

## Prevalence of Alcohol and Drug Abuse among Students in Chuka University, Kenya

### Article History

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**Abstract:** Alcohol and drugs abuse especially among the youth is on increase in many parts of the World. University students have been reported as the most affected by the challenge of alcohol and drugs abuse world over. In Kenya the National Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA) report has indicated that 84% of youth between 16 to 24 years are involved in alcohol and drug abuse. University students fall under this age bracket. To mitigate this all universities in Kenya are required to have Alcohol and Drugs Abuse prevention committees and policy. This study aimed at finding out the prevalence of Alcohol and Drugs Abuse in Chuka University. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population was 15,290 Chuka University students. Simple random sampling technique was employed to choose 384 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows was used to analyze data. Data was presented in frequency distribution tables, bar chart and pie charts.

**Keywords:** Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, Addiction, Substance Abuse.

### 1. Introduction

It estimated that about five percent of adults in the world have at least tasted drugs once (UNODC, 2014). Alcohol alone kills about 0.2 million people every year (Razavi, 2012). This disorganizes families and leaves thousands of people devastated. Alcohol and drug abuse has become a major cause of health and social economic problem in the world today (Watson, 2002). There are indications that Alcohol and drug abuse are seriously increasing in developing countries (Watson, 2002). Tulu and Keskis (2015) found that Alcohol and drug Abuse was highly prevalent among the second year students of Makelle University in Ethiopia. Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) found that 43.9% of University students in Benin City had abused drugs at a certain point in their campus life. The same study found that the most abused drugs were coffee 66.9%, Alcohol 66.7%, Cigarette 57.1%. Marijuana 52.2% and collar nut 51.4 %. Maithya (2009) found that 29.6% of university students were involved in alcohol and drug abuse. Singh and Singh (1979) found that one out of ten undergraduate students had used drugs in the past and the most commonly abused was alcohol at 58%. Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2011) found that alcohol was the most abused drug by young people. Andrews (2001) found that more than half of high school students in USA had got involved in drug abuse before they finished high school.

Buck (2011) found that the prevalence of alcohol among men was 53% and among women was 45%. Gebreslassie *et al.* (2013) found that the lifetime prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse among students in Northwest Ethiopia was 26.7 for Khat chewing, 31.1% for cigarette smoking and 36.4% alcohol intake for university students. Tesfaye *et al.* (2014) found that 62.4% Haramaya University students had used at least one drug in their lifetime. The study further found that 41. % had used khat, 50.2% had drunk alcohol, 22% had smoked cigarettes, 17.4 had used hashish at least ones in lifetime. Tesfaye *et al.* (2014) further found that among the drugs abuser 38% of students indicated that they chew khat sometime while 29% said they chewed khat always, 66.2% drunk sometimes while 33.8% drunk always. 81.1% smoked sometimes while 18.9 % smoked always. Those who indicated that the used illicit drugs sometimes were 44.4% while 55.6 said they used it always.

According to Burns (2014) World Drug Report of 2013 estimated that 5.2% of the people aged 15-64 used drugs like cannabis, opiates, and cocaine o and amphetamine stimulus at least once in a year. Degenhardt and Hall (2012) found that the prevalence of illicit drug abuse among university students in

United States ranged from 6 to 8 %. [El-Ansari et al. \(2015\)](#) did a study of drug abuse prevalence in seven universities in United Kingdom and found that 25% used drugs occasionally while 5 % used them regularly. According to [Dell et al. \(2011\)](#) WHO (2010) Survey and drug abuse in 82 countries showed that in 80% of the countries ADA was on increase, 11% were on decrease and 6% were stable. The study further found that intoxication and binge drinking was on increase among the young people. [Shelton and Savell \(2011\)](#) found that alcohol consumption levels were highest among students and the country with highest prevalence of binge drinking was Ireland at 44%, Romania 39%, Germany and Austria 36% while United Kingdom and Greece were at 34%. [Morgan et al. \(2009\)](#) found that about 81 % of Irish adults' drunken alcohol. [Morgan et al. \(2009\)](#) further found that 51 % of students were binge drinkers.

[Siyam et al. \(2017\)](#) carried out a study among university students in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and found that the prevalence of illicit drug use was highest at 45.7% infrequent users and 5.5% frequent users. In Indonesia there were 40.5% in frequent users and 5.2% frequent users. In Philippines the infrequent users were 13.1% while frequent users were 3.2 % . The lowest prevalence was Cambodia which had 0.2% infrequent user and 0% frequent users. A study by [Gupta et al. \(2013\)](#) on students using illicit drugs in India found at least 7% were using cannabis. A study in Middle East found that students' life time prevalence was 8% in Iran ([Gupta et al., 2013](#); [Mohammadpoorasl et al., 2014](#)).

A survey by ([NACADA, 2012](#)) found that substance abuse was forming a sub-culture among Kenyan youth. The study found that alcohol and drug abuse was wide spread among high school and university students and the commonly abused drugs were alcohol, tobacco, khat and cannabis. The study found that 11.7% of the youth used alcohol, 6.2% used tobacco 4.7% used khat and 1.5% used cannabis ([NACADA, 2012](#)). [NACADA \(2012\)](#) further found that students were also abusing imported illegal drugs like heroin, cocaine and madras.

### 1.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to assess the prevalence of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Chuka University. In descriptive survey the variables of the study are examined in their natural state with no manipulation [Njeru and Orodho \(2003\)](#). Descriptive survey design ends up with formulation of important principles and solutions to significant challenges because it produces statistical information that is used by policy makers, educators and other interested parties on various capacities ([Kombo and Tromp, 2006](#)). This design was suitable because it enabled the study to assess the prevalence of Alcohol and drug abuse among students in Chuka University.

### 1.2. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Third year students were purposely selected for this study. This is because they have a wider experience in the University and were therefore in a position to provide more accurate data on prevalence of Alcohol and drug abuse in the University. Simple random sampling was employed to select 384 respondents for this study. This number is considered adequate to make generalization for a population of 15,000 students according to [Kathuri and Pals \(1993\)](#).

## 2. Results and Discussion

The study sought to find out whether the respondents had ever taken drugs and the responses are shown in [figure 1](#).

Figure 1. Ever taken drugs

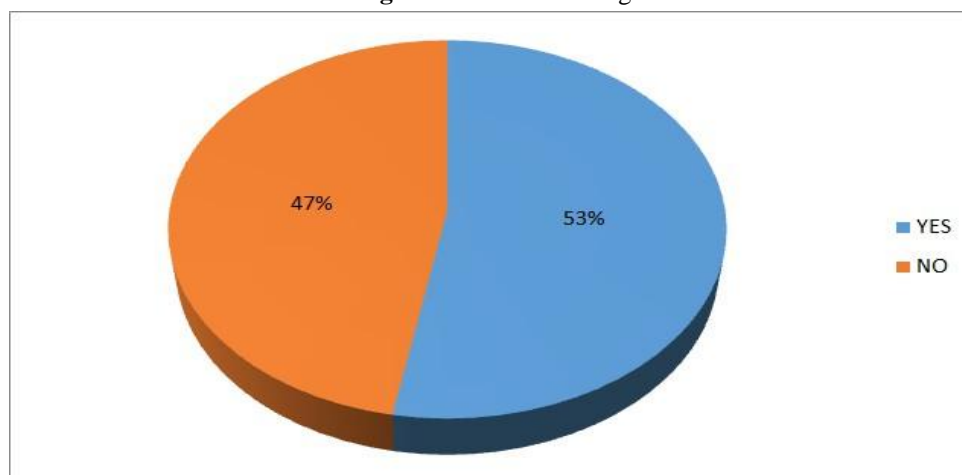


Figure 1 shows that 53% of the respondents indicated that they had ever taken while 47% indicated that they had never taken a drug. This concurs with the findings by Adeyemo *et al.* (2016) that 43.9 % of university students in Benin had abused drugs at a certain point in there university life and that of Tulu and Keskis (2015) that alcohol and drug abuse was highly prevalent among University students in Ethiopia. The findings further concur with findings by Mugumya *et al.* (2014) that 62.4% of Haramaya University students had used at least one drug in their lifetime.

The study collected data on when the respondents who indicated that they had ever take drugs took their first drugs and the responses are s shown in table 1.

**Table 1.**When first drug was taken

	Time first drug was taken	Frequency	Percent
	Primary School	39	17.5
	Secondary School	86	38.6
	University	98	43.9

According to table 2 43.9 % of the respondents indicated that they took their first drug while in the university, 38.6 % in secondary and 17.5 while in primary school.

The study further sought to find out when the respondents took their first alcohol and the findings are shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2.**When one Took First Alcohol

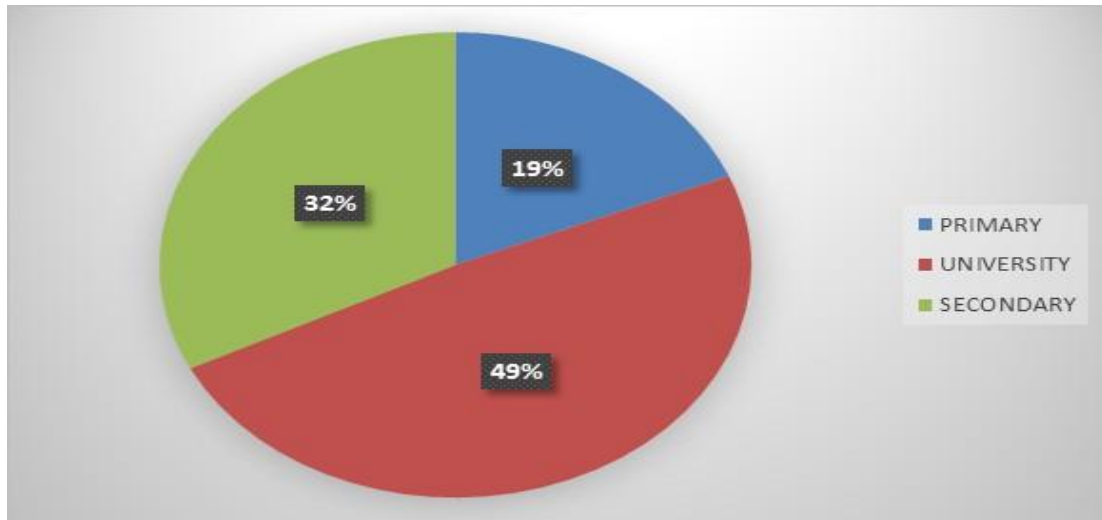


Figure 2 indicates that majority (49 %) of the respondents took their first alcohol in the university; while 32 % did it in primary school and 19% started taking beer while in primary school. This concurs with findings by Singh and Singh (1979) that 58% of university students abused alcohol.

The study further sought data on where the respondent took their first drugs and the responses are shown in table 2.

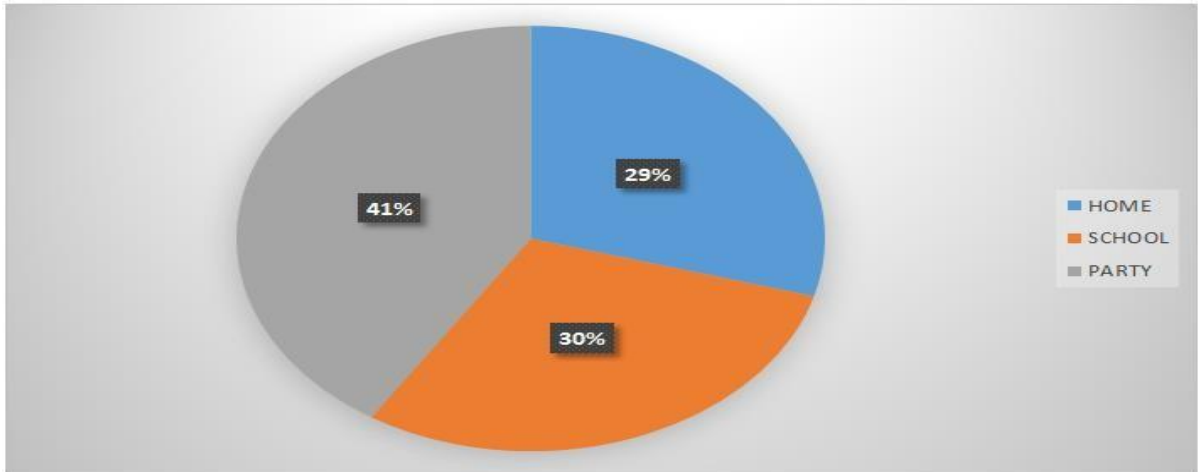
**Table 2.**Where Respondents Took Their First Drugs

	Frequency	Percent
Home	74	33.5
School	50	22.6
Party	97	43.9

According to table 2, 43.9 % of the respondents indicated that they took their first drug in a party while 22.6% took their firs drug in school.

The study also sought information on where the respondents took their first alcohol and the responses are shown in figure 3.

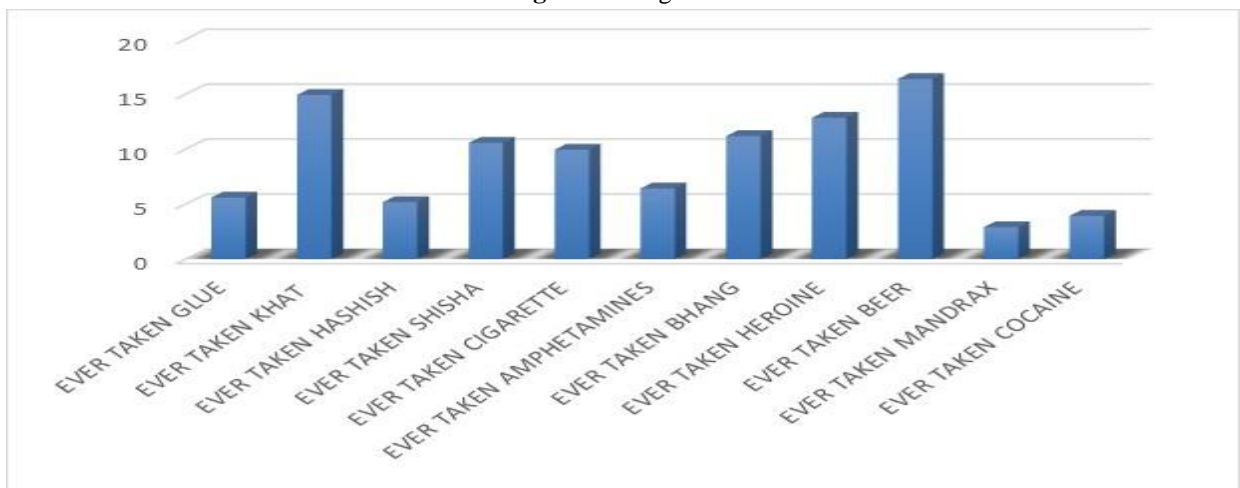
**Figure 3.** Where Respondents Took Their First Alcohol



According to [Figure 3](#) majority (41 %) of the respondents indicated that they took their first alcohol in a party while 30 % started taking alcohol in school and 29 % indicated that they first took alcohol at home.

The study sought information on what drugs the respondents had ever taken and the responses are as shown in [figure 4](#).

**Figure 4.** Drugs Ever Taken



According to [figure 3](#) majority of the respondents (16.5 %) indicated that they have ever taken alcohol, 15% agreed they have ever taken khat while 12.9% said they have ever taken heroine. This compares well with study by [Gebreslassie et al. \(2013\)](#) which found that 36.4 % of university students from North west Ethiopia had taken alcohol, 31.1% had taken khat while 21.3% had taken cigarettes. The percentage of those who took beer and khat among the Ethiopian university students is much higher than those who took the same from Chuka university.

The study further collected data on availability of drug in Chuka University environment and the responses are as shown in [table 3](#).

**Table 3.** Availability of Drugs around Chuka University

Drug Availability	N	PERCENTAGE
Alcohol	303	84.9%
Cigarettes	137	38.4%
Shisha	49	13.7%
Shisha	19	5.3%
Hashish	182	51.0%
Bhang	181	50.7%
Miraa	24	6.7%
Heroine	16	4.5%
Total	911	255.2%

Table 3 shows that the respondents indicated that the most available drugs were alcohol 84.9%, hashish 51% and bhang 5.7% of the respondents suggested that the least available was heroine at 4.5.

The study further sought information on the drugs abused in by Chuka University students and the respondents are shown in table 4.

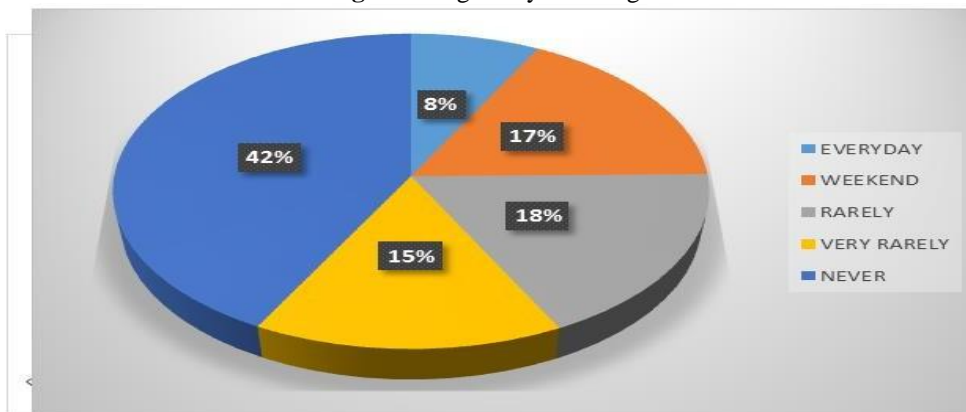
**Table 4.** Drugs Abused by Chuka University students

Drugs Abused		
	N	%
Alcohol	286	81.5%
Khat (Miraa)	129	36.8%
Heroine	17	4.8%
Madrax	13	3.7%
Bhang	140	39.9%
Shisha	47	13.4%
Harshish	12	3.4%
Cigarette	75	21.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>204.8%</b>

According to table 4, majority (81.5%) of the respondents indicated that Chuka University students abuse alcohol while 39.9% and 36.8 indicated that student abuse bhang and khat (miraa) respectively. The findings concurs with a similar study done in Europe by Rehm and Scafato (2011) which found that 76% consumed Alcohol while 6.7 % took cocaine and another study by WHO (2010) which found that 61% of students aged 21 in Europe abused drugs. The findings also agree with a study by Ghitza et al. (2011) that alcohol and drug abuse was rampant among secondary schools, colleges and university students in United States of America.

The study sought data on how regularly the respondents took alcohol and the finding are shown in figure 5.

**Figure 5.** regularity of taking alcohol



According to 42% of the respondents indicated that they never took alcohol, 15% took it rarely while 18% very rarely. Only 8% took alcohol daily while 17% took alcohol over the weekend.

The study sought information on the respondents' regularity of taking drugs. Their responses are shown in figure 6.

**Figure 6.** Regularity of Taking Drugs

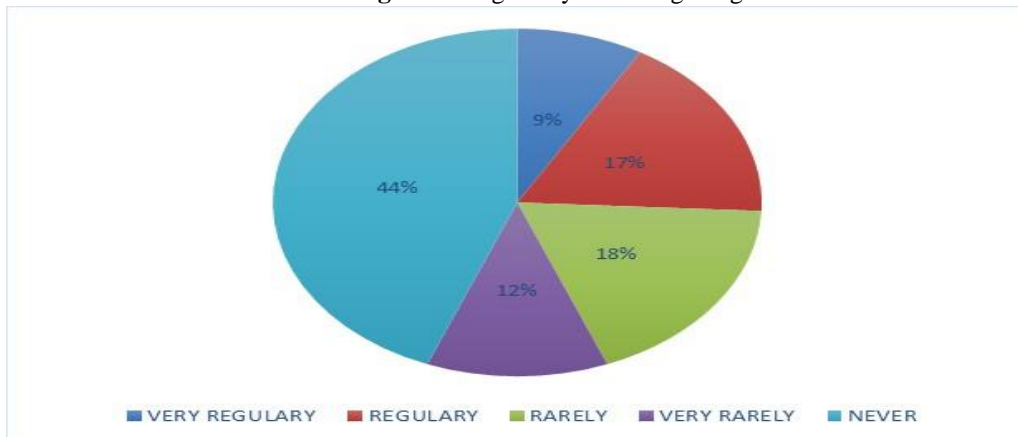


Figure 6 indicates that majority (44%) of the respondents never, 18% rarely and 12% very rarely took drugs while 17% and 9% regularly and very regularly took drugs respectively. This concurs with findings by Dell *et al.* (2011) that 12.7 % of the youth aged 16 to 29 took alcohol once a month and another 12.7% took alcohol once a week.

### 3. Summary of the Research Findings

The study sought to find out the prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse among Chuka University students. The study found that majority of the students had never taken alcohol and drugs in their lifetime. Majority of the students who agreed that they have taken indicated that they started taking drug while in primary and secondary school. According to the study the most abused drugs by Chuka university students were alcohol, bhang and khat. The study found that majority of the students took their first alcohol and drugs in parties. Only 8% of the students took alcohol and drugs daily while 17% took them every over weekends

### 4. Conclusion

The study concluded that alcohol and drug prevalence in Chuka University was low but there is a fraction of students that is addicted. Most of these addicts started taking alcohol and drugs during their primary and secondary school life and perfected the practice at the university where they enjoy independence from the strict school and home rules and regulations. The low prevalence can be attributed to a very elaborate alcohol and drug abuse policy which outlaws any alcohol or drug in university premises and university functions. The university also has an alcohol and drug committee works closely with student welfare department and student leaders in anti-alcohol and drug abuse campaign among the students.

### 5. Recommendations

- i. The study found that majority of students who engage in alcohol and drug abuse started the vice in primary and high schools before joining the university. This makes it necessary for the student welfare department of Chuka University together with Alcohol and Drug Abuse committee to adequately address addiction during the first year student orientation. They should device a way of screening, identifying and helping those in alcohol and drug abuse through guidance and counselling as soon as they register in the university.
- ii. To address the challenge of those who start abusing alcohol and drugs in the university, ADA committee and student welfare department may need to intensify sensitization programs during and after first year students' orientation. The need to liaise with hostel owners who accommodate students and the law enforcement agencies to control of parties in these hostel because it is through these parties that students are introduced to alcohol and drug abuse.

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