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Traditional Leaders' Perspectives on the Risk Factors of Alcohol Abuse Amongst the Youth: The Case of Oshikango in the Ohangwena Region of Namibia

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Abstract. Traditional leaders in Oshikango perceive alcohol abuse amongst the youth as one of the greatest challenges of our time. Alcohol abuse amongst the youth is seen as an emergent concern in Namibia, which affects society in terms of high risk behaviours such as crime, violence, absenteeism, and school dropouts. This qualitative study was aimed at exploring and describing traditional leaders' perspectives on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. In this qualitative study, in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with traditional leaders by means of purposive sampling method. An exploratory research design was utilized. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and ethical approval was obtained from the University of Namibia's ethical approval committee. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Data were collected with the aid of a semi-structured interview guide. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and field notes were taken. Thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data. The main theme on social determinants revealed that a combination of risk factors, such as excessive alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango relate to loss of life; stealing; peer delinquents; peer pressure and that parental and familial substance abuse contribute a lack of good role models as well as youth capitalizing on the ignorance of their parents. The study concluded that these social determinants play a significant role in contributing to the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango. This study therefore recommends that in order to combat alcohol abuse amongst the youth, emphasis should be placed on strategies that address parental and familial alcohol abuse, low parental monitoring, peer norms, peer drinking, peer influence, peer delinquency, programme interventions on how to address these factors at individual, family and society level, as well as law reform and law enforcement.

Keywords. Traditional leaders, perspectives, risk factors, alcohol abuse, youth

Introduction and Problem Formulation

Alcohol abuse amongst the youth is perceived as a global burden, leading to twelve percent (12%) of deaths worldwide (Nowak, Papiermik, Mikulska and Czarkowska-Paczek, 2018). It accounts for more than a quarter of all the 15 to 19 years of age youth worldwide,

which amounts to hundred and fifty five million adolescents (WHO, 2018). In Namibia alcohol abuse amongst the youth is seen as an emergent problem, which affects society in terms of high risk behaviours, such as homicide, stealing, violence, absenteeism, school dropouts and loss of interest in schoolwork (Kauaria, Kaundjua & Mufune, 2015 and Chibaya, 2016). Alcohol is also the most widely abused substance in Namibia (Mustonen, Beukes & Du Preez, 2001) due to its availability (Lebeau & Yoder, 2009, p. xiii). A comprehensive, nationwide survey by SIAPAC (2002) found that fifty five percent (55%) of Namibian adults consumed more than 10 litres of alcohol per week, and a study of Namibian school children found that alcohol use was also high among adolescents. According to Chinsembu, Siziya, Muula and Rudatsikira (2008) data from the World Health Organization (WHO) showed that forty three (43%) of Namibian school children aged 13 to 17 years were regular consumers of alcohol. Barth and Hubbard (2009) found that fifty three point five percent (53.5%) of youth aged 13-30 years in Namibia use alcohol. The Namibian newspaper (2013:1) reported that twenty four out of thirty (80%) learners in one classroom at a secondary school in Windhoek, Namibia, tested positive for substance abuse. According to The Namibian (2013:1) an increasing number of secondary school children are indulging in substance abuse and teachers put the blame on poor parenting (UNICEF-Namibia, 2007:2). Data from a school-based global survey from UNESCO, UNODC or WHO (2017) confirms that excessive alcohol consumption appears amongst the Namibian school children and youth which show that one in four children between the ages of 13 and 15 years have used alcohol during the previous month. Cigarette smoking is the gateway drug to hard drugs and peer pressure plays a big role in the abuse of substance by youth. Too many youth seems to think of experimentation with substances as an acceptable part of transition into adulthood. Many of the school-going youth, when caught, are punished if they are not suspended or expelled from school.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2008), substance abuse is worsened by complex socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, and crime in general. These social evils are disturbing to many families and communities. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health reported the prevalence of alcohol use disorders and alcohol dependence in Namibia to be significantly higher compared to the overall African region (5.1% vs. 3.3% and 2.2% vs. 1.4%, respectively). Also, Namibia's alcohol per capita consumption and prevalence of heavy episodic (binge) drinking ranked as the third and sixth-highest, respectively, out of 45 countries in the African region (WHO, 2014). Lightfoot, Maree, Ananias (2009) and Mufune (2003 & 2008) agreed by arguing that alcohol use is high in southern African countries, especially in Namibia. In Namibia, there are policy and legislative initiatives that direct alcohol consumption and tobacco smoking, particularly in light of the growing problem of alcohol use among youth. For example, the government of Namibia is concerned about underage drinking and therefore had promulgated a Liquor Act aimed at controlling underage drinking. The Liquor Act, Act No. 6 of 1998 (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998, pp. 14-15) is very specific on "the need to avoid, as far as possible, the establishment of licensed premises in the vicinity of schools or places of worship" (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998, 16 A iii). Section 56 of the Liquor Act, Act No. 6 of 1998 states: "*No licensee, or manager or employee of such licensee, shall, in the course of business conducted in terms of a license, sell to any person under the age of 18 years, or supply such person with any drink or substance, which contains more than three percent of alcohol by volume*" (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998, pp. 14-15). In January 2011, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and the Coalition on Responsible Drinking established the National Alcohol Traders Program to help

ensure compliance with regulations on alcohol sales and advertising. Furthermore, parts of the Namibia Tobacco Products Control Act of 2010, which is already being enforced, provides for among others, the reduction of demand for and supply of tobacco products, and protection from exposure to tobacco smoke. However, much is still desired in terms of stricter implementation of legislation and program interventions.

In spite of the extensive reporting of worsening problems with substance abuse among the youth, little research has been undertaken on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Namibia. There is a scarcity of research on alcohol abuse and its associations to risk factors amongst Namibian youth. Among the few general studies done on alcohol abuse, are those by the LeBeau and Yoder (2009) and SIAPAC (2002). Even these studies did not challenge the issue of how alcohol abuse among youth is associated with risky behaviors. There is a lack of research on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in the Oshikango town in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. Little is known about traditional leaders' perspectives on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango and as a result, this article sought to explore and describe traditional leaders' perspectives on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango in the Ohangwena region of Namibia. Research work on traditional leaders' perspectives on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango is important, because in rural Oshikango intervention in terms of prevention and treatment are not contextualized to the conditions of the region in general and Oshikango as a border town in particular rather get imposed on findings from metropolitan cities, such as Windhoek. This study aimed to explore and describe traditional leaders' perspectives on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango in the Ohangwena region in Namibia.

Theoretical Framework

This study applied Bronfenbrenner's (2013) Ecological Model in exploring and describing traditional leaders' perspectives of the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango in the Ohangwena region in Namibia. This theoretical framework appropriately helped to explain the relationship between substance abuse, in particular, alcohol abuse amongst the youth, and systems in which youth interact with. Substance abuse amongst youth is one way or another influenced and impacted by both the environment and its inhabitants. Bronfenbrenner's (2013) Ecological Model implies that a substance abuser is affected by different types of environmental systems. The structures of these ecological systems begin with the individual domain, at the microsystem level, moving outwards to the mesosystem, exosystem and finally, the macrosystem level. In other words, the importance of the ecological system theory in this study is that it explains how individual behaviors are influenced by the characteristics of the external environment in which they live and interact one way or the other. Thus, the ecological system theory is vital to this study because it is easier to explain dysfunctional behaviors within the communities.

Research Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was utilized for this study. This paper was part of a bigger mixed-method study that examined risk and prevalence factors of substance abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango border town. The study population consisted of traditional leaders in the border town. The researchers collected data through in-depth interviews with traditional leaders from the Ohangwena region. The traditional leaders were purposefully selected based on their likelihood to have contact with a more significant/larger population from

the Ohangwena region. The qualitative approach was found appropriate as the study took place in a natural setting where data were gathered by directly talking to the traditional leaders in their areas where they were experiencing/witnessing the problem. The ‘Inquiry into meaning’ focusses on the researcher’s attempt in understanding how others, in this study traditional leaders make sense of their experiences. The study utilized an *exploratory-descriptive research design*. The purpose of exploratory, descriptive and contextual study is to gain a broad understanding of a situation or phenomenon (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). The exploratory design enabled the researchers to explore and describe traditional leaders’ perspectives of the risk factors associated with alcohol abuse amongst the youth of Oshikango contextually in order to gain a broader understanding of and insight into the phenomenon under study. The descriptive design on the other hand aimed at describing the risk factors associated with alcohol abuse amongst the youth contextually (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). It focused on “how” and “who” questions and enabled the researchers to provide a detailed, highly accurate picture of the background and context of the participants’ situation (Neuman, 2000). The method ensured contextual understanding of the participants; traditional leaders’ perspectives of alcohol abuse amongst the youth of Oshikango. This design gave the participants a chance to discuss and clarify their beliefs and attitudes towards alcohol abuse amongst the youth. Exploring these perspectives through in-depth, face-to-face interviews constitute a critical step for developing recommendations that could help to manage alcohol abuse amongst the youth. The researchers needed to understand the data and observations obtained from the participants within the social meaning that forms it. Thus, the researchers provided the participants with an opportunity to describe their perceptions of the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango in the Ohangwena region in Namibia. For the purpose of this study, an applied research approach was used (empirical study). This approach enabled the researchers to gain valuable knowledge and first-hand experience of the alcohol abuse problems experienced by young people in Oshikango. The qualitative approach was chosen as the study sought to gain the understanding, knowledge and insight of the risk factors associated with alcohol abuse amongst the youth. The researchers used the face-to-face interview technique to collect qualitative data from three traditional leaders from the community of Oshikango, two males and one female between the ages of 37 and 50 years of age. The researchers were also able to observe, listen to and reflect on what the participants were saying.

Data Collection and Analysis

On the issues of reliability and validity Neuman (2007:120) states “*qualitative researchers are more interested in authenticity than validity. Authenticity means giving a fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it every day*”. The authors of this article found it imperative to understand the experiences of the participants from their point of view by using a semi-structured interview guide to collect qualitative data through the use of individual face-to-face interviews. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with the traditional leaders to uncover information on their perspectives, feelings, opinions, thoughts, and experiences on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth. The face-to-face interviews were flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee said. Open-ended questions were used to elicit the views and opinions from the traditional leaders on the risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth. The advantage of using open-ended questions is when a variable is relatively unexplored or unknown to the researcher (Fouché, & De Vos, 1998). The face-to-face interviews had a moderator and a scribe, who took notes throughout the

discussions, listened to notable quotes, noted several key points in response to each question, monitored recording equipment and gave an oral summary and feedback after each discussion. The responses were recorded on tape with the prior consent of the participants and audio-recordings for the interviews were transcribed verbatim for content analysis and translated from Oshiwambo into English where and when necessary. The credibility of the data-generation process was enhanced and protected through immersion in the narration of the research participants. In this regard, Neuman (2007:249) explains that “*field researchers depend on what members tell them. This makes the credibility of members and their statements part of reliability...field researchers takes subjectivity and context into account as they evaluate credibility*”. The open-endedness of narrative research is the strength of the method, and there is no primary method for assessment of validity and reliability (Overcash, 2003). Narrative methods lend themselves a holistic view of human experience. Overcash (2003:182) states that, as with all research, consistency tends to be a foremost element to collecting and analysing the data. Consistency has been achieved in the interviews by using the semi-structured interview guide, the use of a secure setting in which the interviews were conducted. The narrations generated presented a credible overview of the lived experiences of the participants. The transferability of the data was evaluated in terms of the meaningfulness of the findings. The data were analysed using an inductive method. The inductive approach involves analysing data with little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework and uses the actual data itself to derive the structure of analysis. This approach is comprehensive and therefore time-consuming and is most suitable where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon. The researcher used the inductive way in data analysis (coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data). Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research. Since the study was following a qualitative approach, data was analysed in themes. Data obtained through face-to-face interviews were analysed and qualitative data were analysed thematically.

Ethical Considerations

According to Polit and Beck (2012:150) when humans are used as study participants, care must be exercised to ensure that their rights are protected. This was done by seeking ethical approval and permission from the research ethics committee of the University of Namibia and the Ministry of Education and consent from the participants. The researcher obtained permission from the participants through a written consent letter, which they signed. In order to ensure confidentiality, the researcher did not state the names and identity of the participants in this paper. The researcher explained the benefits and/or effects of the research to the participants.

Findings

During analysis, the following themes emerged from the interview transcripts and were noted as social determinants contributing to risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst youth, namely; 1) loss of life; 2) stealing; 3) parental and familial substance abuse which contributes to a lack of good role models; 4) wrong friends and peer pressure and 5) youth capitalizing on the ignorance of their parents. Each theme is discussed with verbatim quotes from participants in italics.

Loss of life

One of the themes identified in this study described loss of life as one of the major risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango. In response to a question on risk factors of alcohol abuse amongst the youth all three the traditional leaders indicated that alcohol and drug abuse among the youth in Oshikango lead to loss of life.

One of the participants said:

"..... As you know especially at Odibo, there are cases of people being killed ... a school child was killed ... just recently somebody was killed in a church... And this type of action takes place in the evening after people spend the whole day consuming alcohol. They consume whatever they consume".

A second participant narrated:

"Alcohol abuse amongst the youth in Oshikango is not a concern, it is a problem. It is not even a concern it is a very big problem in the community. Especially, for us who are staying here near the border some of the youth, they are coming from the other side (meaning Angola) and others are coming from our own houses, it is really a problem. And you see the types of activities that are taking place at those cuca shops are fighting, insulting each other and killing each other, it is really a big problem".

The third participant stated:

"You find the person will become aggressive towards others... Even to kill a person, he doesn't care, just doesn't care ... eh hh ... for example 'I think my girlfriend last night cheated on me, let me just go there', when he goes there, two to three words ... then they start quarrelling and even stabbing her".

It is evident from the narrations above that alcohol abuse amongst the youth plays a major role in criminal activities and violence. It is found that excessive drinking has the ability to lower inhibitions, impair a person's judgement and increase the risk of aggressive behaviours. Because of this, alcohol-related violence and crime rates are on the rise throughout the country. This study found that neighborhood levels of crime were associated with adolescents' use of substance abuse. One can draw the conclusion from this study that once youth abuses substances, he or she is likely to commit some or other crimes. Data from this study suggest that youth's engagement in alcohol abuse in Oshikango significantly increases their risk of committing violent offenses, such as killing and stealing.

Stealing

This study found that stealing, pickpocketing, loitering and breaking into cars and houses were some of the crimes committed by some of the Oshikango youth members who abuse alcohol and illegal substances according to the participants.

One participant narrated:

"Stealing from the houses ... I can give an example of myself. I have these plastics chairs. I had 40 of them in my house and if you get there today you may find less than 10. Where are they? How did they move out of the house? Somebody may have taken them to sell them to those for alcohol, for money. For example, I am keeping a friend in my house who is very

difficult to stay with, he steals, he drinks, he drinks ... and when he drinks, when he get drunk you don't know whether is it alcohol or is drugs, it becomes very, very difficult”.

Another participant said:

“They also have friends and again they steal. So, we do not doubt where they found money. Like now, in towns there are places where you can sell old steels, you see! Don't leave your cars there, you will find the cooler stolen you will find the generator is taken and it is taken to be sold to those places. And there are many cars which are broken in over the fields. But the money is not going to be used for something useful, they will only go and buy drugs and alcohol”.

This study found that part of abusing alcohol, youth commits different crimes as a result of substance abuse. Some of the crimes were committed under the influence of alcohol, while others were committed to access substances. It is not only the adoption of similar behavior among peers that result from substance abuse, but also the adoption of other forms of risk-taking, criminal, or delinquent behavior (Bezinović & Malatestinić, 2009:163). This study found that alcohol abuse among the youth in Oshikango leads to risk factors that can intensify a thief's feelings of desperation and cause them to steal someone's money or property. While some thieves desire a better lifestyle or want to make a quick buck, others can turn into repeat offenders. The consequences of stealing from someone are harsh and may entail time in jail, criminal charges on one's record, fines and other legal troubles. At the microsystem level, Ziervogel et al. (1997-1998) and Stacey (in Parry, 1998) report that boredom is one of the reasons youth abuse substances. According to Wegner et al. (2008) boredom is associated with dropping out of school, which is, in turn, a cause for joblessness, which further places youth at risk of substance abuse. Evidence also points to the fact that youth are also prone to substance abuse because of their vulnerability (Mohasoa, 2010). Youth become vulnerable because they are in a phase of substantial experimentation they are unemployed, have no income and are poor, among other things (Kadalié & Thomas, 2013; Parry et al., 2012). This finding is corroborated by Rocha-Silva (1997). Mohasoa (2010) also reports that youth use substances because they are overwhelmed by the challenges in their own lives or families, and society at large.

Parental and Familial Substance Abuse contribute to a lack of good role models (Microsystem)

The microsystem envelopes the individual domain and represents one's immediate environment. It focusses, *inter alia*, on the household and family influences, neighbourhood, school and peer pressures (Bronfenbrenner, 2013). In this study family as the most significant determinant of substance abuse by the youth at the microsystem level is singled out. Parental and familial substance abuse does not only affect an individual, but it also impacts family members and friends – including children, setting a bad example for the youth. Substance abuse can lead to bad parenting and modeling behavior for children and youth. In most cases where parents are drinking, they lead by bad example and children copy from their behaviour.

One of the participants said:

“It means children have no more the right path, it is lost, but where did it come from? It comes from parenting, in the house there is no more proper parenting”.

In a study of learners in the Western Cape of South Africa, Peltzer and Ramlagan (2009) found a strong link between risky drinking behaviors and lack of parental and peer support, school truancy, and mental distress.

“Starting is a very big question because children at the very tender age start through example. And the example, either they have taken the example inside the house or ... because you could see that there are families, parents who also drink Children, they see that this people they drink”.

Pretorius (2003), observe that exposure to alcohol in the family causes risk behaviors, such as rebelliousness and having friends who drink (Pretorius 2010). In addition, literature shows that youths that have parents, who drink heavily, and/or are tolerant of alcohol use, as well as having close acquaintances who drink, place youth at risk for heavy drinking. In other words, role models play a significant part in the substance abuse space. Youths tend to imitate the behaviors of their parents, guardians or other influential people and quantitative and qualitative evidence suggest that those with adequate role models are less likely to indulge in substance abuse (Morojele et al. (2006); Ghuman et al. 2012). Equally, youth with inadequate role models (role models who drink or do drugs) consider it acceptable (Brook et al 2006 and Onya, 2005).

According to Carey (2014), people with a family history of alcohol problems may have different drinking patterns from those who do not have such a family history; in addition, those drinking patterns may lead to greater drinking problems. Parental drinking patterns have been shown to affect descendants over the life course. According to Huselid and Cooper (2010) youth model their own behavior on their parents’ patterns of consumption (including quantity and frequency), situations and contexts of use, attitudes regarding use, and use expectancies. Young adult offspring from the families with alcoholism had eminent levels of alcohol problems compared with peers with no family history of alcoholism. The likelihood of starting to drink was also found to relate to adolescent perceptions of greater mother’s and father’s permissiveness and to lower levels of adolescent identification with the mother. The structure and environment of the family unit, as well as parent-child relationship attributes (for example, parenting style, attachment and bonding, nurturance, abuse or neglect, conflict, discipline, and monitoring), have been found to compare with adolescent alcohol use (White, 2010). It is evident from this study that parental alcohol use disorders have been found to negatively affect the family situation during childhood. Parents, who heavily drink, display particular patterns of alcohol consumption and thereby increase the likelihood that their children will develop a drinking disorder when they are introduced to alcohol when they are young (Carey, 2014).

“They left empty bottles there then children start where they zip in where the parents have beer....and that is a beginning”

On the other hand, a nurturing home environment, encompassing family supervision and monitoring, together with open communication lines between parents and children, has been empirically determined to be strongly associated with low substance abuse (Meghdadpour et al. 2012). Meghdadpour et al (2012) found that in South Africa, family supervision is likely to reduce male youths being drunk by twenty-three percent and lowers their chance of using illegal drugs by thirty-eight percent. This study, therefore, recommends that in order to combat alcohol abuse amongst the youth, emphasis should be placed on strategies that address parental drinking, low parental monitoring, weak parental bonding, poor parent-child communication, poor school performance, little school commitment, peer norms, peer drinking, peer influence, peer delinquency. This study found that when there are no good parental role models for the youth, peers become role models and the outcomes may not be desirable.

Delinquents and Peer Pressure

Other drivers that have been identified by this study as key to alcohol abuse prevention amongst the youth in the microsystem are delinquent peers and peer pressure.

One of the participants stated:

“It means through friends’ influences, those wrong ones, in most cases wrong friends I have seen that like through my own child. He was at UNAM ... he got a friend from Zambia, they use to come at home and while at home they use alcohol ... I called him, I asked him where is the problem, and since then he never come back home anymore. He is totally influenced and gone. And that is because of wrong friends ... This is to say are wrong friends...” “And even if there are these difficulties some of them they start training their cousins. And if they go out and test this marijuana they can come and tell their... their ... their young cousins and brother that you remain ... eee. If you don’t do this I will beat you up”.

According to Bronfenbrenner’s (2013) Ecological theory, the mesosystem is simply a system of microsystems and how they interact. It involves linkages between an individual and family, family and school, peer group and family, or between family and church. The primary risk factor is when microsystems are not interacting well, leaving youth exposed to pressures that will see them submit to substance use. A good example is that if the family does not interact with peers of their children, such children will be exposed to peer pressure. The main message implied by the mesosystem is that substance abuse prevention programs should be multi-dimensional and integrated. South African empirical studies (Brook *et al.*, 2006; van Zyl 2013) indicate that peer pressure is one of the most significant and most consistent predictors of substance use among youth. Peers encourage their uninitiated peers to abuse substances and more often drug or alcohol use is celebrated with those taking illegal substances held in high regard. Youth will then want to be accepted by their peers in these substance abuse networks at all costs. According to Bility (1999), peer pressure is rampant in youth gang networks and other marginalized groups such as street children. Evidence also indicates that youth prefer to discuss issues with their peers more than they would with their family members, teachers, or medical doctors (Hoberg, 2003). They value opinions or support of their peers more than any other social structures at their disposal (Hoberg, 2003). It is clear from the finding of this study that the pressure to be recognized and accepted by peers and gain meaningful participation inadvertently put youth at risk of alcohol abuse.

Another participant in this study replied:

“And there are families where they don’t even touch alcohol even to bring alcohol in the house are a taboo. This also does help their children also not to drink, but then the children sneak out, they hang around with children from different families and they start testing and those from the families where people drinking when the parents are out of the house”..... “Who is harbouring these criminal we are saying maybe our own children who know maybe even in my house there is drugs I don’t know. You won’t be able to know”.

Youth capitalizing on the ignorance of their parents

Another participant narrated:

“When it comes to the type of drinks they are using, the youth are benefitting because they know that our parents, we don’t know. Some of those plants (marijuana) we are talking about here they can easily be planted in our houses without us recognising, they are kept in our houses and being consumed in our houses, and we don’t even detect it because we don’t know

the smell, we don't know the look of the thing, so, they are capitalising on our ignorance that is the thing that is very, very big problem that they are enjoying our ignorance”.

It can be concluded that youth capitalizes on the lack of knowledge and information of their parents about how marijuana looks like and smell. This result in some parents in Oshikango unknowingly watering these marijuana plants in their houses without recognizing that it is an illegal substance they are harbouring in their houses. As a result of some youth capitalizing on the ignorance their parents, some young people in Oshikango are free to use marijuana in their parents' house, because their parents do not recognize the look and smell of marijuana.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is clear from the traditional leaders' perspectives that the youth in Oshikango, as a border town in Namibia is plagued with alcohol abuse problems of great magnitude. This calls for greater efforts and effective strategies in dealing with the alcohol and substance abuse problem. This study also calls for a multi-pronged approach targeting supply and harm reduction. There is a need to put in place targeted and proactive efforts aimed at substance users to treatment. These should include scaling-up interventions or rehabilitation services at a community level, primarily by engaging in peer-led interventions. Long-term interventions for the prevention of alcohol use and abuse, dependence, treatment and care, along with supply reduction efforts are required. This study would like to highlight the need for providing a holistic substance abuse prevention training as a means to demand reduction, which is hoped will impact on the supply chain. Namibia needs to put in place or strengthen programs for monitoring and evaluating progress towards eliminating or reducing significantly the illicit manufacturing, marketing and trafficking of psychotropic substances in line with the Global Alliance for Prevention of Drug Use and Dependence. These efforts should extend beyond the jurisdiction of government departments and must also involve non-governmental organizations to address alcohol abuse. It was noted by Peltzer (2009:385) that preventive measures for substance abuse must be developed with the youth, but also with their parents, their teachers, and healthcare providers, as all these people could influence and are concerned with the living conditions of the youth. This recommends the need for inter-sectoral collaboration in the fight against alcohol and substance abuse among the youth.

Recommended Interventions for Consideration in Combating the Risk Factors of Alcohol Abuse amongst the Youth require an ecological framework, which takes a holistic view to the problem of alcohol abuse amongst the youth and demonstrates that risk factors driving substance abuse are interrelated and intervention strategies or programs for combating the tormentor should be integrated. This study found that alcohol abuse amongst the youth is a multi-dimensional challenge that requires a multifaceted and integrated range of interventions. Setlalentoa, Ryke and Herman Strydom (2015) suggested alcohol abuse prevention programs should be holistic, multi-level (local, regional and national), and multi-sectoral. Bronfenbrenner's (2013) ecological framework becomes handy when analyzing interventions as it allows the targeting of interventions to all risk factors at all levels: be it individual, micro, mesosystem, and exosystem. This study therefore recommends that for any intervention to be successful, it should be underpinned by the following set of principles as identified by Tswala (2005):

*“Principle 1: Interventions should promote protective factors and seek to lessen risk factors;
Principle 2: Prevention programs should be holistic and include all forms of substance abuse;*

Principle 3: Prevention programs should address the type of drug abuse problem in the local community;

Principle 4: To be effective prevention programs should be custom-made to deal with risks specific to audience characteristics;

Principle 5: Prevention programs that target families should seek to improve family relationships, including parenting skills practice in developing, discussing and enforcing family policies on substance abuse, training in drug education and information;

Principle 6: Prevention programs for adolescents should increase skills related to studying, communication, peer relationships, self-efficacy, assertiveness and drug resistance;

Principle 7: For maximum effectiveness prevention programs should employ interactive techniques;

Principle 8: Prevention programs should intervene and reach appropriate populations in multiple settings such as schools, recreational clubs and religious settings and,

Principle 9: Prevention programs should be used in the long-term with repeated reinforcing sessions over time”.

This study, therefore, proposes effective strategies at the individual level which target the youth directly and also take into account peer influence. These strategies include effective intervention programs, which address poor social skills, e.g. low self-esteem, depression, peer pressure and poor social coping strategies, among others. According to Brook (2012) these intervention programs should train young people on how to resist peer pressure as this is the single most important risk factor for the youth. This can be done by promoting peer-to-peer training programs. This study strongly advocates for prevention programs that attempt to engage the minds of young people to avoid boredom. Such activities include life skills programs, vocational training services, youth sport and recreational activities. As youth spend most of their time at school, school-based intervention programs are also vital.

This study also suggests that the microsystem interventions should target the youth concurrently with their peers, parents, and families. Improving parenting skills and behaviors is essential when trying to address a youth's immediate toxic environment. The training for parents should ideally focus on the importance of nurturing one's children; setting rules at home; managing and clarifying expectations; managing strong emotions; effective communication and peer skills; monitoring children's compliance to rules and applying appropriate discipline and rewards. It is also vital to reduce alcohol abuse among youth in order to improve the family environment. This can be achieved through regulatory interventions; decreasing access to alcohol through increased taxes; brief interventions for high-risk drinkers; regulation of unlicensed outlets, and removing outlets from residential areas; advertisement restrictions; community mobilization; and product-related strategies, such as appropriate labeling.

This study concludes by recommending societal or community macro-level Substance Prevention Awareness Campaigns, which should focus on reducing youth's access to substances and transforming societal norms that promote indulgence in these substances. Awareness campaigns against substance abuse can be done using radio, television, internet, posters and pamphlets to spread the message. Most informal settlements, where the poorest live, have a high concentration of cucashops, *shebeens* or liquor outlets, which means that intervention should be targeted at these communities. Regulations and stricter law enforcement play a significant role in decreasing substance abuse. The authors of this article recommend the use of the ecological framework as a basis for designing programs and interventions to combat substance abuse. This study suggests that there is a need for more structured and evidence-based

campaigns, which will be able to advocate increased focus and resources to combating substance abuse. The effort should be maintained throughout the course of the year with campaign renewals at peak high recreational periods.

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