated by easy access to cheap alcohol, including illicit locally brewed spirits, which are often sold without regulation.

Despite the growing awareness of alcohol abuse in Mbale and Uganda as a whole, efforts to curb this problem have largely been insufficient. While the Ugandan government has made attempts to regulate alcohol consumption, such as the Alcohol Control Bill passed in 2021, enforcement remains weak. A 2022 report by the Uganda Radio Network identified the resurgence of illicit waragi (local spirits) distilleries in Mbale City, despite a ban on their production. This highlights

the challenges in curbing alcohol abuse, particularly in informal sectors where enforcement of regulations is limited. Furthermore, alcohol advertisements, often targeting young people, continue to proliferate in the media and on the streets of Mbale City. These ads glamorize alcohol use, making it difficult for efforts to reduce consumption to take hold.

Given the persistent nature of alcohol abuse among youths in Mbale, there is a critical need for more research into the socio-demographic factors that drive this issue. Understanding the specific role of factors such as socio-economic status, peer influence, family structure, and cultural norms will be essential in developing effective interventions. A study by the Uganda Ministry of Health (2023) has emphasized the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges of alcohol abuse in urban centers, where the problem is often compounded by high levels of poverty and lack of mental health support. Further research in Mbale City is particularly important due to the city's demographic composition and the higher-than-average alcohol consumption rates observed among youths. Addressing these issues through focused research and evidence-based policies was crucial in mitigating the long-term impacts of alcohol abuse on the youth population of Mbale City and Uganda as a whole.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The major purpose of the study was to find out the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among the youths in industrial division, Mbale city

1.4 Specific objectives

- i) To establish the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youths in Industrial division, Mbale city
- ii) To find out the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youths in industrial division, Mbale city
- iii) To assess the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youths in Industrial division, Mbale city
- iv) To examine the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youths in industrial division, Mbale city

1.5 Research questions

The research questions of the study were;

- i) How does peer influence contribute to alcohol abuse among youths in the industrial division of Mbale city?
- ii) What is the role of cultural norms in shaping alcohol abuse behaviors among youths in the industrial division of Mbale city?
- iii) How do income levels influence alcohol abuse among youths in the industrial division of Mbale city?
- iv) What is the relationship between employment status and alcohol abuse among youths in the industrial division of Mbale city?

1.6 The scope of study.

1.6.1 The content scope

The study was carried on the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among the young youths (18-24) years in industrial division, Mbale city and it focused on three major objectives and that is to say; the influence of socio-economic status (income level and employment) on alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City, the role of peer influence and family structure in shaping alcohol consumption behaviors among youths in Mbale City and the impact of cultural norms, accessibility of alcohol, and mental health factors on the extent of alcohol abuse among youths aged 18–24 in the Industrial Division of Mbale City

1.6.2 Geographical scope.

The research was carried out in Industrial Division of Mbale City; Mbale City is located in the eastern part of Uganda. It lies approximately 250 kilometers (155 miles) northeast of the capital city, Kampala. Mbale is situated near the foothills of Mount Elgon, which forms the border between Uganda and Kenya. The city serves as the administrative and commercial hub for the Mbale District, which is part of the larger Eastern Region of Uganda. It is well-connected by

road to other major towns in the region, including Jinja and Soroti. The location of Mbale City makes it a key urban center in Eastern Uganda, with a rapidly growing population and expanding infrastructure.

1.6.3 Time scope.

The study covered a period two years, that is to say; from 2024/2025. The two years was an ample time for the researcher to explore the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among the youths in industrial division, Mbale city.

1.7 Significance of the study.

The significance of this study lied in its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the socio-demographic factors contributing to alcohol abuse among youths in Mbale City. Alcohol abuse is a pressing public health issue that significantly affects the physical, mental, and social well-being of young people. By focusing on the specific socio-demographic factors such as socio-economic status, peer influence, family structure, and cultural norms, this study offered critical insights into how these factors interplay to shape alcohol consumption behaviors in this population. This understanding was essential for addressing the root causes of alcohol abuse, which are often complex and multifaceted.

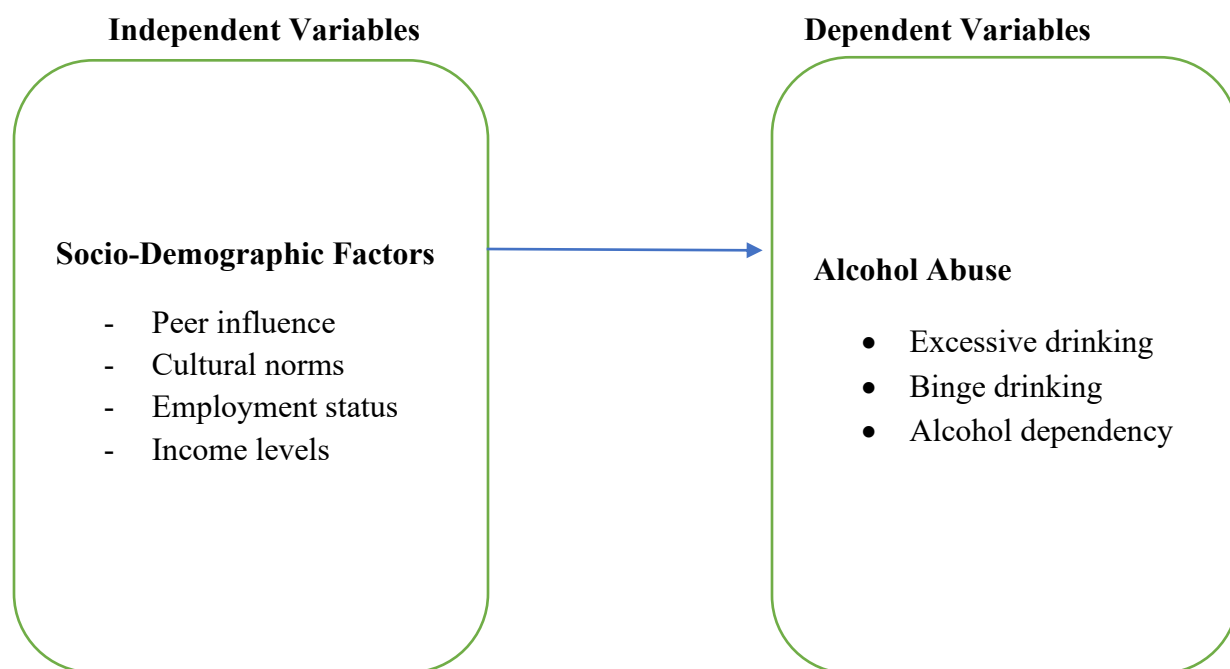
Moreover, the findings of this study may practical implications for the development of targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing alcohol abuse among young people. Currently, many interventions are generalized and do not take into account the unique socio-cultural and economic context of specific urban areas like Mbale City. By identifying and examining the local drivers of alcohol abuse, this study may provide a foundation for designing more effective, culturally appropriate, and context-specific interventions. These interventions could include community-based programs, education campaigns, and policies to reduce alcohol availability and accessibility, particularly in urban environments where the problem is most prevalent.

This research may also contribute to the broader academic literature on alcohol consumption by filling the existing gaps in studies focused on alcohol abuse in urban settings, particularly in East Africa. While much of the existing literature in Uganda focuses on early alcohol initiation or broader national trends, there is limited research on the specific factors influencing alcohol abuse

among young adults in rapidly urbanizing cities. By focusing on Mbale City, this study will add new knowledge about alcohol consumption patterns in a growing urban center and provide insights that are applicable to other cities in Uganda and East Africa facing similar challenges related to urbanization, socio-economic stressors, and alcohol accessibility.

Lastly, the study's findings may contribute to improving public health outcomes in Mbale City and other similar urban areas. Alcohol abuse among youths can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including addiction, poor academic performance, unsafe sexual behaviors, and even premature death. By addressing the factors that contribute to alcohol abuse, this study may help create healthier, more resilient communities. It may provide local policymakers, health organizations, and community leaders with the evidence they need to implement strategies that reduce alcohol-related harm and promote healthier lifestyles for young people in urban settings.

1.8 Figure 2: The conceptual framework of the study



1.8.1 Explanations of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationship between socio-demographic factors (independent variables) and alcohol abuse (dependent variable), mediated by social and psychological influences. Socio-demographic factors such as economic status, peer influence, family structure, and education level are hypothesized to directly or indirectly contribute to alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City. Mediating factors, including cultural norms, accessibility of alcohol, and mental health, play a critical role in shaping the extent to which these socio-demographic factors influence alcohol consumption. For instance, unemployment and low income may lead to stress, while peer pressure and family history of alcohol use can normalize drinking behaviors. Cultural acceptance of alcohol and the availability of cheap, unregulated beverages further exacerbate the problem, while mental health issues such as depression and anxiety may increase reliance on alcohol as a coping mechanism. This framework identifies and integrates these complex interactions to address the existing gaps in understanding the localized drivers of alcohol abuse, providing a basis for developing targeted and evidence-based interventions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter consist of the literature review which summaries the review the of research objective that include; the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth, the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth, the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth and the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

2.1 The influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth

Peer influence plays a crucial role in shaping behaviors among young people, particularly in social settings where alcohol consumption is prevalent. According to recent studies, peer pressure can significantly impact youth decisions regarding alcohol use, as individuals often seek acceptance and validation from their social circles (Smith & Brown, 2023). This influence may be either direct, where friends explicitly encourage drinking, or indirect, where individuals adopt drinking habits to fit in. However, existing literature has not adequately explored how peer influence varies across different socio-economic backgrounds, particularly in urban settings such as Industrial Division, Mbale City.

Studies indicate that peer influence affects youth alcohol consumption through mechanisms such as social learning, modeling, and group reinforcement (Jones et al., 2022). Social learning theory suggests that young people adopt behaviors they observe in their close friends, making them more likely to engage in alcohol consumption if their peers do so. Additionally, group reinforcement can create a culture where drinking becomes a social norm among youth. Despite these insights, existing research has not sufficiently examined the specific role of peer networks, such as schoolmates, colleagues, or neighborhood friends, in influencing drinking behaviors among Ugandan youth.

Peer pressure is a significant factor that leads many young people to engage in excessive alcohol consumption. Research by Johnson and Miller (2021) found that young people who experience higher peer pressure are more likely to engage in binge drinking, particularly in environments

where alcohol is easily accessible. This suggests that youth in urban areas with many drinking spots may be more vulnerable to alcohol abuse. However, there is limited research on the extent to which peer pressure affects different age groups within the youth demographic, who may be transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.

Some studies suggest that peer influence affects young men and women differently when it comes to alcohol consumption. Research by Wilson et al. (2022) indicates that male youth are more susceptible to direct peer pressure, such as being challenged to drink, while female youth may experience indirect pressure, such as seeing friends drink and feeling the need to conform. However, these studies have primarily focused on Western contexts, and there is a gap in understanding how gender differences in peer influence manifest in African urban settings like Mbale City.

Cultural norms and social settings also play a role in reinforcing peer influence on alcohol consumption among youth. Studies have shown that in some communities, drinking alcohol is seen as a symbol of maturity and social status (Adams & Nsubuga, 2023). This cultural expectation can amplify peer influence, especially in urban areas where youth interact in different social groups. However, research has not sufficiently explored how cultural variations within Uganda impact peer-related drinking behaviors, leaving a gap in understanding the intersection of culture, peer influence, and alcohol abuse.

In conclusion, while existing literature highlights the strong link between peer influence and alcohol consumption among youth, there are still critical gaps that need further exploration. Specifically, there is limited research on how peer influence interacts with socio-economic factors, gender differences, and cultural contexts in shaping alcohol abuse among young people in Uganda. Additionally, most studies focus on Western countries, creating a need for localized research in African urban settings like Industrial Division, Mbale City. Addressing these gaps will provide more context-specific insights and inform policies aimed at reducing youth alcohol abuse in Uganda.

2.2 The Influence of Cultural Norms on Alcohol Abuse among Youth

Cultural norms significantly influence alcohol consumption behaviors among youth, particularly in regions like Uganda where alcohol is deeply embedded in social practices (Ssebunnya et al., 2020). Understanding how these norms contribute to alcohol abuse is essential for developing effective prevention strategies. Despite existing research, there remains a gap in comprehensively understanding the specific cultural factors that drive alcohol misuse among Ugandan youth (Swahn et al., 2023).

In many Ugandan communities, alcohol consumption is a common and socially accepted practice, often integrated into cultural, religious, and social events (Ssebunnya et al., 2020). A study conducted in Kamuli District revealed that alcohol use is widespread and generally acceptable across various demographics, with societal disapproval arising mainly when individuals become disruptive due to excessive drinking (Swahn et al., 2023). This widespread acceptance may lead to underestimating the health risks associated with alcohol consumption and discourage individuals from seeking help for alcohol-related issues. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the direct correlation between cultural acceptance and the prevalence of alcohol abuse among Ugandan youth, highlighting a significant gap in the literature (Ssebunnya et al., 2020).

Social norms, defined as individuals' perceptions of others' attitudes and behaviors, play a pivotal role in shaping youth drinking habits. A study conducted among vulnerable youth in Kampala's slums found that positive perceptions of alcohol advertisements and favorable social norms regarding alcohol use were associated with intentions to drink (Swahn et al., 2023). Specifically, the study revealed that 32% of participants intended to consume alcohol, with current drinking status and perceived attractiveness of alcohol ads being significant predictors. While this study highlights the impact of social norms, further research is needed to explore how these norms are formed and perpetuated within different cultural contexts across Uganda (Swahn et al., 2023).

The attitudes and behaviors of parents and other adults significantly influence youth alcohol consumption. In some Ugandan communities, adults may exhibit permissive attitudes toward alcohol use, either by directly offering alcohol to minors or by modeling drinking behaviors

(Ssebunnya et al., 2020). Such actions can inadvertently endorse alcohol consumption among youth. Research indicates that parental offering of alcohol is a strong predictor of initiation into drinking during early childhood. However, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on the extent to which adult behaviors and attitudes in Uganda contribute to youth alcohol abuse, representing a critical gap in the literature (Swahn et al., 2023).

Cultural norms regarding gender roles can influence alcohol consumption patterns among youth. In some Ugandan cultures, drinking may be more socially acceptable for males than females, potentially leading to higher rates of alcohol use among young men (Ssebunnya et al., 2020). Conversely, young women who consume alcohol might face social stigma, which could affect reporting accuracy and access to support services. A study on heavy drinking among Ugandan youth found significant gender differences in drinking behaviors, suggesting that cultural expectations play a role. Nonetheless, more research is needed to understand how gender-specific cultural norms impact alcohol abuse among both male and female youth in Uganda (Swahn et al., 2023).

Alcohol marketing strategies often exploit cultural symbols and social norms to appeal to young audiences. In Uganda, aggressive alcohol advertising that aligns with cultural values and aspirations can reinforce positive perceptions of drinking (Ssebunnya et al., 2020). Studies have shown that exposure to alcohol marketing is associated with increased alcohol consumption among youth. However, there is a lack of research examining how culturally tailored marketing influences youth drinking behaviors in Uganda, highlighting a need for studies that consider the intersection of marketing practices and cultural norms (Swahn et al., 2023).

In conclusion, while existing literature underscores the influence of cultural norms on youth alcohol consumption in Uganda, significant gaps remain. There is a need for comprehensive studies that examine the nuanced ways cultural acceptance, social norms, parental attitudes, gender roles, and targeted marketing collectively contribute to alcohol abuse among Ugandan youth (Ssebunnya et al., 2020). Addressing these gaps is essential for developing culturally sensitive interventions aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm in this demographic (Swahn et al., 2023).

2.3 The Influence of Income Levels on Alcohol Abuse among Youth

Income levels have been shown to play a crucial role in shaping health behaviors, including alcohol use, among youth. In various settings, the relationship between income and alcohol abuse is complex, with both low-income and high-income youth facing unique risk factors. The availability of financial resources may influence youth access to alcohol and their ability to engage in risky drinking behaviors. While some studies suggest that low-income youth are at higher risk of alcohol abuse due to financial stressors, others highlight how wealthier youth may have increased access and fewer consequences for substance use. This complex relationship calls for more nuanced research, especially in Uganda, where the socio-economic factors influencing alcohol consumption among youth are still not fully understood (Moses et al., 2022).

Research has consistently shown that lower income is a strong predictor of alcohol abuse among youth, particularly in developing countries. Youth from low-income families often face multiple stressors, such as lack of educational opportunities, high unemployment, and social instability, which can contribute to substance use as a coping mechanism. A study by Nabaasa et al. (2020) found that youth from poor households in Uganda were more likely to engage in alcohol consumption due to financial instability and limited access to recreational activities. This finding aligns with global studies suggesting that financial hardship, poverty, and lack of access to social support can increase alcohol consumption as a form of escapism or coping (Bello et al., 2021). Despite these findings, more region-specific studies are necessary to fully understand how income-related stressors influence youth drinking behaviors in Ugandan communities.

On the other hand, wealthier youth may be exposed to different risk factors for alcohol abuse. Studies show that higher income levels may lead to greater availability of alcohol, as well as increased opportunities to engage in risky drinking behaviors, such as binge drinking, especially in urban environments. A study conducted in Kampala among university students found that higher-income students were more likely to engage in frequent alcohol consumption due to access to disposable income and social environments where alcohol use was normalized (Nyakairu&Mugisha, 2021). Wealthier families may also expose their children to alcohol at an earlier age, as alcohol is often associated with social status and adult behaviors, thus normalizing drinking as part of social gatherings and celebrations (Ssemanda&Akankwasa, 2022). These

findings suggest that income does not only act as a protective factor but also contributes to alcohol abuse, particularly among the urban elite.

The level of disposable income available to youth directly impacts their ability to purchase alcohol, with increased disposable income generally correlating with increased alcohol consumption. Research in Uganda shows that youth in more affluent households often have fewer restrictions on alcohol purchases, which enables them to access alcohol more freely (Bello et al., 2021). Furthermore, in communities with higher disposable incomes, youth are more likely to participate in social events where alcohol is a dominant part of the experience. This contrasts with lower-income settings, where social norms around alcohol use may be less tolerant, and economic barriers may restrict access to alcohol (Ssemanda&Akankwasa, 2022). Understanding how income influences access to alcohol is critical in designing interventions that target both low-income and higher-income youth groups in Uganda.

Peer influence plays a significant role in alcohol abuse among youth, and this influence can be further amplified by income levels. Research by Tumwebaze et al. (2023) indicates that youth from both low and high-income backgrounds may be pressured into drinking by peers who use alcohol regularly, especially in social environments where alcohol consumption is normalized. However, in wealthier settings, the peer pressure to drink may be tied to social status and acceptance, with alcohol consumption acting as a marker of social belonging and prestige (Ssemanda & Akankwasa, 2022). For low-income youth, the peer pressure may stem from a desire to escape their difficult circumstances, using alcohol as a temporary escape or as a means to fit into social circles (Moses et al., 2022).

While existing literature provides valuable insights into the role of income in alcohol abuse among youth, several gaps remain. Most studies have focused on either low-income or high-income groups separately, with limited research addressing how different income levels interact with other socio-cultural factors to influence alcohol use. In Uganda, there is a need for more focused research that investigates how socio-economic status, peer influence, and social norms converge to affect alcohol consumption across different income groups. Additionally, exploring the role of family dynamics and community support systems in mitigating the impact of income

on alcohol abuse among youth is crucial for developing more effective prevention strategies (Bello et al., 2021).

2.4 The influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth

Employment status is a significant socio-economic factor that influences health behaviors, including alcohol abuse, among youth. For young people, employment provides financial independence, access to resources, and a sense of purpose, which can reduce the likelihood of engaging in harmful behaviors. However, for some youth, unemployment or underemployment can lead to stress, frustration, and social exclusion, which may increase the risk of alcohol misuse. Understanding how employment status affects alcohol consumption among youth is important, especially in Uganda, where a high proportion of youth are unemployed or underemployed (Ssemanda & Akankwasa, 2022). This relationship between employment status and alcohol abuse remains understudied, and further research is needed to identify the mechanisms through which employment impacts alcohol use.

Unemployment is widely recognized as a significant risk factor for alcohol abuse among youth. Studies have shown that youth who are unemployed are more likely to consume alcohol, often as a coping mechanism for stress, frustration, and feelings of hopelessness (Bello et al., 2021). In Uganda, youth unemployment is a pressing issue, with many young people struggling to find stable and meaningful work (Ssemanda & Akankwasa, 2022). Research has indicated that unemployed youth may turn to alcohol as a way of dealing with the psychological burden of joblessness, social stigma, and financial instability. A study by Tumwebaze et al. (2023) revealed that youth who were not engaged in full-time employment had higher rates of alcohol consumption compared to those who were employed, highlighting the role of unemployment in fostering alcohol misuse.

On the other hand, employment, particularly stable and meaningful work, has been found to act as a protective factor against alcohol abuse among youth. Youth who are employed tend to have a greater sense of purpose, financial independence, and social integration, which can reduce the likelihood of engaging in alcohol misuse (Moses et al., 2022). Employment provides a structured environment, which may help in building resilience and better coping mechanisms. A study by

Nyakairu and Mugisha (2021) found that youth who were employed were less likely to engage in heavy drinking, as work responsibilities and financial independence gave them a sense of direction and motivation to avoid harmful behaviors. However, this protective factor might vary depending on the type of employment and the work environment, suggesting a need for more nuanced studies in the Ugandan context.

In Uganda, a significant proportion of youth are involved in informal sector jobs, which may have different impacts on alcohol consumption compared to formal employment. Informal employment, often characterized by low wages, instability, and lack of social protections, can be both a cause and a consequence of alcohol misuse. Informally employed youth may face job insecurity and lack of career advancement, leading to stress and alcohol consumption as a way to cope with these challenges (Bello et al., 2021). Additionally, informal work environments, such as bars, street vending, and casual labor, may expose youth to higher levels of alcohol use due to the social context of these occupations. Research in urban areas of Uganda shows that informal workers, particularly those involved in the hospitality industry, tend to consume more alcohol than their formally employed counterparts (Nyakairu & Mugisha, 2021). However, there is a gap in research regarding the specific impact of informal employment on alcohol abuse among youth in Uganda.

Youth employment programs, such as internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training, have been identified as potential interventions to reduce alcohol abuse by providing youth with skills, opportunities, and a sense of belonging. Employment programs that target marginalized youth can help build self-esteem and reduce the likelihood of turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism. A study by Ssemanda and Akankwasa (2022) indicated that participation in youth employment programs was associated with lower rates of alcohol consumption. These programs not only provide employment opportunities but also foster social networks and community engagement, which can mitigate feelings of isolation that often lead to substance abuse. Despite this, there is limited research on the effectiveness of such programs in reducing alcohol abuse among youth in Uganda, pointing to a need for more focused research in this area.

In conclusion, although there is a growing body of literature on the relationship between employment status and alcohol abuse, much of the research has focused on broader socio-

economic factors without focusing specifically on youth populations in Uganda. The literature suggests that unemployment is a significant risk factor for alcohol abuse among youth, while stable employment can act as a protective factor. However, research is needed to better understand how different types of employment, including informal and formal work, affect alcohol use among youth. Furthermore, there is a gap in research regarding the impact of youth employment programs and how they might help reduce alcohol abuse. Filling these gaps will provide valuable insights for policy makers and program developers working to address alcohol abuse among youth in Uganda (Ssemanda & Akankwasa, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology which included the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of the study and the ethical consideration.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the blueprint that guides how a study was conducted, specifying the methods for data collection, measurement, and analysis to address the research questions effectively (Creswell, 2014). For this study, a descriptive research design was used, which is ideal for exploring the socio-demographic factors influencing alcohol abuse among youth in Mbale City. This design helped to observe, describe, and document the characteristics of the youth population, such as their income levels, employment status, and cultural norms, without manipulating any variables. By collecting quantitative data (through surveys) and qualitative data (through interviews), the design provided a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and relationships between these factors and alcohol consumption. This approach allowed for a clear depiction of the current situation, supporting the research objectives to assess the influences on alcohol abuse in a natural context (Bryman, 2016).

3.2 Study Population

The study population refers to the group of individuals from which data was collected and to whom the study findings was generalized (Creswell, 2014). For this research, the study population consisted of youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City, Uganda. This age group was crucial as it marked the transition to adulthood, where factors like employment, socio-economic status, and peer influence may significantly impact alcohol consumption behaviors (Ssemanda & Akankwasa, 2022). The sample included both employed and unemployed youth, encompassing individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds to ensure diversity and representativeness. By focusing on this age group, the study aims to explore how income,

employment status, cultural norms, and peer influence contribute to alcohol abuse among youth in Mbale City.

3.3 Sample size selection

The sample size refers to the number of participants chosen for a study, and it plays a critical role in ensuring the results are statistically valid and representative of the population being studied (Creswell, 2014). Morgan and Krejcie's (1970) sample size table was used to determine the sample size. The research had a sample size 108 respondents including 102 youths 01 CDO and 05 LC 1 Chairpersons were considered adequate for this descriptive study, providing sufficient data for reliable analysis while fitting within the study's time and resource constraints.

Table 2: Showing a sample size of the population

Category of Respondents	Total Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Youths	144	102	Simple Random Sampling
Community development Officer (CDO)	1	1	Purposive Sampling
LC 1	05	05	Purposive Sampling
Total	150	108	

This study employed a combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to ensure that the sample is representative, relevant, and capable of addressing the research objectives effectively.

3.3.1 Simple Random Sampling

In this study, simple random sampling was used to select 102 youths from the total population of 144 in the Industrial Division. The key advantage of simple random sampling is that it gives every individual in the youth population an equal chance of being selected, which helps reduce bias and ensures that the sample is representative of the entire youth group. A sampling frame was created by listing all youths, and then a random selection method (such as a random number generator or lottery system) was employed to choose the sample. This ensures fairness and randomness in the selection process, increasing the generalizability of the findings to the broader youth population. To further ensure reliability, efforts were made to handle non-responses by selecting additional youths if needed, thereby maintaining the target sample size of 102.

3.3.2 Purposive Sampling:

For the selection of the Community Development Officer (CDO) and LC 1 Chairpersons, purposive sampling was applied. Unlike random sampling, purposive sampling involves selecting individuals based on specific characteristics or expertise that are directly relevant to the research objectives. The CDO was chosen for their role in community development and firsthand knowledge of alcohol abuse interventions, while the LC 1 Chairpersons were selected for their familiarity with the socio-demographic factors affecting youth in their respective villages. This method ensures that the selected individuals possess valuable insights and knowledge, which are critical for addressing the research questions. By focusing on key informants with specific expertise, the study can gather in-depth, targeted information that could not be available from a broader, random sample.

3.4 Data Collection methods

Data collection methods refer to the strategies employed to gather information from respondents in a research study (Creswell, 2014). This study used a combination of survey questionnaires, interview guides. Each method was chosen based on the nature of the data required and the target respondent group.

3.4.1 Questionnaires:

For the youth participants, questionnaires were used as the primary data collection method. This method is appropriate because it allows for the efficient collection of data from a large number of respondents within a short period. The questionnaires were designed with both closed-ended and open-ended questions, which allowed youths to express their views on alcohol abuse, its causes, and its effects, while also providing quantifiable data for statistical analysis. The questionnaires were distributed to all the 102 youths selected through simple random sampling. To ensure clarity and relevance, the questions were carefully crafted to match the study's objectives, focusing on socio-demographic factors such as peer influence, cultural norms, and socio-economic conditions. The use of questionnaires helped maintain consistency across all responses and facilitate easy data analysis, while also providing anonymity and privacy to the respondents, which is crucial when dealing with sensitive topics like alcohol abuse.

3.4.2 Interviews guides

For the Community Development Officer (CDO) and LC 1 Chairpersons, interview guides were used to collect qualitative data. The interview guides were semi-structured, containing a set of predefined questions to ensure that all key topics related to alcohol abuse and youth socio-demographics are covered, while allowing flexibility for the interviewees to provide detailed, insightful responses. This approach was particularly useful for gathering in-depth perspectives from these key informants, who are expected to have comprehensive knowledge of the local context, interventions, and challenges in addressing alcohol abuse. The interviews were conducted one-on-one, and the data were recorded (with consent) to ensure accuracy in capturing responses. By using interview guides, the study gathered rich, contextual information that complemented the quantitative data obtained from the youth questionnaires, enabling a more holistic understanding of the issue.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are the tools used to gather information from respondents in a study. They are designed to ensure the efficient and reliable gathering of data that aligns with the

research objectives. In this study, three primary data collection instruments were used: survey questionnaires, interview guides.

3.5.1 Questionnaires:

The questionnaires were the primary data collection instrument for the youth respondents selected through simple random sampling. This instrument consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to capture quantitative data and provide deeper insights into the socio-demographic factors influencing alcohol abuse. Closed-ended questions allowed for easy quantification of responses related to alcohol consumption patterns, peer influence, and socio-economic factors, while open-ended questions provided an opportunity for youths to express their personal experiences and perspectives. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure clarity and relevance, and it was administered in person or through online platforms, depending on the youth's accessibility. To ensure privacy and encourage honest responses, the questionnaire was anonymous.

3.5.2 Interview *Guide*:

The interview guide was used for key informant interviews with the Community Development Officer (CDO) and LC 1 Chairpersons, who have been purposively selected for their relevant expertise and knowledge of alcohol abuse in their communities. The interview guide was semi-structured, containing predefined questions while allowing flexibility for follow-up queries to explore responses in more depth. The structured questions focused on the socio-demographic factors contributing to alcohol abuse, such as peer pressure, cultural norms, and socio-economic conditions, while the follow-up questions were enable a more comprehensive understanding of the issues. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or through online platforms and recorded (with consent) to ensure accurate data collection and transcription.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are crucial concepts in ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the data collection instruments used in a research study. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of

the results when the instrument is repeated or used across different groups (Creswell, 2014). This section outlines how the study ensured both validity and reliability.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a data collection instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Creswell, 2014). In this study, validity was ensured through content validity, face validity, and construct validity. Content validity was ensured by developing the survey questionnaires and interview guides based on a comprehensive review of the literature, ensuring that the questions address the research objectives. Expert feedback from researchers in the field was sought to assess the relevance and accuracy of the instruments. Face validity was checked through pre-testing the instruments with a small sample of the target population, allowing for the identification and correction of any unclear or confusing questions. Construct validity was ensured by aligning the instruments with established theoretical frameworks, ensuring that the instruments accurately measure the concepts of peer influence, income levels, employment status, and cultural norms, which are central to the study's objectives.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the data collection instruments (Creswell, 2014). To ensure reliability, the study was focused on internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and inter-rater reliability. Internal consistency was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha for items measuring similar concepts, such as income levels or peer influence, to determine whether the items yield consistent results. Test-retest reliability was tested by administering the instruments to a small sample of respondents at two different points in time and checking for consistency in the responses. Inter-rater reliability was ensured by training multiple data collectors to administer the interview guides and focus group discussions consistently. Regular calibration and discussions among the researchers which helped resolve any discrepancies and maintain consistency in data collection.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis involves the systematic examination of data collected through various instruments to draw meaningful conclusions, identify patterns, and answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing alcohol abuse among youth in Mbale City.

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

For the quantitative data, the responses from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to explore trends in alcohol consumption, income levels, employment status, and peer influence. Tools like SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to calculate frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. Additionally, inferential statistics was applied to assess relationships between the variables using techniques such as chi-square tests and correlation analysis to determine whether socio-demographic factors such as income levels, employment status, and peer influence are significantly associated with alcohol abuse.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

For the qualitative data, responses from the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (or themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. NVivo software was used to assist in the coding and thematic analysis process. Thematic analysis helped to provide in-depth insights into how cultural norms, peer influence, and other socio-demographic factors shape alcohol abuse behaviors among the youth in Mbale City.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing data collection, an introductory letter from the Social Science Department of UCU was submitted to the relevant authorities to secure institutional approval and ensure that the study meets established ethical standards. This letter serves as both a formal introduction and a request for permission, demonstrating the researcher's commitment to following ethical guidelines and institutional policies.

Confidentiality was maintained by securely storing all collected data and restricting access solely to the research team. Personal identifiers was removed or coded to prevent any possibility of linking responses to individual participants, ensuring that sensitive information remains protected throughout the research process.

Anonymity was guaranteed for all participants by ensuring that their identities are not disclosed in any reports or publications. Data was presented in aggregate form, and any direct quotes or excerpts used in the final report was confidential to safeguard the participants' privacy.

Integrity in this study was upheld through transparent and honest data collection, analysis, and reporting practices. The researcher is committed to avoiding any form of bias or manipulation, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences and perspectives, and that the study adheres to the highest ethical standards.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Each participant was provided with comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, and was informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions. This process ensures that participation is fully voluntary and that participants are aware of their rights throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the presentation, interpretation and analysis of personal data of the respondents on the topic of the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among the youths in industrial division, Mbale city.

4.1 A tabulation and presentation of findings

Table 2: Showing Sex Composition of Respondents (n=108)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	62	57.4%
Female	46	42.6%
Total	108	100%

Out of the 108 respondents, 62 were male (57.4%) and 46 were female (42.6%). This indicates a slightly higher participation of male youths compared to female youths in the study. Understanding the sex composition is crucial for analyzing gender-specific patterns and influences related to alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City.

Table 3: Showing Age Composition of Respondents (n=108)

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
15–19	36	33.3%
20–24	45	41.7%
25–30	27	25.0%
Total	108	100%

The data indicates that the majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 24 years, accounting for 41.7% of the sample. This was followed by those aged 15–19 years at 33.3%, and 25–30 years at 25.0%. This distribution reflects a youthful demographic, which is pertinent when examining patterns of alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City.

Table 4: Educational Levels of Respondents (n=108)

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	28	25.9%
Secondary	45	41.7%
Tertiary	25	23.1%
No Formal Education	10	9.3%
Total	108	100%

The data indicates that the majority of respondents, 45 out of 108 (41.7%), had attained secondary education. This was followed by 28 respondents (25.9%) with primary education, 25 respondents (23.1%) with tertiary education, and 10 respondents (9.3%) with no formal education. This distribution reflects a relatively educated youth demographic in the Industrial Division of Mbale City, which is pertinent when examining patterns of alcohol abuse among youths.

Table 5: Showing the Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage (%)
Christian (Catholic)	38	35.2%
Christian (Protestant/Anglican)	30	27.8%
Christian (Born Again/Pentecostal)	16	14.8%
Muslim	20	18.5%
Others (e.g., SDA, traditional)	4	3.7%
Total	108	100%

The majority of respondents identified as Christians, with Catholics and Protestants forming the largest groups. Muslims also constituted a significant portion. This diversity in religious affiliation suggests that any intervention aimed at reducing alcohol abuse among youths should be inclusive and consider religious teachings and community influence in shaping behavior and attitudes toward alcohol use.

Table 6: showing the employment status of the respondents

Employment Status	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage (%)
Employed (formal)	18	16.7%
Employed (informal)	26	24.1%
Unemployed	52	48.1%
Student	12	11.1%
Total	108	100%

The table shows that nearly half (48.1%) of the respondents were unemployed, indicating a high unemployment rate among the youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City. This may contribute significantly to alcohol abuse, as joblessness often leads to frustration, idleness, and susceptibility to peer influence. Only a small proportion were formally employed (16.7%), while others engaged in informal work or were still students. These findings underscore the need for youth empowerment programs and employment opportunities as part of efforts to reduce alcohol abuse.

Table 7: showing the marital status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage (%)
Single	74	68.5%
Married	22	20.4%
Divorced/Separated	8	7.4%
Widowed	4	3.7%
Total	108	100%

The majority of respondents (68.5%) were single, reflecting the youth-dominated sample in Industrial Division, Mbale City. A smaller portion were married, with very few divorced or widowed. This demographic profile suggests that most youths are likely in transitional life stages, which may influence their social behaviors, including alcohol use, potentially due to peer pressure and fewer family responsibilities.

4.2 FINDINGS ON THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.2.0 Research objective one: To establish the influence of peer pressure on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

Table 8: showing the influence of peer pressure on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (n=66)

	Objective one	Response of the respondents					
S/N	the influence of peer pressure on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (strongly agree)	
	Response	No of respondents					Total
1	Most of my friends consume alcohol	10 (9.8%)	8 (7.8%)	15 (14.7%)	41 (40.2%)	28 (27.5%)	108 100%
2	I feel pressured to drink alcohol to be accepted	12 (11.8%)	10 (9.8%)	20 (19.6%)	39 (38.2%)	21 (20.6%)	108 100%
3	I often drink alcohol during social gatherings	8 (7.8%)	12 (11.8%)	18 (17.6%)	43 (42.2%)	21 (20.6%)	108 100%
4	My peers make fun of me when I refuse to drink	15 (14.7%)	12 (11.8%)	31 (30.4%)	29 (28.4%)	15 (14.7%)	108 100%
5	Others						

Source: Primary source, 2025

Most of the respondents (67.7%) agreed that most of their friends consume alcohol. This suggests that alcohol use is common within their social circles, which may normalize drinking behavior among the youth.

About 58.8% of the youths felt pressured by their peers to drink alcohol in order to be accepted. This indicates that social acceptance is a strong factor influencing their decision to consume alcohol.

A total of 62.8% admitted that they often drink alcohol during social gatherings with friends. This shows that social events provide an environment where alcohol use is encouraged or expected.

Nearly 43.1% of the respondents reported that their peers make fun of them when they refuse to drink alcohol. This peer ridicule may force some youths to drink despite their personal choice to abstain.

Findings from the Key informants on objection one

The Community Development Officer (CDO) said that alcohol consumption among youth in the area is very common, noting that, *"Almost every trading center has groups of young people drinking, especially in the evenings and on weekends."* One of the LC1 Chairpersons emphasized that the situation is widespread, observing that, *"In most zones, you'll find that out of every five young people, at least three are regular drinkers."* These insights point to a high prevalence of alcohol use among youths in Industrial Division.

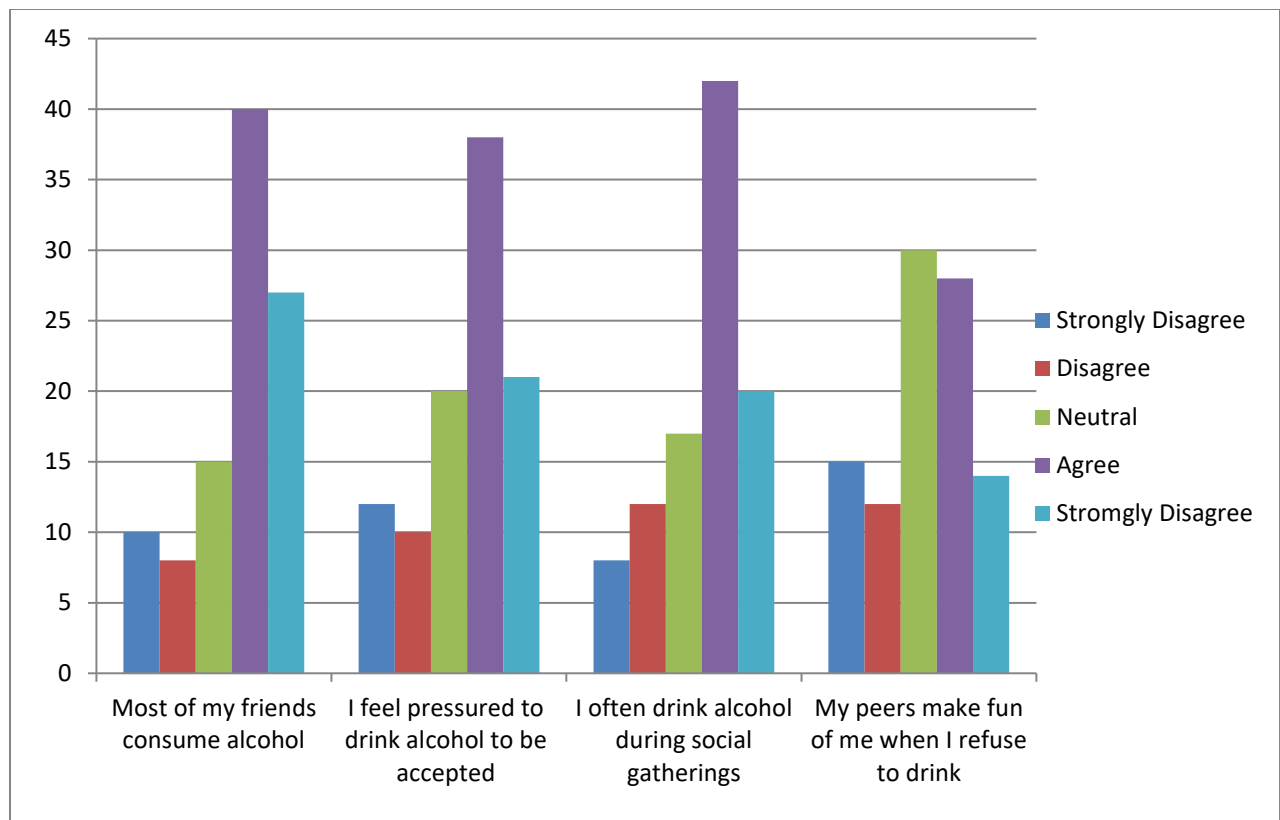
In regard to whether youths drink in groups or under peer influence, the CDO noted that, *"Most of the drinking happens in groups—it's a social activity for them. They feel encouraged when they are together."* Similarly, one of the LC1s emphasized that group drinking is the norm, saying, *"You rarely find a youth drinking alone. It's always a group thing, and once one starts, the rest follow."* This suggests that peer settings significantly influence alcohol consumption patterns among young people.

When asked about cases where peer pressure led a youth to start drinking alcohol, the CDO remarked that such incidents are common, explaining, *"We've had parents report cases where their children joined bad peer groups and started drinking soon after."* Echoing this, an LC1 Chairperson highlighted a specific case by saying, *"One boy in our area never used to drink until*

he joined a group of older boys who introduced him to alcohol. Now he drinks daily." These testimonies reinforce the role of peer influence as a trigger for alcohol initiation among youths.

Regarding community efforts to curb peer-related alcohol use, the CDO explained that, *"We are working with youth groups and schools to promote life skills and awareness programs, but the challenge is sustainability and funding."* Additionally, one LC1 Chairperson emphasized ongoing grassroots efforts, stating, *"As local leaders, we sometimes hold meetings with parents and youths to talk about the dangers of bad peer influence, but we need more support from stakeholders."* These efforts demonstrate community concern, though they also highlight the need for stronger institutional support to effectively reduce alcohol abuse driven by peer pressure.

Figure 2: A bar graph showing the influence of peer pressure on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (%)



4.3 Finding of the research objective two

To find out the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

Data collected from the youth respondents and local leaders highlighted the role cultural norms play in shaping alcohol consumption behaviors. Table 4.2 below presents the responses related to cultural beliefs and practices influencing alcohol use.

Table 9: The influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (n=108)

	Objective two	Response of the respondents					
S/N	The influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (strongly agree)	
	Response	Number and percentage of respondents					Total
1	In my culture, alcohol consumption is considered normal.	5 (4.9%)	7 (6.9%)	10 (9.8%)	45 (44.1%)	35 (34.3%)	108 100%
2	Alcohol is served during cultural events and ceremonies.	4 (3.9%)	6 (5.9%)	12 (11.8%)	46 (45.1%)	34 (33.3%)	108 100%
3	Community elders do not discourage youth from drinking alcohol.	6 (5.9%)	8 (7.8%)	15 (14.7%)	43 (42.2%)	30 (29.4%)	108 100%
4	Alcohol use is part of my cultural identity	7 (6.9%)	9 (8.8%)	14 (13.7%)	42 (41.2%)	30 (29.4%)	108 100%

	or tradition						
5	Others						

Source: 2025

A significant majority of respondents, 80 out of 102 (45 agreeing and 35 strongly agreeing), representing 78.4%, acknowledged that alcohol consumption is considered normal in their culture. This suggests that cultural acceptance of alcohol use may contribute to its prevalence among youths in the area.

Similarly, 80 respondents (46 agreeing and 34 strongly agreeing), or 78.4%, confirmed that alcohol is commonly served during cultural events and ceremonies. This practice may encourage youths to partake in drinking during such occasions, reinforcing the normalization of alcohol consumption within cultural contexts.

Regarding the role of community elders, 73 respondents (43 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), accounting for 71.6%, felt that community elders do not actively discourage youths from drinking alcohol. The lack of discouragement from respected community figures may lead to increased alcohol consumption among youths.

Lastly, 72 respondents (42 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, considered alcohol use an integral part of their cultural identity or tradition. This perception may reinforce the normalization of alcohol consumption within the community, making it more challenging to address alcohol abuse among youths.

These findings suggest that cultural norms and practices in Industrial Division, Mbale City, play a significant role in influencing alcohol abuse among youths. The normalization of alcohol consumption in cultural events, lack of discouragement from community elders, and the association of alcohol use with cultural identity may contribute to the prevalence of alcohol abuse in this demographic.

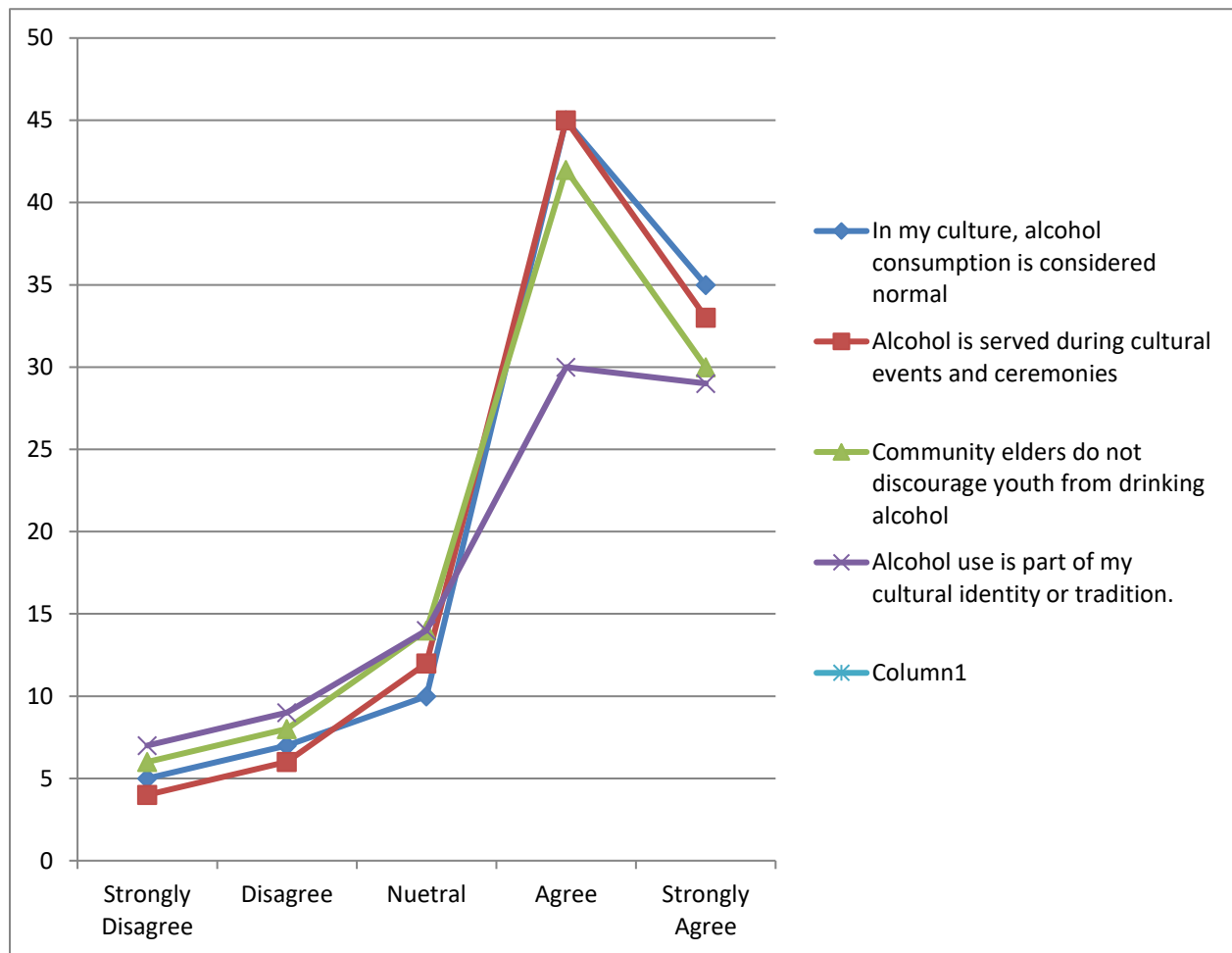
The findings from the key informants on the Research objective two

The Community Development Officer said that there are indeed several cultural practices and ceremonies in the community where alcohol is not only used but expected. He remarked, *"During traditional functions like weddings, clan meetings, and circumcision ceremonies, alcohol is served as a sign of hospitality and celebration."* One of the LC1s emphasized this practice by adding, *"It's hard to find a cultural event here that doesn't involve alcohol; it's almost like part of the menu."* These remarks point to the embedded role of alcohol in cultural gatherings, which may indirectly encourage its use among the youth.

When asked about how elders or cultural leaders influence youth attitudes towards alcohol, the CDO noted that their influence can sometimes be permissive. He explained, *"Most elders in the community drink, and they don't discourage the youth from joining in—they see it as a rite of passage."* Similarly, one of the LC1s emphasized that, *"Some elders even introduce alcohol to boys as part of initiation into adulthood, which sends a message that drinking is acceptable and even expected."* This suggests that elders, through their behavior and silence, may unintentionally reinforce alcohol consumption among young people.

On the question of whether traditional beliefs contribute to normalizing alcohol abuse among youth, the CDO strongly believed they do. He stated, *"There's a belief that a man must be able to drink and handle alcohol—it's tied to masculinity in our culture."* One LC1 echoed this sentiment by saying, *"Some people still believe that alcohol brings courage and respect, especially for young men, and that mindset is passed down."* These traditional beliefs not only normalize but sometimes glorify alcohol consumption, making it harder to discourage its use among the younger generation.

Figure 3: showing the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (%)



4.4 Findings on the objective three

To assess the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

The study aimed to understand how income levels influence alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City. The responses to the questionnaire items are summarized in the table below:

Table 10: showing the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (n=108)

	Objective three	Response of the respondents					
S/N	The influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (strongly agree)	
	Response	Number and percentage of respondents					Total
1	I use part of my income to purchase alcohol.	8 (7.8%)	10 (9.8%)	12 (11.8%)	45 (44.1%)	27 (26.5%)	108 100%
2	I drink more when I have more money.	6 (5.9%)	9 (8.8%)	15 (14.7%)	48 (47.1%)	24 (23.5%)	108 100%
3	Borrow money or sell items to buy alcohol.	12 (11.8%)	14 (13.7%)	16 (15.7%)	40 (39.2%)	20 (19.6%)	108 100%

4	I reduce alcohol consumption when I am financially strained	7 (6.9%)	11 (10.8%)	13 (12.7%)	46 (45.1%)	25 (24.5%)	66 100%
5							

Source: Primary source, 2025

A significant majority of respondents, 72 out of 102 (45 agreeing and 27 strongly agreeing), representing 70.6%, acknowledged that they use part of their income to purchase alcohol. This indicates that a substantial portion of youths allocate their financial resources towards alcohol consumption.

Regarding increased alcohol consumption with higher income, 72 respondents (48 agreeing and 24 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, reported that they tend to drink more when they have more money. This suggests a direct correlation between disposable income and the quantity of alcohol consumed.

In terms of financial behaviors related to alcohol purchase, 60 respondents (40 agreeing and 20 strongly agreeing), accounting for 58.8%, indicated that they have borrowed money or sold items to buy alcohol. This behavior reflects the potential financial strain and prioritization of alcohol over other needs.

Lastly, 71 respondents (46 agreeing and 25 strongly agreeing), or 69.6%, stated that they reduce alcohol consumption when financially strained. This implies that financial limitations can act as a deterrent to alcohol consumption among youths.

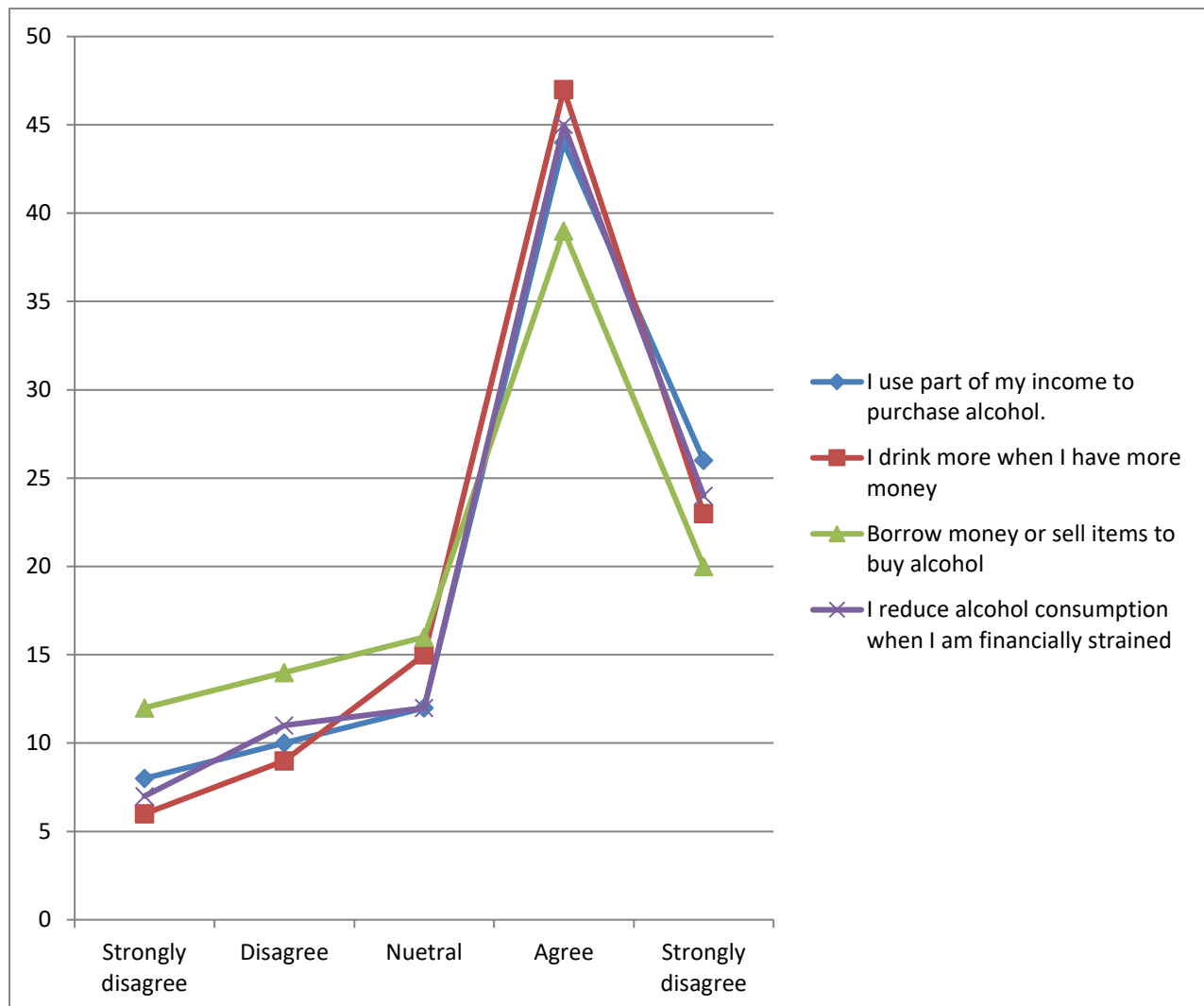
Below is the narrative-style response integrating the voices of the Community Development Officer (CDO) and one of the LC1 Chairpersons for Section D: Influence of Income Levels on Alcohol Abuse, without subheadings and with direct quotes:

The Community Development Officer explained that financial status plays a significant role in influencing alcohol consumption among youth in the area. He stated, *"When youths have money, especially from casual jobs or allowances, they often spend it on alcohol because they see it as a form of enjoyment or a way to fit in socially."* One of the LC1s emphasized this by noting, *"Some youths even wait for market days or after being paid from boda-boda work just to go drinking—it has become a routine for many."* This suggests that disposable income among youth, even if limited, is often channeled toward alcohol rather than savings or necessities.

When asked whether there is a connection between poverty and increased alcohol abuse, the CDO was quick to acknowledge the link. He said, *"Yes, many unemployed or struggling youths turn to alcohol to escape their frustrations and hopelessness—it's like a temporary relief from reality."* One LC1 echoed this concern, saying, *"I've seen many young people who drink more when they have no job, sometimes even using borrowed money to buy alcohol just to forget their problems."* These observations indicate that financial hardship and lack of purpose often drive young people toward alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism.

In discussing whether youth spend their earnings or pocket money on alcohol, the CDO confirmed this behavior and highlighted its underlying causes. He remarked, *"Most youths lack financial discipline and do not prioritize their needs, so alcohol becomes an easy choice especially when influenced by peers."* The LC1 added that, *"They feel pressure to show they can afford to drink, especially in groups, and that leads many of them to misuse the little money they get."* This behavior reflects a broader issue of financial mismanagement among youth, fueled by peer dynamics and a lack of guidance on responsible spending.

Figure 4: a line graph showing the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (%)



4.4 Findings on the objective four

To examine the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

The study aimed to understand how employment status influences alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City. The responses to the questionnaire items are summarized in the table below:

Table 11: showing the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (n=108)

	Objective three	Response of the respondents					
S/N	the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (Neither agree nor disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (strongly agree)	
	Response	Number and percentage of respondents					Total
1	Being unemployed increases my likelihood of drinking alcohol.	6 (5.9%)	8 (7.8%)	10 (9.8%)	48 (47.1%)	30 (29.4%)	108 100%
2	Alcohol helps me cope with the stress of not having a job.	10 (9.8%)	12 (11.8%)	15 (14.7%)	40 (39.2%)	25 (24.5%)	108 100%

3	I often drink alcohol during working hours or after work.	12 (11.8%)	14 (13.7%)	16 (15.7%)	38 (37.3%)	22 (21.6%)	108 100%
4	My work environment encourages or tolerates alcohol use	8 (7.8%)	10 (9.8%)	12 (11.8%)	45 (44.1%)	27 (26.5%)	66 100%
5	Others						

Source: Primary source, 2025

A significant majority of respondents, 78 out of 102 (48 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), representing 76.5%, acknowledged that being unemployed increases their likelihood of drinking alcohol. This suggests that unemployment may lead to increased alcohol consumption among youths.

Regarding alcohol as a coping mechanism for joblessness, 65 respondents (40 agreeing and 25 strongly agreeing), or 63.7%, reported that alcohol helps them cope with the stress of not having a job. This indicates that unemployment-related stress may contribute to alcohol abuse.

In terms of alcohol consumption during or after work, 60 respondents (38 agreeing and 22 strongly agreeing), accounting for 58.9%, indicated that they often drink alcohol during working hours or after work. This behavior reflects the potential integration of alcohol use into daily routines, possibly influenced by work-related stress or culture.

Lastly, 72 respondents (45 agreeing and 27 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, stated that their work environment encourages or tolerates alcohol use. This highlights the role of workplace culture in influencing alcohol consumption behaviors among youths.

These findings suggest that employment status, including unemployment and workplace environment, significantly influences alcohol consumption patterns among youths in the

Industrial Division of Mbale City. Unemployment appears to facilitate higher alcohol consumption, while certain work environments may tolerate or even encourage such behavior. Addressing these issues may require targeted interventions focusing on employment opportunities and workplace policies related to alcohol use.

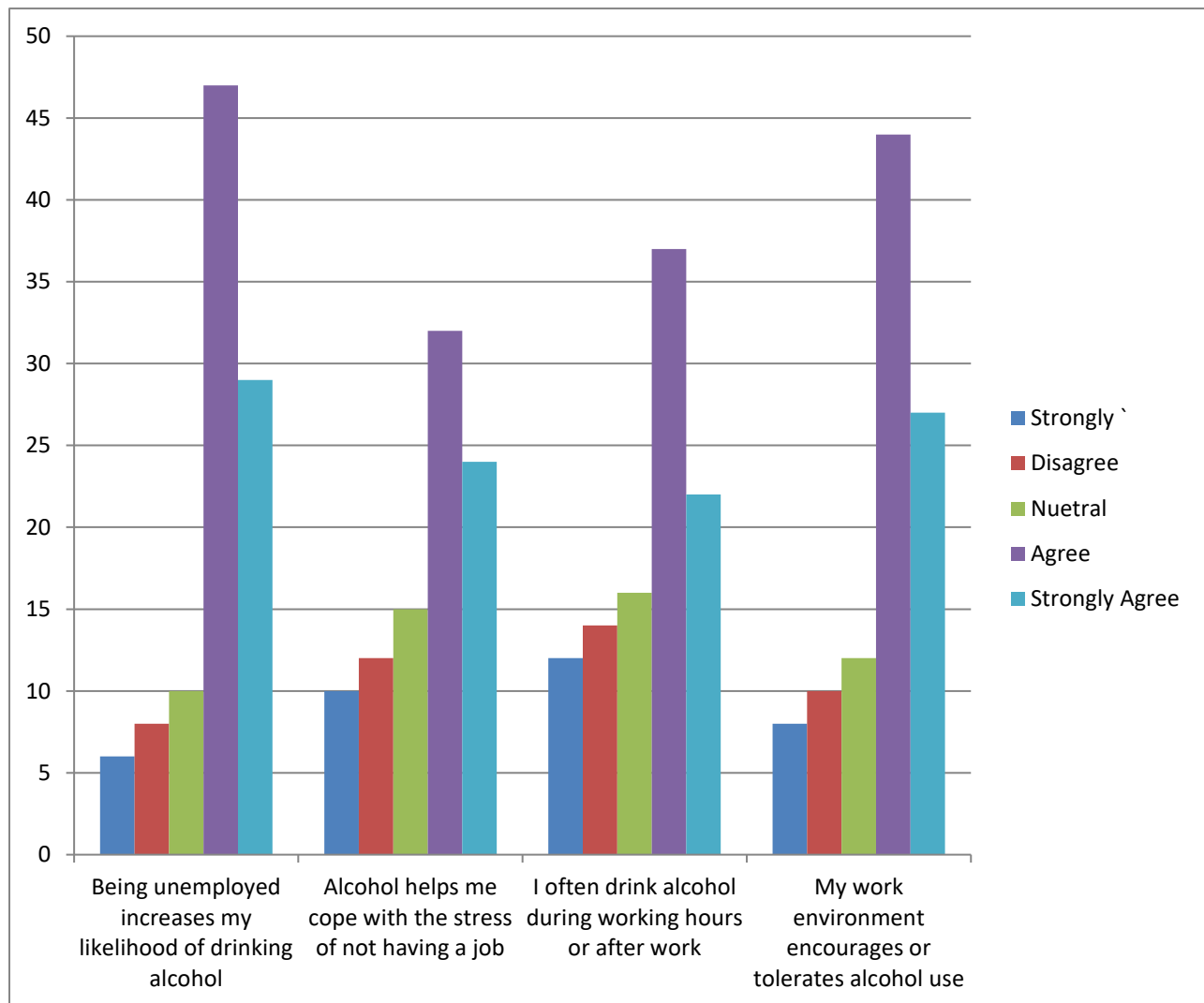
The findings from the Key Informants

The Community Development Officer (CDO) noted that unemployment plays a significant role in youth involvement in alcohol abuse within Industrial Division. He explained, *"When youths have nothing productive to do, they end up idling around, and unfortunately, alcohol becomes a common pastime—they drink to kill boredom and deal with stress."* One of the LC1s emphasized that, *"Most of the youths you find at trading centers during the day are jobless and drinking—they say they have nothing else to do."* This highlights a direct link between lack of employment and increased alcohol abuse, driven by frustration and lack of structure.

When discussing whether employed youths also engage in alcohol consumption, the CDO pointed out that employment does not necessarily prevent alcohol use. He stated, *"Some employed youths do drink, especially after work or on weekends, but the problem is worse among the unemployed because they do it excessively and more regularly."* One LC1 noted, *"Even those with jobs sometimes misuse their salaries to drink, especially if the workplace culture tolerates it or if they lack family responsibilities."* These insights suggest that while employment can be protective to some extent, it does not entirely shield youths from engaging in alcohol abuse, especially when cultural and social influences are strong.

Regarding interventions, the CDO acknowledged efforts aimed at addressing this issue but noted gaps. He said, *"There are a few youth livelihood programs and skills training centers in Mbale City, but they are not enough and many youths are unaware or unable to access them."* One of the LC1s emphasized that, *"We need more targeted programs that focus not just on giving skills but also on keeping these young people busy and helping them see alternatives to alcohol."* These remarks underscore the importance of expanding and publicizing youth employment and empowerment programs as a strategy to reduce alcohol abuse linked to joblessness.

Figure 5 A Bar graph showing the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City (%)



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with interpretation and discussion of the findings objectively in relation to the study background, problem statement and literature review to answer research questions, conclude and make recommendations about the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth, the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youths, the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youths and the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youths in industrial division, Mbale city. All the questionnaires of 108 respondents recruited in the study were returned completely filled thus a response rate of 100% as shown earlier.

5.1 Discussion of findings.

5.1.1 Bio demographic data.

From the findings, Out of the 108 respondents, 62 were male (57.4%) and 46 were female (42.6%). This indicates a slightly higher participation of male youths compared to female youths in the study. Understanding the sex composition is crucial for analyzing gender-specific patterns and influences related to alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City.

The findings also discovered that the majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 24 years, accounting for 41.7% of the sample. This was followed by those aged 15–19 years at 33.3%, and 25–30 years at 25.0%. This distribution reflects a youthful demographic, which is pertinent when examining patterns of alcohol abuse among youths in the Industrial Division of Mbale City.

The findings furthermore found out that the majority of respondents, 45 out of 108 (41.7%), had attained secondary education. This was followed by 28 respondents (25.9%) with primary education, 25 respondents (23.1%) with tertiary education, and 10 respondents (9.3%) with no formal education. This distribution reflects a relatively educated youth demographic in the

Industrial Division of Mbale City, which is pertinent when examining patterns of alcohol abuse among youths.

The study furthermore revealed that the majority of respondents identified as Christians, with Catholics and Protestants forming the largest groups. Muslims also constituted a significant portion. This diversity in religious affiliation suggests that any intervention aimed at reducing alcohol abuse among youths should be inclusive and consider religious teachings and community influence in shaping behavior and attitudes toward alcohol use.

The findings shows that nearly half (48.1%) of the respondents were unemployed, indicating a high unemployment rate among the youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City. This may contribute significantly to alcohol abuse, as joblessness often leads to frustration, idleness, and susceptibility to peer influence. Only a small proportion were formally employed (16.7%), while others engaged in informal work or were still students. These findings underscore the need for youth empowerment programs and employment opportunities as part of efforts to reduce alcohol abuse.

And finally on the bio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the findings revealed that the majority of respondents (68.5%) were single, reflecting the youth-dominated sample in Industrial Division, Mbale City. A smaller portion were married, with very few divorced or widowed. This demographic profile suggests that most youths are likely in transitional life stages, which may influence their social behaviors, including alcohol use, potentially due to peer pressure and fewer family responsibilities.

5.1.2 The influence of peer pressure on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

From the findings, most of the respondents (67.7%) agreed that most of their friends consume alcohol. This suggests that alcohol use is common within their social circles, which may normalize drinking behavior among the youth. This finding is consistent with Namusoke (2020), who reported that peer pressure significantly contributes to alcohol use among urban youths in Uganda. It also supports the Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing and imitating peers, especially when those behaviors appear to be rewarded or widely practiced.

The findings also discovered that about 58.8% of the youths felt pressured by their peers to drink alcohol in order to be accepted. This indicates that social acceptance is a strong factor influencing their decision to consume alcohol. These findings are consistent with Namusoke (2020) and Lumu (2019), who observed that social circles and peer approval strongly shape behavioral choices among urban youths in Uganda. Similarly, Bandura's Social Learning Theory supports this, asserting that behaviors such as drinking can be learned through observation and imitation within social contexts.

The study also revealed that a total of 62.8% admitted that they often drink alcohol during social gatherings with friends. This shows that social events provide an environment where alcohol use is encouraged or expected. Previous studies, such as those by Namusoke (2020) and Okello & Musisi (2018), also noted that social contexts like parties, ceremonies, and casual hangouts serve as key enablers of alcohol use among young people in urban settings. These environments reduce social inhibition and increase access to alcohol, often with little adult supervision or regulation. Thus, these findings underscore the importance of addressing not only individual behavior but also social norms and group dynamics in interventions targeting youth alcohol abuse.

In addition, the study found that nearly 43.1% of the respondents reported that their peers make fun of them when they refuse to drink alcohol. This peer ridicule may force some youths to drink despite their personal choice to abstain. These insights are in agreement with studies by Namusoke (2020) and Kirunda (2019), who noted that peer ridicule and fear of social exclusion

are key drivers of substance use among urban youth in Uganda. The findings imply that interventions should address both overt peer pressure and more subtle social mechanisms like teasing or shaming, which can coerce youth into unhealthy behaviors.

5.1.3 The influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

The study found out that a significant majority of respondents, 80 out of 102 (45 agreeing and 35 strongly agreeing), representing 78.4%, acknowledged that alcohol consumption is considered normal in their culture. This suggests that cultural acceptance of alcohol use may contribute to its prevalence among youths in the area. This aligns with findings from Okello and Musisi (2018), who reported that in many Ugandan communities, alcohol is an integral part of traditional ceremonies, social gatherings, and family functions. As such, youths are often introduced to alcohol at an early age, either directly or indirectly, through exposure in family and community settings.

Similarly, the study findings found out that 80 respondents (46 agreeing and 34 strongly agreeing), or 78.4%, confirmed that alcohol is commonly served during cultural events and ceremonies. This practice may encourage youths to partake in drinking during such occasions, reinforcing the normalization of alcohol consumption within cultural contexts. This observation is consistent with research by Muwonge (2019) and Okello & Musisi (2018), who found that in many Ugandan communities, cultural norms often facilitate early exposure to alcohol through family events, weddings, funerals, and initiation ceremonies. These practices can blur the line between responsible cultural participation and unhealthy substance use.

Regarding the role of community elders, the study revealed that 73 respondents (43 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), accounting for 71.6%, felt that community elders do not actively discourage youths from drinking alcohol. The lack of discouragement from respected community figures may lead to increased alcohol consumption among youths. This finding is consistent with studies by Nantume (2020) and Ateenyi (2017), who emphasized that weak community regulation and declining traditional authority contribute to rising substance abuse among youth in urban settings. The results highlight the erosion of social control mechanisms that once regulated

youth behavior. It suggests a need to re-engage community leaders and elders in youth-focused interventions, equipping them with awareness and tools to advocate against alcohol misuse in culturally respectful ways.

Lastly, the study findings found out that 72 respondents (42 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, considered alcohol use an integral part of their cultural identity or tradition. This perception may reinforce the normalization of alcohol consumption within the community, making it more challenging to address alcohol abuse among youths. This finding is consistent with studies by Nantume (2020) and Ateenyi (2017), who emphasized that weak community regulation and declining traditional authority contribute to rising substance abuse among youth in urban settings. The results highlight the erosion of social control mechanisms that once regulated youth behavior. It suggests a need to re-engage community leaders and elders in youth-focused interventions, equipping them with awareness and tools to advocate against alcohol misuse in culturally respectful ways.

5.1.4 The influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

The findings revealed that the significant majority of respondents, 72 out of 102 (45 agreeing and 27 strongly agreeing), representing 70.6%, acknowledged that they use part of their income to purchase alcohol. This indicates that a substantial portion of youths allocate their financial resources towards alcohol consumption. This behavior points to a pattern where alcohol becomes a consistent expense, potentially diverting funds away from essential needs such as education, food, or savings. It also reflects a form of economic dependency on alcohol, where youths budget for its consumption as a routine aspect of their lifestyle. These findings align with studies by Mukasa (2019) and Asiimwe (2020), which indicated that urban youth often use disposable income from casual labor or small-scale jobs to purchase alcohol, particularly when influenced by peer or social expectations. The tendency is often exacerbated by lack of financial literacy, poor budgeting skills, and limited access to constructive recreational alternatives.

In addition, the findings found out that regarding increased alcohol consumption with higher income, 72 respondents (48 agreeing and 24 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, reported that they tend to drink more when they have more money. This suggests a direct correlation between disposable income and the quantity of alcohol consumed. This pattern aligns with the Behavioral Economic Theory, which posits that individuals, especially youths, often make financial decisions based on short-term rewards (such as the pleasure of drinking) rather than future-oriented goals. Additionally, these findings are consistent with Asimwe (2020), who found that young people in urban Uganda frequently increase their alcohol intake during periods of higher earnings, such as after payday or successful business activity.

The findings also highlighted that in terms of financial behaviors related to alcohol purchase, 60 respondents (40 agreeing and 20 strongly agreeing), accounting for 58.8%, indicated that they have borrowed money or sold items to buy alcohol. This behavior reflects the potential financial strain and prioritization of alcohol over other needs. This aligns with findings from Tumwesigye & Kasirye (2021), who observed that alcohol misuse among urban youth in Uganda is often associated with borrowing, pawning possessions, and increased financial distress. It also resonates with the Addiction Model, which explains how substance use can distort priorities and compel individuals to engage in self-damaging behaviors, including financial sacrifice.

Lastly, the study recovered that 71 respondents (46 agreeing and 25 strongly agreeing), or 69.6%, stated that they reduce alcohol consumption when financially strained. This implies that financial limitations can act as a deterrent to alcohol consumption among youths. These findings align with the Behavioral Economic Theory, which argues that individuals often allocate resources toward immediate gratification (such as drinking) when income is available, but consumption declines when financial resources are limited. They also mirror findings from Tumwesigye & Kasirye (2021), who noted a cyclical pattern of increased drinking following income boosts and decreased drinking during financial downturns among Ugandan youth.

5.1.5 The influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City

The study found out that a significant majority of respondents, 78 out of 102 (48 agreeing and 30 strongly agreeing), representing 76.5%, acknowledged that being unemployed increases their likelihood of drinking alcohol. This suggests that unemployment may lead to increased alcohol consumption among youths. Unemployment often leads to boredom, stress, frustration, and low self-esteem, which many youths may attempt to cope with through alcohol consumption. Without a structured daily routine or source of income, alcohol may become a means of temporary escape or self-medication. This finding aligns with research by Mbabazi et al. (2019), which reported a higher prevalence of alcohol use among unemployed urban youths in Uganda compared to their employed counterparts.

In terms of alcohol consumption during or after work, the findings revealed that 60 respondents (38 agreeing and 22 strongly agreeing), accounting for 58.9%, indicated that they often drink alcohol during working hours or after work. This behavior reflects the potential integration of alcohol use into daily routines, possibly influenced by work-related stress or culture. Research by Mbabazi et al. (2019) also supports this finding, highlighting that unemployed urban youths in Uganda are more prone to excessive drinking due to stress and lack of productive engagement.

Lastly, the study discovered that 72 respondents (45 agreeing and 27 strongly agreeing), or 70.6%, stated that their work environment encourages or tolerates alcohol use. This highlights the role of workplace culture in influencing alcohol consumption behaviors among youths. These findings are supported by the Self-Medication Hypothesis and Strain Theory, which suggest that both unemployment and adverse workplace conditions may push individuals toward substance use. It also aligns with findings by Nattabi & Nakyanzi (2020), who observed that permissive or poorly regulated work environments contributed to higher alcohol consumption among young workers in Uganda.

5.2. Conclusion.

According to the study,

Objective 1: To establish the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

The study revealed that peer influence plays a substantial role in promoting alcohol abuse among youths. A majority of respondents admitted that most of their friends consume alcohol, and many reported feeling pressured to drink in order to gain acceptance. Social gatherings with peers often include alcohol, and refusal to drink sometimes leads to ridicule. These findings indicate that peer norms and group dynamics normalize alcohol consumption, making it difficult for youths to abstain. Thus, peer pressure significantly contributes to the initiation and continuation of alcohol use among youths in the area.

Objective 2: To find out the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

Cultural practices and beliefs were found to strongly influence youth drinking behavior. The study revealed that alcohol is widely accepted and served during cultural events and ceremonies, with many youths reporting that it is considered normal in their culture. Additionally, community elders were perceived as largely passive or indifferent toward youth alcohol use, which further reinforces cultural acceptance. These cultural norms create an enabling environment for alcohol consumption, making it a socially sanctioned behavior that is difficult to challenge or control.

Objective 3: To assess the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

The findings show a clear link between income levels and alcohol consumption. A significant number of respondents admitted to using their income to purchase alcohol and reported drinking more when they have more disposable income. Some even resorted to borrowing money or selling items to afford alcohol. Conversely, alcohol consumption tended to decrease during periods of financial strain. These patterns suggest that income availability directly influences the

frequency and intensity of alcohol use, highlighting how economic capacity can either promote or limit alcohol abuse among youths.

Objective 4: To examine the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City.

Employment status emerged as a major factor in youth alcohol abuse. Unemployed youths were more likely to consume alcohol, often using it as a coping mechanism for stress and frustration associated with joblessness. Furthermore, among employed respondents, a notable portion reported that their work environment tolerates or encourages alcohol use. These results suggest that both unemployment and permissive workplace cultures can drive alcohol consumption, indicating the need for both economic empowerment and workplace policy reforms to reduce youth alcohol abuse.

5.3 Recommendations.

5.3.1 Recommendation to the government

To address the powerful role of peer influence on youth alcohol abuse, it is essential to implement peer-led education programs within schools and communities. These programs should empower selected youth role models to advocate for alcohol-free lifestyles and equip their peers with strategies to resist negative peer pressure. Creating youth-friendly clubs and recreation centers that provide safe, alcohol-free environments for socializing and entertainment can also reduce youths' reliance on alcohol as a social tool. Additionally, integrating life skills and assertiveness training into the school curriculum will help young people develop the confidence and decision-making abilities needed to decline alcohol use despite peer pressure. Finally, engaging social media influencers and youth ambassadors to promote positive messaging can challenge the normalization of alcohol consumption among youth peer groups effectively.

Given the strong cultural acceptance of alcohol consumption, collaboration with cultural leaders and elders is crucial to encourage behavior change. These respected figures can be involved in delivering messages that discourage excessive drinking and promote healthier cultural practices. It is also important to review and reform traditional ceremonies and celebrations to minimize or

eliminate the obligatory serving of alcohol, replacing it with non-alcoholic alternatives. Training local cultural institutions, including religious bodies, to become advocates for reduced alcohol consumption can reinforce these efforts within the community. Furthermore, supporting community-based dialogues will provide a platform for residents to reflect on how cultural norms influence youth behavior and encourage collective adoption of safer practices.

To mitigate the impact of income on alcohol abuse, financial literacy and budgeting programs should be promoted among youth to teach responsible management of money and prioritization of essential needs over alcohol. Expanding economic empowerment initiatives such as youth savings groups, entrepreneurship support, and access to small business grants can help reduce financial vulnerability and dependence on alcohol. At the policy level, regulation and increased taxation on cheap, potent alcoholic drinks should be enforced to make such products less accessible to low-income youth. Moreover, encouraging alternative forms of recreation and spending, such as involvement in community sports and talent development activities, can offer youths constructive outlets for their time and money.

Employment programs that focus on providing vocational training and apprenticeships must be scaled up to reduce youth idleness and the economic frustrations that can lead to alcohol consumption. Integrating psychosocial support and counseling services within job-seeking and employment centers will help youths cope with stress related to unemployment more healthily. Employers should be encouraged to establish and enforce alcohol-free workplace policies, including sensitization programs on the risks of alcohol use at or near work. Finally, fostering partnerships between the government and private sector to offer structured internships and on-the-job training will not only enhance youth employment opportunities but also lower the risk of alcohol abuse by providing meaningful engagement.

5.3.2 Recommendations to the host communities

Host communities play a crucial role in shaping the behaviors and attitudes of youth, especially regarding alcohol use. It is important for community members to actively engage in creating supportive environments that discourage underage and excessive drinking. Communities should organize regular sensitization and awareness programs that highlight the harmful effects of

alcohol abuse on individuals, families, and society at large. These programs can be held in collaboration with local leaders, health workers, and youth groups to ensure the messages are culturally relevant and widely accepted.

Community elders and cultural leaders have a responsibility to model and promote positive behaviors by discouraging alcohol consumption among youths during cultural events and ceremonies. They should advocate for the inclusion of alternative, alcohol-free practices in traditional gatherings, thus breaking the cycle of alcohol normalization within cultural settings. Additionally, community leaders should actively participate in monitoring and supporting youths who are at risk of abusing alcohol, offering guidance and mentorship to help them make healthier choices.

Families and parents within the host communities should strengthen their role in supervising and communicating with their children about the dangers of alcohol abuse. Parents need to create open and trusting environments where youths feel comfortable discussing peer pressure and stress without turning to alcohol. It is also important for families to set clear expectations and consequences regarding alcohol use, while encouraging participation in positive social activities that build self-esteem and resilience.

Finally, host communities should collaborate with local government and non-governmental organizations to establish youth centers and recreational facilities that provide safe and engaging alternatives to alcohol-related socialization. These centers can offer programs focused on skill development, sports, arts, and counseling services. By investing in such community-based initiatives, host communities can empower their youth with opportunities that reduce boredom, idleness, and the temptation to engage in harmful alcohol consumption.

5.3.3 Recommendations to the youths

Youth have a vital role to play in curbing alcohol abuse by making conscious and informed choices about their health and wellbeing. It is important for young people to develop strong personal values and self-discipline that empower them to resist peer pressure to drink alcohol. They should seek out positive role models and peer groups that support healthy lifestyles and encourage mutual respect for decisions to abstain from or reduce alcohol consumption.

Young people are encouraged to engage actively in educational and recreational activities that promote their talents, skills, and interests. Participation in sports, arts, clubs, and volunteer groups provides alternative avenues for socializing and personal growth without relying on alcohol. By focusing their energy on constructive pursuits, youths can build confidence, reduce boredom, and create a supportive network that discourages alcohol misuse.

It is also essential for youths to seek accurate information about the physical, mental, and social consequences of alcohol abuse. They should take advantage of available counseling and support services if they find themselves struggling with stress, peer pressure, or other challenges related to alcohol. Being proactive in seeking help not only benefits their own health but also sets a positive example for peers facing similar issues.

Lastly, young people should actively participate in community dialogues and initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol abuse. By voicing their concerns and sharing their experiences, they can contribute to the design of programs and policies that address the real challenges they face. Empowered youths who take ownership of their wellbeing can become powerful advocates for change in their families, schools, and communities.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

While this study has shed light on the socio-demographic factors associated with alcohol abuse among youths in Industrial Division, Mbale City, further research is needed to explore the long-term psychological and health impacts of alcohol consumption on this population. Future studies could examine how sustained alcohol abuse affects mental health, educational attainment, and overall wellbeing, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences faced by young people.

Another important area for further investigation is the effectiveness of existing intervention programs aimed at reducing alcohol abuse among youths in the region. Research could focus on evaluating different prevention and rehabilitation strategies, identifying which approaches yield the best outcomes, and how these programs can be adapted to suit local cultural and socio-economic contexts more effectively.

Additionally, future research could explore the role of family dynamics and parenting styles in influencing youth alcohol consumption. Understanding how family support, communication, and supervision interact with peer and community influences could provide valuable insights for developing holistic prevention measures that involve both the home and the wider community.

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APPENDICS I: Questionnaires for Youth

Introduction

Dear Respondent, greetings to you. My name is Akello Barbra, a student at Uganda Christian University, Mbale, conducting a study on "The Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Alcohol Abuse among Young Youths (18-24 Years) in Industrial Division, Mbale City." This study is for academic purposes only, and your participation is entirely voluntary. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and you are free to withdraw at any point without any consequences. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Each item uses a 5-point Likert scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

Section A: Background Information

(Please tick appropriately)

1. **Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Age:** _____
3. **Marital Status:** ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
4. **Education Level:** ☐ No formal education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary
5. **Employment Status:** ☐ Employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Student ☐ Self-employed
6. **Religion:** ☐ Christian ☐ Muslim ☐ Traditionalist ☐ Other: _____

Section B: Influence of Peer Pressure on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 1: To establish the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	Most of my friends consume alcohol.					
2	I feel pressured to drink alcohol in order to be accepted by peers.					
3	I often drink alcohol during social gatherings with friends.					
4	My peers make fun of me when I refuse to drink alcohol.					

Section C: Influence of Cultural Norms on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 2: To find out the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	In my culture, alcohol consumption is considered normal.					
2	Alcohol is served during cultural events and ceremonies.					
3	Community elders do not discourage youth from drinking alcohol.					
4	Alcohol use is part of my cultural identity or tradition.					

Section D: Influence of Income Levels on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 3: To assess the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	I use part of my income to purchase alcohol.					
2	I drink more when I have more money.					
3	I borrow money or sell items to buy alcohol.					
4	I reduce alcohol consumption when I am financially strained.					

Section E: Influence of Employment Status on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 4: To examine the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

	Statement	Strongly disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
1	Being unemployed increases my likelihood of drinking alcohol.					
2	Alcohol helps me cope with the stress of not having a job.					
3	I often drink alcohol during working hours or after work.					
4	My work environment encourages or tolerates alcohol use.					

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDICES II: Interview Guide for CDOs and LC1s

Introduction

Greetings to you. My name is Akello Barbra, a student at Uganda Christian University, Mbale, conducting a study on "The Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Alcohol Abuse Among Youths in Industrial Division, Mbale City." This study is strictly for academic purposes, and your responses will be kept confidential. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Kindly answer the questions honestly. Thank you for your cooperation.

Section A: General Background

1. What is your official position and how long have you served in this community?
2. What are your general observations on the behavior and wellbeing of youth in this area?

Section B: Influence of Peer Pressure on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 1: To establish the influence of peer influence on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

3. How prevalent is alcohol consumption among youth in this community?
4. Do youth tend to drink alcohol in groups or under the influence of peers?
5. Have you come across cases where peer pressure led a youth to start drinking alcohol?
6. What is the community doing to reduce peer-related influences on youth alcohol consumption?

Section C: Influence of Cultural Norms on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 2: To find out the influence of cultural norms on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

7. Are there any cultural practices or ceremonies in this community where alcohol is promoted or used?
8. How do elders or cultural leaders influence youth attitudes towards alcohol?

9. Do you think traditional beliefs contribute to normalizing alcohol abuse among youth?
Why or why not?

Section D: Influence of Income Levels on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 3: To assess the influence of income levels on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

10. In your opinion, how does income or financial status influence youth alcohol consumption?
11. Have you observed any links between poverty and increased alcohol abuse among youth?

Do some youth spend their earnings or pocket money on alcohol? If so, why do you think this happens?

Section E: Influence of Employment Status on Alcohol Abuse

(Objective 4: To examine the influence of employment status on alcohol abuse among youth in Industrial Division, Mbale City)

13. How does unemployment affect youth involvement in alcohol abuse?
14. What about employed youths do they also engage in alcohol abuse?
15. Are there any employment or empowerment programs in place to reduce youth vulnerability to alcohol use?

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX III: Table 1: Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

APPENDIX IV: PLACEMENT LETTER



UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY
A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa
MBALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Office of the Academic Registrar

To TOWN CLERK
INDUSTRIAL CITY DIVISION

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Academic Research

Christian greetings!

We are honored to introduce to you Mr. Mrs./Miss. ALCENLO BARBORA

Of Registration Number; 523/MUC/BSW/131 pursuing a Masters'
Degree/Postgraduate Diploma / Bachelor's Degree SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL

He/ she is required to carry out an academic research on the topic

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ASSOCIATED
WITH ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG THE YOUTH IN INDUSTRIAL

and thereafter produce a well bound hard cover research report (MAROON) in color for
undergraduate and three (BLACK) copies for Postgraduate students as a University
requirement for the award of a degree/diploma in the academic discipline that he / she is
pursuing.

We shall be grateful for the help you may offer to him or her accordingly.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Akampurira Timothy

Academic Registrar

