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Effects of alcohol abuse on involvement of youth in productive economic activities in Baringo Central Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to analyse the effects of alcohol abuse on youth involvement in productive economic activities in Baringo's central sub-county, Kenya. The issue of alcohol abuse among youth is pervasive globally, with approximately 30 per cent of adolescents engaging in binge drinking, leading to severe consequences for health systems, economic productivity, and social stability. In Baringo Central Sub-County, approximately 40 per cent of the youth engage in regular alcohol consumption, presenting a critical public health issue. This study aimed to assess the effects of alcohol abuse on youth involvement in productive economic activities, including crop farming, animal herding, entrepreneurial activities, and formal employment. The researchers utilised a cross-sectional descriptive research design to collect data from youth aged 18-35 using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that 66 per cent of respondents reported missed farming deadlines, 69 per cent indicated neglect of livestock, 69 per cent of young entrepreneurs reported reduced motivation, and 70 per cent of respondents in formal employment reported increased absenteeism due to alcohol abuse. These results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions such as comprehensive awareness programs, enhanced access to rehabilitation services, and stricter regulations on alcohol sales to address alcohol abuse and support the socio-economic development of youth in Baringo Central Sub-County. The study contributes valuable insights into the socio-economic effects of alcohol abuse, informing policymakers and stakeholders about the necessary measures to mitigate these impacts and promote sustainable development.

Key words: Alcohol abuse, animal herding, crop farming, entrepreneurial activities, formal employment.



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INTRODUCTION

Despite numerous initiatives aimed at curbing alcohol consumption, Baringo Central Sub-County continues to grapple with alarmingly high rates of alcohol abuse among its youth. This pervasive issue significantly hampers the involvement of young people in productive economic activities such as crop farming, animal herding, and entrepreneurial ventures. The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated, as alcohol abuse diminishes their effectiveness and productivity in these crucial sectors, leading to missed opportunities and decreased output. The ripple effects of this problem are felt across the community as diminished youth productivity directly correlates with lower economic growth and development in the region. The persistent issue of alcohol abuse among youth in Baringo Central not only stifles economic potential but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and social instability. Families bear the brunt of increased healthcare costs and the socio-economic burden of supporting unproductive or unemployed youth. Additionally, the social fabric of the community is strained by the associated issues of family conflicts, crime, and deteriorating health conditions. Despite efforts by local authorities and organisations to address this problem, the lack of effective enforcement and targeted interventions continues to exacerbate the situation. Understanding the specific socio-economic effects of alcohol abuse within this local context is crucial for developing strategies that can break this cycle and promote sustainable development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Africa, cultural norms and socio-economic factors play a significant role in influencing alcohol consumption patterns among youth. Traditional ceremonies and rites of passage often involve alcohol, normalising its consumption from a young age. For instance, in Nigeria, cultural celebrations frequently feature alcohol, contributing to early drinking initiation among adolescents (Atwoli et al., 2019). Similarly, in South Africa, alcohol is often seen as a symbol of masculinity or a coping mechanism for social stressors (Peltzer & Ramlagan, 2019). These cultural influences exacerbate the economic consequences of alcohol abuse, which include unemployment, reduced productivity, and increased healthcare costs. The World Health

Organization reports that alcohol-related healthcare expenditures and loss of productivity cost African countries billions of dollars annually, highlighting the profound economic challenges posed by youth alcohol abuse (WHO, 2021). In Kenya, and specifically in Baringo Central Sub-County, alcohol abuse among youth is a critical public health issue with severe socio-economic ramifications. Local data indicates that approximately 40 per cent of youth in Baringo County engage in regular alcohol consumption, with binge drinking being prevalent (Kimani et al., 2019). Socio-economic conditions, cultural influences, and the availability of cheap illicit alcohol are significant factors contributing to these trends. Alcohol abuse among youth in this region leads to poor educational outcomes, limited employment opportunities, and strained family relationships, perpetuating cycles of poverty and social instability (Kipchirchir et al., 2019). The high prevalence of alcohol abuse not only undermines the health and well-being of young individuals but also hampers their potential to contribute productively to society, necessitating urgent and effective intervention strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive research design to examine the effects of alcohol abuse on youth involvement in productive economic activities in Baringo Central Sub-County (Levin, 2006). The target population comprised youth aged 18-35 years, selected to represent the critical developmental stage where alcohol abuse impacts are significant (World Health Organization, 2014). Stratified random sampling was utilised to ensure diverse representation across different wards within the sub-county (Creswell, 2014). Data collection involved the use of structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires, featuring closed-ended questions and a Likert scale, gathered quantitative data on alcohol consumption frequency, quantity, types consumed, and its effects on economic activities such as crop farming, animal herding, entrepreneurial ventures, and formal employment (Likert, 1932). In-depth interviews provided qualitative insights into personal experiences and perceptions of alcohol abuse's impacts (Patton, 2015). SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data, employing descriptive statistics to

infer and summarise the data, including multiple regression analyses, to determine relationships between alcohol abuse and economic productivity measures (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis involving transcription, data coding, and interpretation to identify key themes relevant to the study's objectives. The analysis was facilitated by NVivo software, ensuring systematic organisation and comprehensive examination of the qualitative data. The combined methodologies provided a robust framework for understanding the socio-economic effects of alcohol abuse among youth in the region.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Crop Farming Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The study found that 66 per cent of respondents reported that alcohol consumption led to missed farming deadlines. Seventy per cent indicated reduced time spent on farming activities, while 65 per cent experienced lower crop yields due to alcohol abuse. Additionally, 68 per cent of the youth stated that their productivity in crop farming decreased, and 72 per cent mentioned that alcohol impaired their ability to manage farming operations effectively. The findings are illustrated in Figure 1.

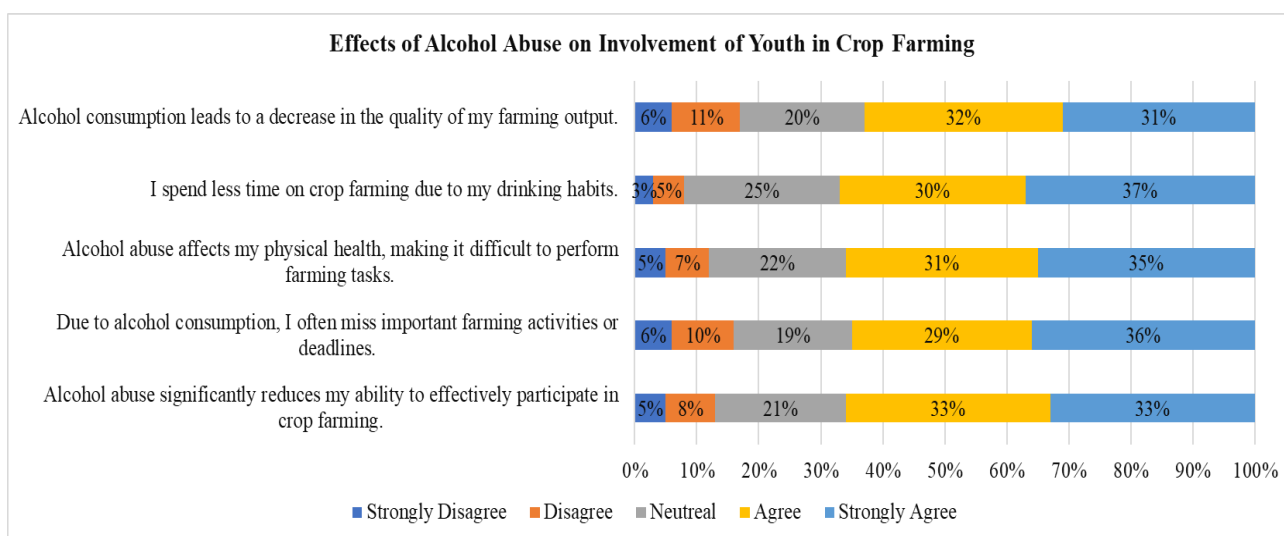


Figure 1: Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Crop Farming Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Animal Herding Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The impact of alcohol abuse on animal herding was significant, with 69 per cent of respondents reporting neglect of livestock due to alcohol consumption. Seventy-one per cent noted poor animal health, and 67 per cent experienced reduced productivity in their

herding activities. Furthermore, 73 per cent of the youth indicated increased incidences of livestock diseases, and 70 per cent reported a lower market value of their animals as a consequence of alcohol abuse. The results are presented in Figure 2.

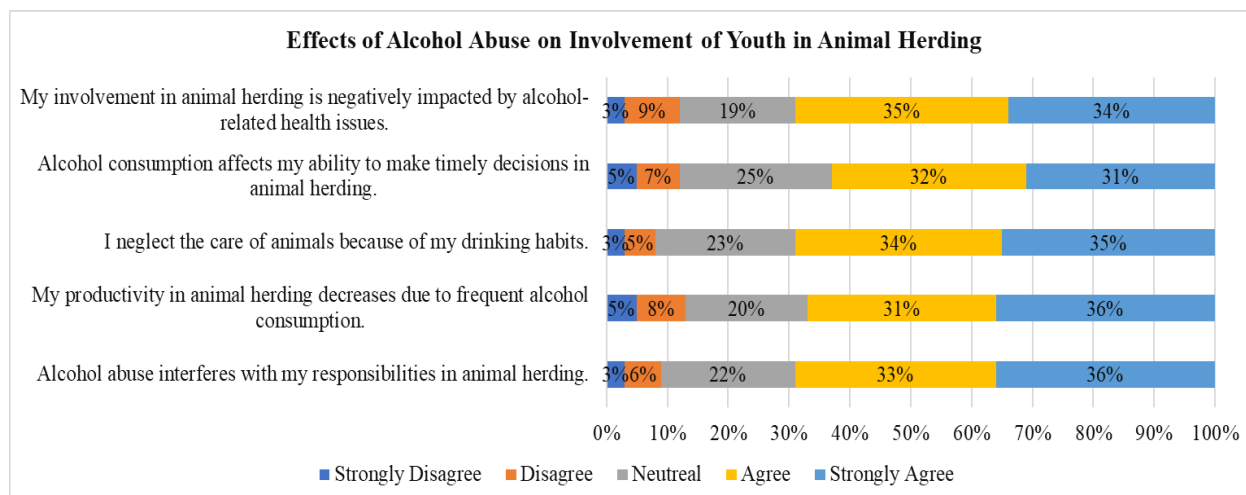


Figure 2: Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Animal Herding Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Entrepreneurial Activities Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

Alcohol abuse adversely affected entrepreneurial activities, with 69 per cent of young entrepreneurs reporting reduced motivation to manage their businesses. Seventy-two per cent faced difficulties

maintaining regular business operations, and 68 per cent struggled to meet customer demands. Additionally, 70 per cent reported poor financial management due to alcohol consumption, and 66 per cent experienced reduced business growth and profitability. The results are presented in Figure 3.

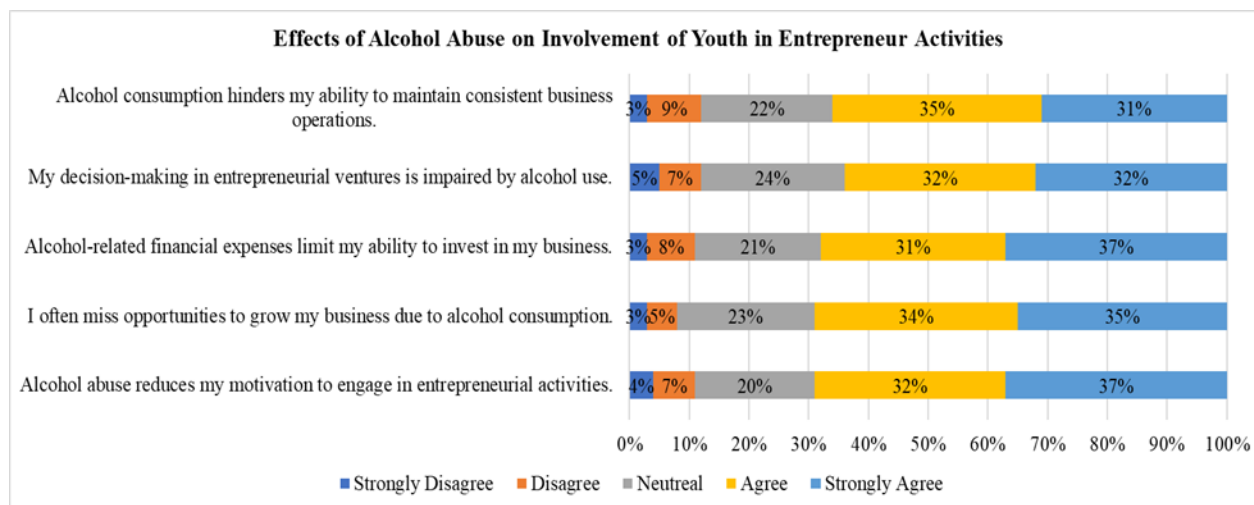


Figure 3: Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Involvement of Youth in Entrepreneurial Activities in Baringo Central Sub-County

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Formal Employment Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The study revealed that alcohol abuse significantly impacted formal employment, with 70 per cent of respondents reporting increased absenteeism from

work. Sixty-eight per cent noted poor job performance, while 65 per cent had difficulties maintaining steady employment. Furthermore, 72 per cent of the youth experienced strained relationships with employers and colleagues, and 67 per cent faced higher job

termination rates due to alcohol consumption. The findings are summarised in Figure 4.

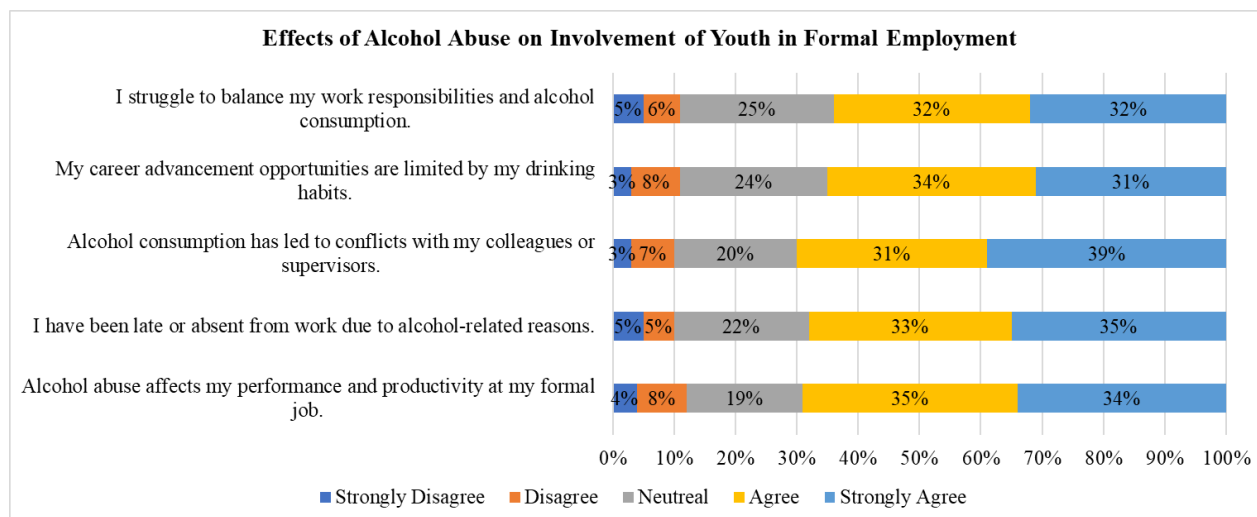


Figure 4: Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Involvement of Youth in Formal Employment in Baringo Central Sub-County

Discussion

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Crop Farming Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The findings indicate that alcohol abuse significantly impairs the productivity of youth in crop farming, with 66 per cent of respondents reporting missed farming deadlines and 70 per cent noting reduced time spent on farming activities. This aligns with the Human Capital Theory, which argues that health is a critical component of the human capital necessary for productivity (Becker, 1964). Alcohol abuse depletes this human capital by impairing physical and cognitive functions, thus reducing productivity and effectiveness in farming. The lower crop yields reported by 65 per cent of respondents reflect the diminished capacity to perform agricultural tasks efficiently, consistent with previous studies indicating similar trends (Okeke et al., 2021). The decreased productivity (68 %) and impaired management abilities (72 %) further support the theory that poor health due to alcohol abuse hinders the accumulation and utilisation of human capital, leading to adverse economic outcomes.

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Animal Herding Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

Alcohol abuse significantly affects animal herding, with 69 per cent of respondents reporting neglect of livestock and 71 per cent noting poor animal health.

This supports the Social Exclusion Theory, which highlights how substance abuse can lead to social and economic marginalisation (Pohlan, 2019). Neglect and reduced productivity in herding (67%) due to alcohol consumption result in increased incidences of livestock diseases (73%) and lower market value of animals (70%). These outcomes diminish economic productivity and exacerbate social exclusion by limiting the youths' ability to participate fully in economic activities. The findings align with studies in Nigeria and South Africa, where alcohol abuse similarly impacted livestock management and economic stability (Okeke et al., 2021; Moyo et al., 2020).

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Entrepreneurial Activities Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The detrimental effects of alcohol abuse on entrepreneurial activities are evident, with 69 per cent of young entrepreneurs reporting reduced motivation and 72 per cent facing difficulties in maintaining regular business operations.

Human Capital Theory explains these findings by suggesting that alcohol abuse depletes the cognitive and physical resources necessary for effective business management (Schultz, 1961). The difficulties in meeting customer demands (68%) and

poor financial management (70%) reflect the impaired decision making and operational capabilities caused by alcohol consumption. Reduced business growth and profitability (66%) highlight the long-term economic disadvantages posed by alcohol abuse, aligning with the theory that health investments are crucial for economic success. These results are in tandem with previous research showing similar impacts on youth entrepreneurship (Mbwana et al., 2020).

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Formal Employment Among Youth in Baringo Central Sub-County

The study reveals that alcohol abuse significantly impacts formal employment, with 70 per cent of respondents reporting increased absenteeism and 68 per cent noting poor job performance. Social Exclusion Theory elucidates these findings by indicating that alcohol abuse can lead to marginalisation in the workplace, reducing opportunities for stable employment (Lenoir, 1974). The difficulties in maintaining steady employment (65%) and strained relationships with employers and colleagues (72%) suggest that alcohol consumption not only affects individual productivity but also social interactions crucial for job retention and career advancement. The higher job termination rates (67%) reflect the compounded effects of health deterioration and social exclusion, limiting the youths' economic opportunities. These results are consistent with previous studies in Kenya and other regions, highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems to mitigate these impacts (Mwangi et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: This study concludes that alcohol abuse among youth in Baringo Central Sub-County significantly hampers their involvement in productive economic activities, including crop farming, animal herding, entrepreneurial activities, and formal employment. Key findings indicate that alcohol consumption leads to missed deadlines, reduced productivity, and impaired management in crop farming. In animal herding, alcohol abuse results in neglect of livestock, poor animal health, and decreased economic output. Young entrepreneurs face diminished motivation, operational difficulties, and reduced business profitability due to alcohol consumption. Similarly, youth in formal employment experience increased absenteeism, poor job performance, and higher job termination rates.

Recommendations: The study's findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions to address alcohol abuse among youth. By improving health outcomes and reducing alcohol consumption, these interventions can enhance productivity, economic stability, and social inclusion for the youth in Baringo Central. These results contribute to the broader field by highlighting the intricate relationship between substance abuse and economic activities, supporting the need for integrated approaches that consider both health and socioeconomic factors. Overall, this research offers valuable perspectives into the socio-economic effects of alcohol abuse, informing policymakers and stakeholders about the urgent need for effective measures to mitigate these impacts and support the economic and social development of youth in Baringo Central Sub-County.

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