

Evaluating the Quantitative Perception of Residents of Paynesville City on the Excessive Alcohol Consumption among Adolescents and Youth

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Abstract

Background: One of the major things that affects adolescence health is alcohol consumption. Adolescence and young adults are the most vulnerable groups that are mostly exposed to the dangerous effects of excessive alcohol consumption. That's why the pilot study was conducted to evaluate the perception of residents of Paynesville City on excessive alcohol consumption among Adolescents and Youth in the city.

Method: This pilot study utilized a quantitative research approach, which further used an observational, cross-sectional descriptive design. This design was used to ensure that the quantitative perception of residents of Paynesville on excessive alcohol intake among adolescents and youths were properly documented and analyzed. The pilot study included 100 respondents between the age range 18-55 years. The FOAP Concept was used as a conceptual framework.

Results: The survey results show that residents of Paynesville believe that alcohol consumption rate among adolescents and youths have increased in recent years, with the variable "Alcohol Consumption Increased among Youth" recording the highest mean score (3.63). The variables that assessed the impacts with mean score (3.44) and the severity of excessive alcohol consumption as a serious health problem with mean score (3.36) indicate that the respondents do not view the excessive drinking of alcohol among adolescents and youths as a harmless thing. Furthermore, 87% of the respondents reported that they have personally seen young people drinking alcohol

within Paynesville City. The respondents recognized peer pressure (59%) and family problems (no parental control) (16%) as the primary drivers of excessive alcohol consumption among adolescents and youths.

Conclusion: This pilot study indicates that excessive alcohol consumption among adolescents and youth in Paynesville City is considered a huge public health challenge that needs urgent attention among all stakeholders.

Key Terms: Alcohol, Alcohol Consumption, Excessive Alcohol Intake, Adolescents, Youth, Perception of Alcohol Consumption

Introduction

On the average, 24% of the total world's population is comprised of young people between the age group 10-24 years (United Nations Population Fund, 2025; Intorre, Foddai, & Venneria, 2025). Adolescence is a critical period of growth and development for young people. This period is characterized by a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood (Intorre, Foddai, & Venneria, 2025). As such, it is important to note that at this critical stage of development, eating habits, lifestyle, and physical activity can significantly contribute to the health and well-being of young people as they grow up to become adults. It is therefore of essence that adolescence begin practicing healthy eating habits, which will positively impact their adulthood (van Sluijs et al, 2021; Chaudhary, Sudzina, & Mikkelsen, 2020; Intorre, Foddai, & Venneria, 2025).

One of the major things that affects adolescence health is alcohol consumption (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2026). Every year, according to the World Health Organization, 2.6 million people die due to the harmful use of alcohol, and this

constitutes 5.1% of all deaths globally (United Nations Population Fund, 2025; Patton et al, 2016). That means approximately 5.1% of the global burden of disease and injury is due to alcohol since alcohol is the a causal factor for more than 200 diseases and injuries (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2026). There are levels and patterns of alcohol intake that makes it dangerous for use among adolescence due to its ability to cause death and disability (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2026). The volume of alcohol intake and the weekly pattern of drinking alcohol are two things that significantly impact health outcomes among the population of those who drink alcohol (American College of Cardiology, 2026; Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2026).

Adolescence and young adults are the most vulnerable groups that are mostly exposed to the dangerous effects of excessive alcohol consumption (Turyasiima et al, 2025). This has led to the development of alcohol use disorders among some people who drink alcohol (World Health Organization, 2024; World Health Organization, 2022). In 2019, It was indicated that approximately 22% of people in the age range 15-19 years drank excessive alcohol, which indicates that alcohol intake among adolescents is increasing across all regions of the world (Degenhardt et al 2018; Turyasiima et al, 2025; World Health Organization, 2024). It has been noted that early consumption of excessive alcohol is linked to increased risks of injury, risky sexual behavior, mental health challenges, and poor academic and social outcomes (World Health Organization, 2024; Puddephatt et al, 2022; Ning K, Gondek, Patalay, & Ploubidis, 2020). It has also been studied that alcohol use could contribute to cognitive impairments, emotional regulation, and behavioral difficulties among adolescents who are engaged in excessive alcohol intake (Turyasiima et al, 2025; Cho & Yang, 2023).

Alcohol use is prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa due to rapid urbanization, socioeconomic disparities, weak alcohol policy enforcement, and cultural acceptance of drinking (Turyasiima et al, 2025; World Health Organization, 2023). Africa's highest per capita alcohol intake of approximately 12.2 liters per year is witnessed in Uganda. However, there are still no sufficient data across the African region to clearly indicate the high rates of alcohol use and AUD among adolescence and youth (Kabwama et al, 2021; Makerere University School of Public Health, 2016; Wagman et al, 2020). That is one of the main reasons why most countries in sub-Saharan Africa lack sufficient evidence-based mechanisms to adequately tackle the misuse of alcohol among adolescents and youth (Ferreira-Borges et al, 2015; Smart et al, 2021; Park & Kim, 2020; Swahn et al, 2022; Turyasiima et al, 2025).

Liberia is one of the poorest and resource constraint countries in the world. Improved education and employment rate in Liberia will help to change such a narrative about Liberia. When a lot of young people have the purchasing power, it becomes better for the nation. The youth comprises of approximately 65% of Liberia's population (Pullen et al, 2016). Alcohol consumption among adolescents and youth remains a vital public health concern, which if proper care is not taken to aggressively tackle it, it could undermine the progress being made in a country that emerged from a fourteen-year of civil war (Atilola, Ayinde, & Adeitan, 2013; Harris et al, 2012). One of the things that is prevalent among secondary school students in Liberia is alcohol and substance misuse. A cross-sectional study conducted among 802 Liberian students indicated that 51% of the students noted that they drink alcohol, while 9% said they take in marijuana (weed)(Harris et al, 2012; Pullen et al, 2016).

Paynesville City is one of the most densely populated and commercially friendly areas

in Montserrado County, which hosts the famous Red Light Market and the Gobachop Market (Omega Market). That's why this pilot study is being carried out to evaluate the perception of residents of Paynesville City on excessive alcohol consumption among Adolescents and Youth in the city.

Methodology

Study Design, Setting, and Study Population

This research work is a quantitative study, which used an observational, cross-sectional descriptive design. This design was used to ensure that the quantitative perception of residents of Paynesville on excessive alcohol intake among adolescents and youths are properly documented and analyzed. This is going to serve as a baseline document for future sustainable solutions to such an escalating health problem. The field work was done by Cohort 1 Candidates of the Institute of Climate Change and Health Research within Paynesville City, Montserrado County. Paynesville is one of the most populated cities in Montserrado County. The survey was done among 384 respondents (population proportion of Paynesville City considering that the candidates do not know the current total number of residents). The inclusion criteria for this pilot study were 100 youths and adults (between the ages 18-55) who reside in Paynesville. The exclusion criteria were elderly, adolescents, and children in the area as well as those people who do not reside in Paynesville. This is a pilot study. The candidates decided to survey 100 respondents.

Sampling Technique and Data Collection/Analysis

The research candidates used structured survey tool with Likert Scale questionnaires that were encoded into Google Forms to ensure paperless data collection process. The sampling technique that was used is the

simple random sampling and convenience sampling techniques where the location for the study was randomly selected from a jar filled with cut papers that had names of places; while the study participants were engaged based on convenience and location during the survey. The data collected were collated and encoded in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for direct data analysis using the Jamovi software. Descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency/variability and frequency table/pie charts/bar charts and percentages) was performed on the various study variables.

Conceptual Framework: The FOAP Lens

This study was guided by the Field Observation for Accurate Practicum (FOAP) Concept. This concept was developed by Forkpah Pewee, a distinguished Liberian Author and Researcher, in 2021. The FOAP Concept has four distinct stages - Field Observation (FO), Accurate Practicum (AP), Practicum Evaluation (PE), and Practicum Sustainability (PS) (Pewee, 2024). The research candidates utilized one of the four stages of the FOAP Concept for the conduct of this study, which is Field Observation (FO). Under the FO, the candidates were able to engage with respondents, visibly see a few adolescents and youth engaged in alcohol intake, and carry out their survey.

Results and Discussion

Demographics of the Study Population

Frequencies

Table 1: Frequencies of Age of Respondents

Frequencies of Age			
Age	Count s	% of Total	Cumulative %
18-25	50	50.0 %	50.0%

Frequencies of Age

Age	Count s	% of Total	Cumulative %
26-40	44	44.0 %	94.0%
41-55	6	6.0%	100.0%

Table 1 shows that majority of those who gave their informed consent to the candidates to participate in the study were respondents in the ages 18-25 (50%) and 26-40 (44%). Only 6% of the respondents were in the age range 41-55.

Table 2: Frequencies of Years Living in Paynesville

Frequencies of Years in Paynesville

Years in Paynesv ille	Coun ts	% of Total	Cumulativ e %
1-5 years	49	49.0 %	49.0%
6-10 years	27	27.0 %	76.0%
Less than 1 year	11	11.0 %	87.0%
More than 10 years	13	13.0 %	100.0%

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents have lived in Paynesville City for 1-5 years (49%) and 6-10 years (27%). The remaining respondents lived in the city for more than 10 years (13%) or less than 1 year (11%).

Table 3: Frequencies of Occupation of Respondents

Frequencies of Occupation

Occupation	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Student	42	42.0%	42.0%
Business	28	28.0%	70.0%
Employed (private/public)	17	17.0%	87.0%
Trade man/woman	10	10.0%	97.0%
Unemployed	3	3.0%	100.0%

From Table 3, it shows that majority of the respondents were Students (42%) AND Business individuals (28%). The remaining respondents were Employed in Private or Public sectors (17%), Trade Man/Woman (10%), and Unemployed (3%).

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of Q1-Q5

Descriptives

	Alcohol Intake a Serious Problem	Alcohol Consumption Increased among Youth	Entertainment Centers in Paynesville	Peer Pressure a Reason	Excessive Alcohol Intake Impacts
N	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.36	3.63	3.14	3.58	3.44
Median	3.50	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Standard deviation	1.43	1.50	1.51	1.60	1.44
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5

From Table 4, ‘Alcohol consumption increased among youth’ has the highest mean score (3.63) with a median of 4.00 (at agree). This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that excessive alcohol consumption has increased among young people in Paynesville in

recent years. The second highest mean score (3.58) with median of 4.00 is 'Peer Pressure a Reason'.

This shows that majority of the respondents believe that peer pressure (being around friends who excessively drink alcohol) is a reason why young people in Paynesville are involved in excessive alcohol consumption. With a standard deviation of (1.60), it further clarifies that while peer pressure is a main cause of excessive alcohol intake among young people, there could be other factors that could lead young people to get involved in excessive drinking. The third and forth highest mean scores for 'Excessive Alcohol Intake Impacts (3.44) with median of 4.00' and 'Alcohol Intake a Serious Problem (3.36) with median of 3.50' further indicate that the respondents are duly aware of the adverse effects of alcohol on the education, health, social, and economic life of young people in Paynesville. The lowest mean score (3.14) with a median of 4.00 is 'Entertainment Centers in Paynesville'. This shows that a good portion of the respondents see the too many bars, clubs, and entertainment centers in Paynesville as a contributing factor for young people involvement in excessive alcohol intake. However, with a low mean score, it also highlight that some of the respondents see peer dynamics as a more influential factor rather than places that alcohol are sold.

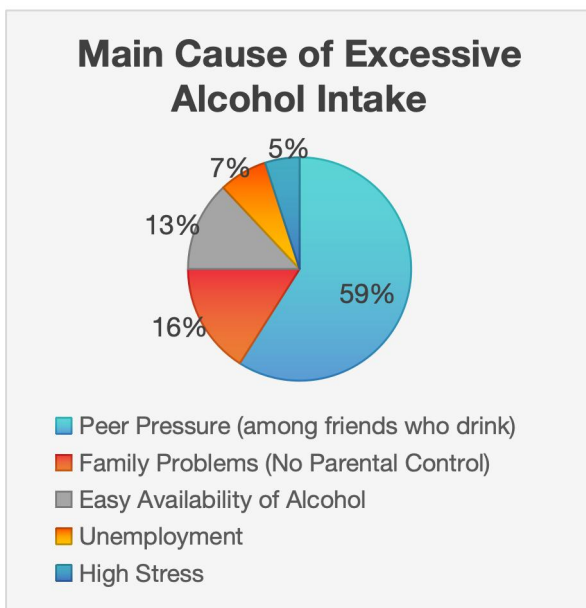


Figure 1: Main cause of excessive alcohol intake among young people in Paynesville

Based on the pie chart, it indicates that 59% of the respondents noted that peer pressure (always being with friends who drink) is the main cause of excessive alcohol intake among young people, 16% of them responded that family problems (no parental control) is the main cause of excessive alcohol intake; 13% of them said Easy Availability of Alcohol is the main cause of excessive alcohol intake; 7% of them noted that Unemployment is the main cause of it; while 5% of them said High Stress is the main cause of it.

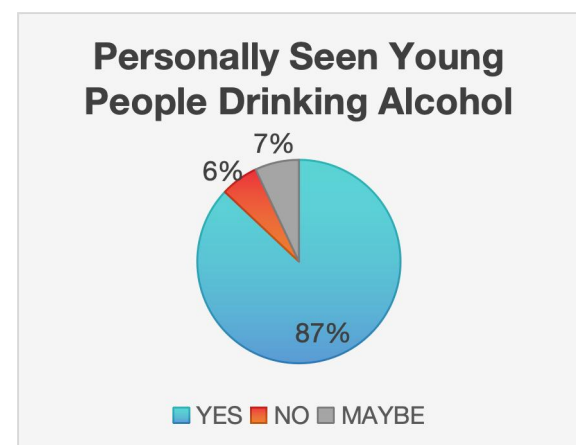


Figure 2: Personally seen young people drinking excessive alcohol

From the data set, 87% of the respondents (majority) noted that they have personally seen young people drinking alcohol in Paynesville City.

Discussion

By utilizing the Field Observation stage of the FOAP Concept, the candidates successfully looked into respondents' perceptions about the increase in the excessive consumption of alcohol among young people in Paynesville City. During the analysis of the survey data, it was

revealed that 100 respondents provided informed consent to take part in the pilot survey. The survey results showed that approximately 94% of the total respondents were in the age range of 18-25 and 26-40. In furtherance, students were found to be the highest (42%) participants in the pilot study. Accordingly, approximately 65% of Liberia's population is made of youth (Pullen et al, 2016). Since this is just a pilot study, the researchers do not intend to generalize the results of this research by doing a comparative analysis with other studies conducted in the region relating to the topic.

The pilot survey results displayed that there is community agreement that alcohol abuse among young people is actively increasing every day in Paynesville. This is evident by the displays in the data set where 'Alcohol consumption increased among Young People' has the highest mean score (3.63) with a median of 4.00 (at agree). Furthermore, 87% of the respondents reported that they have personally seen young people drinking alcohol within Paynesville City. As such, there is a need for call to action.

The most interesting thing here is that even though people know that having too many bars and clubs around plays a part (with a mean score of 3.14 and a median of 4.00), they still feel that social and mental factors matter way more (peer pressure). To them, the physical drinking spots are just places where it happens, but the real driving force comes down to personal choices and the people kids hang out with.

When we asked respondents to name the single biggest reason why young people drink too much, most of them pointed directly at peer pressure. In fact, 59% of the people surveyed said that constantly being around friends who drink is the number one cause. On top of that, 16% believed that family issues—specifically when parents aren't looking out for or controlling their

kids—are the main reason for the problem. This is true, most especially in our Liberian setting nowadays. There exist multiple challenges that have prevented a lot of parents from properly looking after their children. As a result of those multifaceted challenges experienced by parents, children use such a window to do whatever they want to do and how they want to do it without being disciplined in the end. This is so rampant that some young people now serve as breadwinners for the families, where they go out in a vulnerable state to sell on the streets - something that exposes them to hanging out with undisciplined friends who introduce them to drinking or clubbing. Easy Availability accounted for 13% of responses from the respondents. Alcohol is one of the things easily accessible, available, and affordable for young people to buy anywhere in Paynesville City, and at anytime of the day or night. Most of Liberia's biggest, enjoyable, and nicest entertainment centers, clubs, and bars are located in the heart of Paynesville City. As such, it is obvious to understand why majority of the respondents noted that they have seen a lot of young people around those places drinking alcohol on a regular, having birthday parties or after party clubbing while drinking alcohol. Socioeconomic Strains like Unemployment (7%) and High Stress (5%) were rated remarkably low by comparison. This heavily concentrated perception that peer groups drive the culture is backed up by a high mean score of 3.58 for peer pressure. However, this variable also produced the highest standard deviation in the entire pilot study ($SD = 1.60$).

The respondents in the city of Paynesville are conscious of the negative impacts of excessive alcohol drinking among young people. The variables that assessed the various impacts with mean score (3.44) and the severity of excessive alcohol consumption as a serious health problem with mean score (3.36) indicate that the respondents do not view the excessive

drinking of alcohol among adolescents and youths as a harmless thing.

Conclusion

This pilot study, conducted by Cohort 1 Candidates at the Institute of Climate Change and Health Research, indicates that excessive alcohol consumption among adolescents and youth in Paynesville City is considered a huge public health challenge that needs urgent attention among all stakeholders. With the usage of the Field Observation (FO) stage of the FOAP Concept, this research uncovered that the city dwellers recognize peer pressure (59%) and family problems (no parental control) (16%) as the primary drivers of excessive alcohol consumption among adolescents and youths in Paynesville City.

The problem of excessive alcohol intake among young people is a health problem that is deeply embedded in the daily life of residents of the city. This is evident by the study result, which noted that 87% of the respondents have personally seen the excessive drinking pattern among adolescents and youths. They believed that this is going to have adverse effects on the education, health, and future career opportunities of those adolescents and youths who are involved in excessive alcohol consumption.

Recommendations

Next steps to transition from the Field Observation (FO) phase to the FOAP (Accurate Practicum, Practicum Evaluation, and Practicum Sustainability, or AP, PE, and PS) phases include:.

1. With 59 percent of respondents indicating that peer pressure is the main cause of alcohol and substance abuse, positive peer influence is key. The ICCHR should support the creation of peer-led “Anti-Alcohol and Substance Misuse Clubs” in secondary schools and universities across Paynesville.

2. The ICCHR should train young people to be leaders in promoting healthy lifestyles and resistance to negative social pressures.

3. Sixteen percent of the problem is blamed on family problems and lack of parental control. As such, community leaders, in conjunction with existing local structures, will initiate parental guidance workshops that would train parents to recognize the early symptoms of substance use and teach them techniques to maintain open communication with their children.

4. Physical entertainment hubs rated lowest for relative mean with “easy availability” still a structural contributor (13 per cent). As such, the Paynesville City Corporation (PCC) should begin to exercise its zoning laws and ensure that bars, clubs, entertainment centers and liquor stores do not allow children under 18 years to venture around those areas. They should ensure that 12 graders having end-of-WASSCE or class party do not have access to alcoholic drinks during their get together at entertainment centers or clubs.

5. On this basis our primary argument is that the ICCHR will take the results of this pilot study (a convenience sample of 100 respondents) as baseline data with which to support the initiation of a larger, fully funded epidemiological survey with a statistically representative sample size of 384 -1,000 respondents, and expand inclusion criteria to incorporate qualitative focus groups with the adolescents themselves. Only then would we have the evidence needed to change national health policy and access long-term funding.

Ethical Consideration

Because this public health study is an observational and descriptive survey, which acquired anonymous resident’s perceptions without taking their personal contact details or information, it meets the ethical standard to be carried out. The study also strictly followed the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki by getting informed

consent from the participants and ensuring data confidentiality and protection.

Conflict of Interest

The research candidates declare no conflict of interest.

Contributions to work

All research candidates were involved with the field observation or data collection. The data was encoded and analyzed by the data analysis team at the Institute of Climate Change and Health Research.

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