

ALCOHOL CONTROL POLICY AND REGULATION OF UNDERAGE DRINKING, A CASE STUDY OF NYANDARUA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Despite county governments having the ultimate authority in regulating the alcohol trade and enacting new laws, alcohol remains a significant issue in Kenya. This study aims to explore how the implementation of alcohol control policies impacts underage drinking in Nyandarua County. The objectives include examining the effects of licensing regulations, and enforcement regulations on underage drinking in the county. The findings of this study will benefit the alcohol regulation board in Nyandarua County and the government of Kenya by providing valuable insights into alcohol trade regulation especially against underage drinking. The study was premised on two theories namely New Public Management and Social Exchange theories all relating to the three proxy independent variables. The research employed a descriptive research design focusing on Kinangop sub-county as the target population which has the highest number of liquor premises in Nyandarua County at 427 according to data from the department of social services. A representative sample population of 120 respondents was selected using a blend of simple random sampling on bar attendants as per Taros formula (1967) and purposeful sampling targeting government officials. Data was collected through validated semi structured questionnaires and interview

guides, with both quantitative and qualitative data analyzed using descriptive statistics, content/thematic analysis and SPSS. The data has been presented using central tendency measures, measures of dispersion and bar charts. The research revealed that there somewhat enforcement of licensing requirement in the area. The study observed that there is adherence of 300m rule for liquor business from school, the branding of alcoholic drinking is checked, there is also revocation and denial of licenses for business violating licensing requirements and lastly, there is audits and compliance checks in the region. However, the study observed that there is huge gap in stakeholder's engagement in licensing and enforcement processes. The study observed that majority of the respondents recognize corruption as major factor which is hindering the effectiveness of licensing and enforcement policies in Nyandarua County. The fight against corruption should be intensified in order to ensure effectiveness of the policies while stringent penalties should be adopted for any non-compliance with regulation and lastly, the government should greatly engage various stakeholders such as parent, community and religious leader in order to collectively address this issue of underage drinking in Nyandarua County.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, alcohol consumption is a widespread issue among individuals under the age of 25 (UNODC, 2017). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that alcohol use remains a threat to the health and well-being of young people worldwide, posing clear risks to both economic and social aspects (UNODC, 2017). The World Health Organization (WHO) also acknowledges the growing global public health problem of alcohol consumption, with an estimated 43% of the world's population aged 15 and older having ever consumed alcohol (WHO, 2014).

In Africa, approximately 32.2% of individuals aged 15 years and above (21.4% aged 15-19 and 34.1% aged 20-24) have consumed alcohol (WHO, 2014). Some studies in Africa have identified associations between alcohol consumption and factors such as male gender, peer pressure, family history of alcohol abuse, unstable employment, poor social and coping skills, increased alcohol availability, and positive expectations regarding alcohol use (WHO, 2018). In Zambia, alcohol consumption is recognized as a growing public health concern among young people (Habulembe, 2014). Despite considerable efforts, the number of young people aged 15-24 years reported to be consuming alcohol has steadily increased (Habulembe, 2014).

In Kenya, underage drinking persists, particularly among secondary school students and unemployed youths due to social and economic factors, according to NACADA 2014. Alcohol consumption in Kenya is associated with numerous negative impacts, with a considerable number of deaths and accidents resulting from alcohol abuse. In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that four in every 100 people in Kenya died as a result of alcohol abuse. The report highlights the high dependency of a significant portion of the Kenyan population on harmful brews, commonly known as "kumikumi" or changaa, with 37% of the entire population consuming them (Kairu, 2018). Alcohol abuse has adversely affected the Kenyan economy and population, particularly in Central Kenya. Increased alcohol consumption in this region is exacerbated by the accessibility, availability, and affordability of cheap alcohol, including traditional liquor. Nyandarua is among the counties with high cases of illicit brew consumption. According to a report by Munene (2016), the youth have made alcohol consumption a 24/7 affair, spending their nights in pubs. Consequently, the economy of Nyandarua County is stagnant, as a significant number of youths do not work.

Consumption of alcohol by the young people is attributed to high societal costs and heavy burden of diseases, accidents and school drop outs rate increasing every day (WHO, 2022). This is prompting many nations to implement policies restricting availability of alcohol to underage and hence plummeting associated harm and consumption among the underage. Alcohol control policies differ worldwide and are put in place to directly or indirectly adjust the norms and alcohol consumption in the general public. Alcohol consumption and related effects among the underage can be addressed by the strictness and comprehensiveness of regulatory policies.

In Kenya, enforcement of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act of 2010 provisions guarantee that the public is aware of the effects of alcohol, protect minors from drinking, and provide rehabilitation assistance to those who are impacted (Lutta, 2016; Mututho, 2014). It controls the granting of licenses to vendors of alcoholic beverages, controls the advertising and promotion of alcohol, and provides guidelines for the quality of alcohol (Mututho, 2014). The Act was introduced because, according to Jenkins et al. (2015), earlier regulations were unable to reduce the damages and injuries caused by chang'aa consumption. The District Alcoholic Drink Regulation Committee and other law enforcement officials are guided by the guidelines

found in Alcoholic Drink Control 2010. The guidelines help attain maximum compliance and improved administration of the alcoholic drink control procedure, and guarantee homogeneity of the implementation process throughout the nation. In addition to upholding social norms, the enforcement of alcohol drink limits aims to safeguard the public from excessive alcohol consumption, prevent alcohol-related health problems, and helps enhance people's overall quality of life (Lutta, 2016).

The licensing of alcoholic beverages has been introduced by many nations worldwide and the process is handled by a wide range of departments and agencies in different nations across the globe. In the UK, for instance, alcohol licensing is governed by the Licensing Act 2003. According to this law, companies and people who want to offer alcohol or other services related to alcohol sales must obtain a license from the local licensing authority. Personal, premises, and temporary event licenses are some of the sorts of permits that are available. Due to state-specific variations, licenses are awarded differently in every state in the US. The state and local laws controlling the application and acquisition of licenses set the terms of the license. For instance, California established the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) in 1955. It was founded in accordance with the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, which was passed in order to regulate the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages inside the state. Because of this statute, the ABC, which grants licenses to companies that manufacture, import, and sell alcoholic drinks in California, is now in charge of all alcohol regulation.

In Nyandarua County, the issue of alcohol consumption being very rampant, the county government has made a strong effort to end and regulate the illicit trade of alcohol. The county has introduced a new law to enforce stringent rules and oversight on individuals involved in the alcoholic beverage sector, in response to the growing harm that unregulated alcohol sales are causing to public health and safety. The Nyandarua County Governor has already enacted the Nyandarua County Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, 2014, with the primary objective of eliminating illicit brews across all five sub-counties: Kinangop, Kipipiri, Ol'Kalou, Ol'joro-rok, and Ndaragwa. Nyandarua County is poised to adopt a decentralized approach to regulation through the establishment of Alcoholic Drinks Regulation Committees in each sub-county, as outlined in the County Drinks Control Act 2014. These committees will play a crucial role in evaluating applications for both retail and wholesale liquor licenses.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed by the study is the increase of underage drinking according to NACADA (2022) despite of the existence of policies regulating alcohol consumption nationally and at County level (Jenkins et al., 2015). Underage drinking has been associated with negative implications both to individual and country at large. WHO (2022) asserts that 10% of deaths of young people 15-19 age groups globally is traced back to alcohol use. Alcohol consumption impacts health and the socio-economic sphere, leading to issues such as HIV infection, crime, personality changes, poor academic performance, high mortality, and morbidity due to injuries and road accidents (Masiye, 2016). A substantial reduction of underage drinking will help save lives, increase productivity among the young people, reduction of health cost and accidents.

Lutta's (2016) research on factors influencing the implementation of policies on corruption and enforcement personnel argues that corruption is the primary factor affecting the implementation of policies to regulate alcohol trade with approximately 50.8% of respondents in support of this notion. Rostrup et al. (2016), in a study on methanol poisoning, reported a

significant incident on 4th May 2014 in Central Kenya where the consumption of illicit brews resulted in the death of 60 individuals and the hospitalization of 70. Luta (2016), in a study on factors influencing the implementation of alcohol policies, posits that despite the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, Kenyans have gone further to expose alcohol to children and involve more of them in drinking. This led to an additional 8 deaths and blinding of 7 individuals in Nyahururu on 14th September 2014 and 4 deaths in Narok County. Scholars are yet to develop comprehensive and appropriate studies that estimate the effects of the implementation of alcohol control policies on the regulation of underage drinking which this study seeks to establish.

Objectives

- i) Examine the effects of alcohol licensing on regulation of underage drinking in Nyandarua County, Kenya.
- ii) Assess effects of enforcement of Alcohol Control Policy on regulation of underage drinking in Nyandarua County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

In this study the theory of social exchange and new public management served as our guides. The theoretical framework tries to explain why the research problem under investigation happens by drawing on preexisting concepts. Odero (2014) asserts that a theoretical framework acts as a bridge between theoretical reviews and the elements under study, providing a basis for doing practical research.

New Public Management Theory

The NPM theory was introduced by Christopher Hood in 1991, NPM model is founded on ideas of "administrative argument" and "administrative philosophy" which are conceptually related but not identical. Public administration systems inefficiencies and bureaucratic inadequacies were to be addressed by New Public Management (NPM). Samaratunge, Alam, & Teicher, (2008), indicated that applying from the private sector management principles to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of public sector organizations in service delivery is what NPM advocates. Decentralization and a market-oriented approach principle to delivery of public service is what the NPM model is built on. This model emphasizes on proficient and efficient use of resources in service delivery to the public through performance and accountability measure of the service deliverers by the implementation and application of key performance indicators (KPI), setting of clear targets, outsourcing, and privatization of services.

The model applicability is demonstrated in controlling underage drinking through the use alcohol licensing. The application of this model characteristics such as decentralization, to aid in improving their understanding of local conditions and trends related to underage drinking will enable licensing authorities to be able to precisely shift their enforcement efforts towards a given direction according to Kalimullah and Khan (2011). Combating of underage drinking is made easier through decentralization as the collaboration between various stakeholders such as schools, community groups and law enforcers enables creation of plans to fight against the alcohol abuse among the minors. The performance of enforcement initiatives can easily be

evaluated through the use of performance measures such as issued tickets to underage drinkers and licenses compliance checks frequency. The accountability and transparency of service delivery is increased by making the performance indicators available publicly as licensing authorities can be held accountable of their enforcement actions.

According to Kalimullah and Khan (2011), NPM emboldens competition in public service provision. To endorse accountability on sales practices and discourage the sale of alcohol to minors, this can involve making competition amongst alcohol vendors in the background of alcohol licensing. Policymakers can inspire liquor traders to abide by licensing requirements and give priority to responsible alcohol sales practices by creating a competitive market environment.

Social Exchange Theory

This theory was founded by George Homans in 1958 and later refined by scholars such as Peter Blau. The theory is a social psychology and sociological perspective that aims to explain social development and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. The model argues in line of maximizing benefits and minimizing cost as people tries to engage with each other. The expenses and rewards vary and ranges from material (cash) to immaterial things (emotional support). The model highlights how importance it is for reciprocity is to maintaining connections and realizing collective goals. Mutually beneficial relationships can effectively assist in regulating underage drinking as stakeholders can discuss terms and expectations that will help in curbing this problem. For example, law enforcement agencies may apply regulations and carry out enforcement actions in return for funding and resources provided by government agencies (Blau, 1986).

According to Molm (2010), the mutuality structure in stakeholder collaborations can encourage confidence, unity, and commitment in all essential mechanisms of actual underage drinking legislation. Policymakers and practitioners can come up with methods to enrich collaboration, remove power imbalances, and promote effective control of underage drinking by understanding the settings of social exchange among stakeholders.

An understanding of stakeholders such as government organizations, local communities, representatives of the alcohol business, parents, and youth and their interests is necessary to evaluate the model's applicability to the research variable. It's important to determine who the key players are in the control of underage alcohol consumption and comprehend their concerns. To enhance public health and safety, for example, government organizations might work to decrease underage drinking, but the alcohol business might put profit-making first. Parents could be worried about their kids' well-being, and youth might place a high importance on peer networks and social acceptance.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Alcohol Licensing and Regulation of Underage Drinking

Onyango (2019) in assessing how well Kenya's alcohol licensing laws work to prevent underage drinking and minimize the harm associated with alcohol consumption, he found that although laws regarding licensing exist, enforcement and compliance monitoring are typically very lax, making it easy for people to obtain alcohol, particularly those who are underage. The study used qualitative interviews through collaboration with personnel involved in alcohol regulation and also examination of license data quantitatively. Onyango (2019) combined statistical insights with contextual data acquired through usage interviews in their research

study design in order to give a thorough grasp of the problem being researched on. The study ensured the quality and trustworthiness of the data used by utilizing data from several sources. Because it will offer excellent and thorough information on our topic of discussion—namely, how licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder participation restrict underage drinking in Nyandarua County: this study will be helpful to us in our research.

According to Gathura (2015), Kenyans are drinking more and even exposing their children to alcohol despite the Alcohol and Drinks Control Act of 2010, often known as the "Mututho laws," being in effect. This is largely due to the accessibility of non-returnable bottles and cans. Companies manufacturing beer have come up with inventive habits to package their goods, including tins, in order to navigate through Mututho restrictions which have increased sales and encouraged consumption at home. Gathura (2015) offers information that comprehensively indicate difficulties encountered in controlling underage drinking in Kenya; nevertheless, the study insists on identification of underlying causes of this problem and create effectual approaches for enforcement and compliance monitoring. To close this knowledge gap therefore, this research study will examine how Nyandarua County's licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder involvement policies affect underage drinking.

A study by Lucia in 2022, on alcohol and drug abuse deterrence in Africa which used Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review framework between 2008 and 2018, a thorough search of pertinent literature was carried out on the PubMed, EBSCO Host, and Web of Science databases. For the final review, a total of 34 peer-reviewed studies were selected. Research indicates that there isn't a single, effective strategy for dealing with the issue of drug and alcohol abuse. The study exposed that although several targeted preventative programs have been implemented throughout Africa, additional investigation, and testing are still essential to ascertain the effectiveness of these programs. Because Lucia's (2022) study used a research methodology that guaranteed thorough coverage of significant literature, it offers valuable insights into this topic. Nevertheless, the research relied on a limited representative sample that was susceptible to publication bias. The study's conclusions highlight the necessity of implementing additional tactics in the fight against underage drinking. The study's use of a scoping review made it difficult to draw valid conclusions because the methodology only allows for evidence summarization, not critical evaluation of data. Thus, this study demonstrates how Nyandarua County's underage drinking is controlled by licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder involvement.

Enforcement of alcohol control policy and regulation of underage drinking

MacLennan et al. (2012) examined how three New Zealand communities developed and implemented alcohol policies concentrating on the influence of local features. The study utilized interviews where key members of the community were engaged and past policy documents analyzed. The study established various alcohol control measures are more operative in rural areas in comparison with urban areas this is because alcohol laws tend to vary on basis of community setting. The research underlined how vital it is for the community to have alcohol policies founded on their social requirements and dynamics. However, resistance arose from political leaders for the application of alcohol restrictions on provincial areas. The study highlights the need for communities to develop this own alcohol policies in response to local problems and challenges, which differ across regions. The research methodology used has overreliance of past information about alcohol policy which might limit the analysis scope though it provides insight and knowledge on areas of study from community leaders.

Paschall et al. (2012), studied the relationship between alcohol consumption by the adult, density of alcohol premises, strategies for enforcement, underage drinking and alcohol policies and laws in 50 communities in California state. The study established their existence of a connection between drinking by the young people with the density of alcohol outlets, adult alcohol consumption levels, and the enforcement of underage drinking regulations. The efficiency of eight municipal alcohol laws was evaluated in each town using the data collected between 2009 and 2010 which entailed 8553 and 1312 adults and minors systematically. Generally, the research conducted by Paschall et al. (2012) employed a research design and methodology that provided understanding of independent variables by considering several factors. The study reliability was guaranteed as representative sample used was large and hence giving a lot of statistical power to the research. Therefore, considering this evaluation, this research will fill the gaps arising by investigating how licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder engagement regulate underage drinking in Nyandarua County.

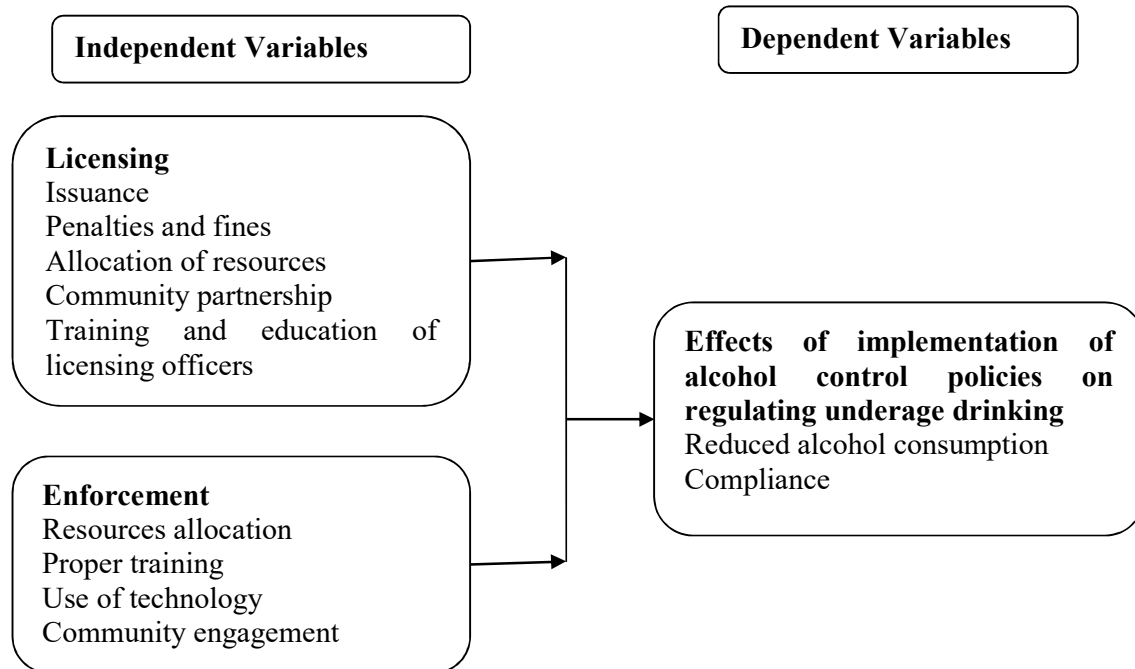
Lenk et al. (2014) conducted a study that evaluated the state and law enforcement bodies and their tactics for upholding laws prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages to inebriated customers at authorized establishments, noting that Patrons of authorized alcohol establishments were intoxicated. The study used a sample of 1631 local agencies and 1082 respondents picked randomly of all 49 of the state agencies that had implemented alcohol control policies. The research found that implementation of legislation barring alcohol sale to individual who are intoxicated noticeably is one of the strategies that can be applied in lowering challenges of alcohol consumption by the enforcement personnel. Based on this evaluation, this research will fill the gaps arising by investigating how licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder engagement regulate underage drinking in Nyandarua County.

Harris (2010) conducted a study on impact of alcohol policy enforcement on drinking behaviors of the college student in United States. This was as a result of introduction of stricter policies during 1999-2001 (with publication in 2010). The sample used was 1252 respondents and the results showed there existed a strong correlation between the stricter alcohol enforcement policies and the reduction of the drinking among the collage and universities students over a period of time. Hence, the study suggested overall alcohol consumption levels in colleges and universities can be reduced and regulated by the application of very proactive enforcement alcohol policies. In summary, while the study findings by Harris (2010) indicate the significance of the correlation between enforcement of alcohol control policies and drinking behaviors of the student, the research validity, reliability and applicability is questioned due lack of important information and context that is necessary to ensure comprehensive evaluation of the data.

Xuan Z (2015) investigated the connection between youth drinking and alcohol policy environments in the US. He used repeated cross-sectional Youth Risk Behavior Survey data from representative samples of high school students in grades 9 through 12 from biennial years between 1999 and 2011 to calculate Alcohol Policy Scale (APS) scores, which characterize the strength of state-level alcohol policy environments. The study established there is lower chance of underage alcohol consumption due to application of tougher alcohol laws even the one that are not directly target children. In summary, the research methodology used by Xuan provided a wide-ranging analysis of trends in underage drinking and alcohol control policies strengths and therefore, provided a lot of insights in this study. Despite this, the research only concentrated on the strength of alcohol policies put in place and ignored other important factors such as enforcement and stakeholder engagement. Therefore, this study will establish the effect of licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder engagement in the regulation of underage drinking in Nyandarua County.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework, according to Peters, Elmendorf, Kondala, and Chellaran (2000), is a diagrammatic presentation that identifies the variables that, when taken as a whole, describe the topic of concern. The conceptual framework, which may be thought of as a scholar's glasses through which to see the subject under research, expounds broad ideas by using dependent factors, namely outcome and independent variable (Coulthard, 2004). The independent variable of the study encompasses licensing and enforcement whereas the dependent variable is implementation of alcohol control policies on regulating underage drinking



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to address its research objectives. The researcher is able to define the features of the phenomenon or population being investigated through the use of this methodology (Greener, 2008). The study was conducted in Nyandarua County whereby the residents in Kinangop Sub-County were targeted since the sub-county has the highest number of alcohol establishment in the whole County according to data by the department of Social Service. The study involved alcohol traders i.e. bar attendants, government officials' key informants will comprise of CECM, CO, Director social services and enforcement, OCS, County administrator, area DCC and chiefs. The study was guided by two themes to address implementation of Alcohol Control Policy. The two themes include licensing and Enforcement and stakeholder's engagement. The study would equip the various governments with the specific information on areas that need improvement and hence guide their actions.

Kinangop sub-county was used as our target population since it has the largest number of alcohol establishments of 427. The census data of liquor establishments sourced from Social Service department in Nyandarua County 2023, the registered number of liquor premises in sub-counties is distributed as follows: Kipipiri 158, Ndaragwa 118, Ol'kalou 240, and Ol'joro-oro 144 aggregating to 1057 liquors premises. Therefore, in order to gather comprehensive

insights into underage drinking, a representative sample was selected from target population i.e. Kinangop sub-county.

This study adopted both simple random sampling and purposive sampling as methodological framework used to select a subset of individuals or items from a larger population in order to conduct research or draw conclusions about the population. The bar attendants were selected using simple random sampling while government officials were selected using purposive sampling since this representative sample is crucial for the study as its members possess specialized knowledge and expertise on underage drinking, which might not be readily available from underage individuals themselves. A representative sample of 120 respondents was selected through the Taro's (1967) formulas. This research study used both quantitative and qualitative data. The adoption of interviews and questionnaires enabled the researcher to gain a profound comprehension of the study topic from several dimensions as the researcher can triangulate and validate the results.

To determine the relationship between the different independent variables (licensing and enforcement,) and the control of underage drinking, the researcher employed descriptive, inferential statistics and thematic for data analysis and presentation. The study used descriptive statistics which include methods such as measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) which give an indication of the typical value in the dataset, and measures of dispersion (range, variance, standard deviation) which show how much the values in the dataset differ from each other. This study used inferential statistics comprising methods such as regression analysis, hypothesis testing, and, confidence intervals, which are important to evaluate the probability that perceived variances or connections in the sample data also exist in the population from which the sample was obtained.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This research study aimed to use a sample of 81 respondents and therefore, 81 questionnaires were administered to the participants of the study. However, according to 81 questionnaires given out only 71 were correctly filled whereas 10 questionnaires were spoilt. Therefore, the response rate of these questionnaires was 87.7% which according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a threshold of 75% of responses are acceptable for the study. Data collected on gender distribution indicated that the bar attendant field is highly dominated by females where 63.38% of the respondents are female and 36.62% of the respondents are male. Therefore, this research will not be gender biased. Additionally, the findings indicate both genders are aware of alcohol control policies implementation and regulation of underage drinking in Nyandarua County this is because they interact with various individuals at the workplace hence, their insights will be very viable in this research.

Data in age distribution indicated that 63.38% were 19-25 years of age, 26.76% were between 26-35 years of age and 9.86% were above 36 years of age. The result shows that the majority of the respondents employed as bar attendants were between 19-25 years marking up to 63.38%. These findings reveal that the majority of alcohol sellers are in the lower age bracket but no seller employed as a bar attendant was below the age of 18 years.

Data on employment period indicated that majority of the bar attendants have worked for a period between 1-3 years (47.89%), more than 3 years (32.39%), 6 months to 1 year (18.31%), and less than 6 months (1.41%). The data collected indicates most of the bar attendants we engaged in our research have stayed for long at their place of employment and therefore, they are adequately aware of the alcohol control policies, whether they are properly enforced, and any cases of underage drinking in the area.

Data on education levels attained by the respondents indicated that the majority of the respondents 70.42% had attained secondary education, 12.68% had attained primary education, 12.68% had attained college education and 4.23% had attained university level of education. This indicates that most of the respondents were learned and therefore they had considerable knowledge about alcohol control policy regulations and underage drinking in Nyandarua County, Kinangop sub-county.

Alcohol licensing and regulation of underage drinking

Revocation and denial of license

Table 1: Revocation and denial of license

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	2	2.8	3.56	1.01
	disagree	8	11.3		
	neutral	22	31.0		
	agree	26	36.6		
	strongly agree	13	18.3		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 1 above indicates the findings on revocation and denial of licenses to premises not adhering to licensing requirements in the region. 54.9% of the respondents agreed that there is revocation and denial of a license for any liquor premises that has not followed stipulated licensing laws and regulations. However, there were 31% of the respondents were neutral while 14.1% disagreed with the statement. This statement had a mean of 3.56 which is far above the neutral mean indicating that the majority of the responses had positive feedback on the presence of revocation and denial of licenses. The standard deviation of 1.01 shows a small spread in responses. These findings indicate that the majority of the participants of this study feel that there is an exercise of denial and revocation of licenses for liquor establishments not adhering to laid out licensing requirements.

Chief in the Engineer ward in North Kinangop sub-county was in support of the effectiveness in the enforcement of licensing requirements as he noted that,

“In the engineer ward, there are several license applicants who did not succeed in acquiring trading licenses since their liquor store did not meet the stipulated health and safety standard and also the location of the premises did not meet the requirement of the law. In addition, some business trading licenses have been revoked following a constant violation of bar operating hours and sell of alcohol through closed doors”.

300m rule from school adherence before license is granted

Table 2: 300m rule from school adherence before license is granted

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	disagree	9	12.7	3.51	0.91
	neutral	28	39.4		
	agree	23	32.4		
	strongly agree	11	15.5		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 2 above shows study results on the adherence to the 300-meter rule from schools before a license is granted showing respondents' responses, deviated toward agreement. The largest group of respondents 39.4% was neutral on this statement, indicating indifference about the

300m rule's adherence by liquor businesses. However, a significant number of respondents, 47.9%, agreed with the statement, reflecting a reasonable level of support for its enforcement. On the other hand, 12.7% disagreed with the statement, indicating a smaller group that may feel the 300-meter rule requirement is either not enforced or not important. The mean score of 3.51 is above neutral, suggesting that overall, respondents lean positively toward the rule's adherence before a license is granted. The standard deviation of 0.91 shows moderate consistency in responses, with most opinions centered on the positive end of the scale. We interacted with some of the government officials in the licensing committee who commented on this and said:

“No license will be issued or renewed to any liquor establishment if the business location has not observed the 300m rule from school. This committee is working in collaboration with OCS, and ward administrators to ensure this law is followed to the letter and also no alcohol is sold to minors otherwise any person liable attracts a 12-month imprisonment or a fine of Kshs 150,000 or both”.

Corruption is high in Process of obtaining license

Table 3: Corruption is high in process of obtaining license

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	1	1.4	3.42	0.92
	disagree	11	15.5		
	neutral	23	32.4		
	agree	29	40.8		
	strongly agree	7	9.9		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 3 above shows the responses of the respondents on the statement corruption is high in the process of obtaining a license. This statement is significant as it will enable us to understand if the whole process of licensing is affected by other factors such as corruption or bribery which is likely to hinder the effectiveness of the process. 50.79% of the respondents agreed that there is a problem of corruption in the process of obtaining a license while 32.4% were neutral and lastly, 16.9% disagreed that corruption is there in the process of obtaining a license. Since the number of respondents that were neutral is high it indicates a considerable level of dissatisfaction on this matter. The mean of 3.42 which is above the 3.00 neutral mean suggests that the respondents in this region feel that corruption is a major problem in this process while a small number of the participants remain unsure or unbothered whether corruption is a problem in this process. The statement had a standard deviation of 0.92 which shows good consistency in the responses given.

The process of obtaining license is very stringent

Table 41: The process of obtaining license is very stringent

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	1	1.4	3.38	0.87
	disagree	10	14.1		
	neutral	26	36.6		
	agree	29	40.8		
	strongly agree	5	7.0		
Total		71	100.0		

The survey results on whether the process of obtaining a license is very stringent reveal a general tendency toward agreement, though with some variation in opinion. The largest group, 40.8%, agreed that the process is stringent, and 7% strongly agreed, indicating that many respondents feel the licensing process is indeed rigorous. However, 36.6% remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or a lack of strong feelings about the stringency of the process. On the opposite end, 14.1% disagreed, and just 1.4% strongly disagreed, reflecting a small group who may feel the process is not stringent enough. The mean score of 3.38 is above neutral, signaling that respondents generally view the process as fairly stringent. The standard deviation of 0.87 indicates relatively consistent responses, with most opinions clustered around the agreement side of the scale. Overall, the results suggest that while many respondents believe the process is stringent, there is still a notable portion that are either neutral or feel the process is not demanding enough.

Regular audits and compliance check with licensing requirement

Table 5: Regular audits and compliance check

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	2	2.8	3.42	0.97
	disagree	9	12.7		
	neutral	26	36.6		
	agree	25	35.2		
	strongly agree	9	12.7		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 5 above shows the responses to the statement of whether there are regular audits and compliance checks according to licensing requirements in Nyandarua County. The majority of these respondents seemed to agree with this statement 49.9%, 36.6 %remained neutral on this statement while 15.5% disagreed with this statement. The statement had a mean of 3.42 which indicates the respondent's level of agreement with there is regular audit and compliance check with licensing requirement. The number of neutral respondents is also high which shows there is a considerable number that feels that these licensing requirements are not effectively enforced.

I engaged some members of the licensing committee, who commented on the requirement of licensing and said that,

“We have been engaging with chiefs, ward administrators, and national police to ensure that there are regular audit and compliance checks to ensure only licensed businesses are operating and according to laid down laws and regulations. Though the audit and compliance checks are not done as frequently as is needed we intend to intensify these exercises in the future. We are working with the government to ensure sufficient allocation of resources to effectively facilitate these exercises’.

Enforcement of alcohol control policies and regulation of underage drinking.

Enforcement of 300m rule from school

Table 6: Enforcement of 300m rule from school

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	2	2.8	3.41	1.04
	disagree	14	19.7		

	neutral	17	23.9		
	agree	29	40.8		
	strongly agree	9	12.7		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 6 above shows the findings on whether enforcement of the 300m rule from school is implemented accordingly to regulate minors from accessing alcohol. The research question was to assess the effect of enforcement of alcohol control policies in regulating underage drinking. The findings stipulate that 40.8% agree with the statement of the 300m rule from the school, followed by neutral with 23.9%, disagree with 19.7%, strongly agree with 12.7%, and lastly strongly disagree with 2.8%. The results indicate that there is adherence to the 300m rule in the location of liquor establishments in the region with 53.5% agreeing with the statement. The statement had a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 1.04 which deviates towards agreeing with the enforcement of this policy by respondents. Despite this there is 23.9% of the respondents believe that the enforcement of the 300m rule from school is not implemented accordingly which indicates that there are some areas that this measure is not taken into account which affect the regulation of minor drinking.

I interviewed OCS of the region in regards to the enforcement of this rule and he noted that. *“National police is working tirelessly in collaboration with Nyandarua County licensing committee to ensure that no liquor establishment is given a license if it is located near the school. I have directed police to the field to ensure this rule is followed strictly failure to which business license will be revoked and the owner prosecuted according to the law”.*

Enforcement of bar operating hours

Table 7: Enforcement of bar operating hours

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	2	2.8	3.31	1.09
	disagree	17	23.9		
	neutral	20	28.2		
	agree	21	29.6		
	strongly agree	11	15.5		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 7 above indicates the responses of the respondents on whether bars adhere to the stipulated operating hours in Nyandarua County. According to the result of the study, 29.6% agree that liquor stores do adhere to the law of operating hours while 28.2% show they are neutral with the statement, disagree were 23.9%, strongly agree with 15.5%, and lastly strongly disagree with 2.8%. Though 45.1% agree that bar operating hours are adhered to there is strong variation in respondent responses indicating that some of the respondents are unsure whether this law is correctly applied with the statement having a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.09.

We interviewed some of the parents in the region and said the following,

“We have noticed tremendous adherence to bar operating hours in this region for the past years. However, some alcohol sellers are violating this law by selling alcohol back doors especially here in rural areas where law enforcement hardly reaches most of the time. The government should make arrangements that will ensure law enforcers access even the remote areas of the county because in those areas where stipulated laws of alcohol consumption are being violated”.

Witnessed action being taken to business selling alcohol to minors

Table 8: Witnessed action being taken to business to minors

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	6	8.5	3.24	1.09
	disagree	12	16.9		
	neutral	17	23.9		
	agree	31	43.7		
	strongly agree	5	7.0		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 8 above shows whether the respondent has witnessed the law enforcers taking action against businesses selling alcohol to minors. The statement is very essential as it provides information on whether law enforcement is taking its course in the region. The findings show majority of participants agrees with the statement with 43.7%, followed by neutral with 23.9%, then disagree with 16.9%, then strongly disagree with 8.5% and lastly strongly agree with 7.0%. The result of this investigation indicates that the majority of the participants agreed with the statement with 50.7% while those that were neutral with the statement were 23.9%. This shows that despite a considerable number agreeing that action is being taken against the business selling alcohol to minors a substantial number also indicate they are either unsure or have not witnessed the application of this policy in the region. These results correlate with Kariuki (2021), who noted that some of the regions witness good enforcement but minors continue to access alcohol due to a lack of adequate follow-up measures and monitoring which leads to a lack of effectiveness in law enforcement action.

Checking of branding of age limit on alcoholic drinking's

Table 9: Branding of age limit on alcoholic drinking

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	6	8.5	3.03	0.97
	disagree	13	18.3		
	neutral	26	36.6		
	agree	25	35.2		
	strongly agree	1	1.4		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 9 shows data collected regarding whether the law enforcers check on the branding of age limit in the alcoholic drinks that are being sold. According to the information above 36.6% were neutral about this statement, 35.2% of these respondents were in agreement with the statement, while disagree was 18.3% followed by strongly disagree which was 8.5% and lastly strongly agree with 1.4%. The results show that there is 36.6% of the respondents thought there is a regular check of branding of age limit in alcoholic drinks these results correlate with Gathura (2015), who concluded in his research that the alcohol manufacturers adhere to the rule of branding. Despite this, there are still a large number of respondents who represent 36.6% who were neutral about this statement. This indicates that there is a definite level of uncertainty in the enforcement of this policy.

The director of enforcement commented on this matter where he stated,

“This office is working in collaboration with law enforcement authorities to ensure that all alcoholic beverage manufacturers put a visible WARNING message to all alcoholic drinks and also the alcoholic drinking's must be branded the age limit that is ‘alcohol must not be sold to

persons under the age of 18 years. Failure to adhere to this law will attract fines or imprisonment. Additionally, I recognize the weight this exercise carries as the process requires the allocation of adequate resources such as logistic and enforcement personnel therefore, the exercise may not be performed as stipulated but we are working closely with county government to ensure that we have an adequate allocation of resources which will ensure such exercise is effectively done in the future”.

Multi-agency coordination between law enforcement and bar attendants

Table 10: Multi-agency coordination

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	10	14.1	2.83	1.06
	disagree	13	18.3		
	neutral	30	42.3		
	agree	15	21.1		
	strongly agree	3	4.2		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 10 indicates the results of the statement of multi-agency coordination between various stakeholders to help curb underage drinking in the region. According to the information collected 42.3% of the respondents were neutral about this statement while those who disagreed were 18.3% and strongly disagreed with 14.1%, 21.1%, and strongly agree 4.2%. This information indicates that there is a lack of multi-agency coordination between the law enforcers and bar attendants with those disagreeing with the statement being 32.4% and those who were neutral being 42.3% this shows that the majority of the respondents believe there is a lack of multi-agency coordination between law enforcers and other stakeholders which can undermine the efforts to curb underage drinking. The statement had a mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.06 which shows that the majority of participants disagreed that there is multi-agency coordination. This result is in agreement with Mutua (2022) who stipulated that the persistence of underage drinking can only be addressed through collective efforts and the absence of collaboration between law enforcement officials, bar owners, and the community to escalate the issue of underage drinking.

Minors being apprehended buying alcohol

Table 11: Minors being apprehended buying alcohol

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	4	5.6	3.00	0.96
	disagree	19	26.8		
	neutral	22	31.0		
	agree	25	35.2		
	strongly agree	1	1.4		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 11 above shows the responses of the participants on the issue of minors being apprehended buying alcoholic drinks in the region. The results indicate that 36.6% of the respondents agree with their instances of minors having been apprehended buying alcohol while 32.4% disagreed with this statement and 31% remained neutral about this statement. The average score of this statement was 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.96 which indicates that the majority of the respondents were neutral on this statement.

Enforcement of age verification

Table 32: Enforcement of age verification

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	6	8.5	2.94	1.03
	disagree	19	26.8		
	neutral	21	29.6		
	agree	23	32.4		
	strongly agree	2	2.8		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 12 above shows the respondent's responses regarding whether there is age verification before selling alcohol. The respondents who agreed with this statement were 35.2% while those that disagreed were 35.3% and those who remained neutral were 29.6%. These results show great variation in response with an average score of 2.94 and standard deviation of 1.03. These variations in responses indicate that the majority of the respondents have mixed opinions on the proper enforcement of age verification.

Acceptance of bribes by law enforcement

Table 4: Acceptance of bribes by law enforcement

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std deviation
Valid	strongly disagree	8	11.3	3.23	1.12
	disagree	11	15.5		
	neutral	12	16.9		
	agree	37	52.1		
	strongly agree	3	4.2		
Total		71	100.0		

Table 13 above shows whether there is bribery and corruption in the process of enforcement of alcohol policies in Nyandarua County. The majority of the respondents agreed that there is corruption and bribery when the offense is found in the administration of alcohol control policies with 52.1% while those that were neutral were 16.9%. The respondents that disagreed with this statement were 26.8%. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents strongly agree that there is a major issue of corruption and bribery with 56.3% and with mean of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.12. This shows that bribery is majorly undermining the efforts to regulate underage drinking in Nyandarua County.

Overall, reactions suggest that although some enforcement practices are noticed, there are important concerns about continuity and efficiency due to corruption. These results are similar to those of Lutta (2016), who concluded that corruption is very common among law enforcers such as chiefs and police, and therefore, the implementation of alcohol policies is not effectively done.

I interviewed the CECM of enforcement on the issue of corruption and he said,

“This department has received alarming feedback on the level of corruption experienced in the enforcement of various policies where law enforcers are taking bribes to overlook any violation of law. I want to assure you that we are working tirelessly with the help of other stakeholders to ensure these officers are caught and prosecuted to rectify this problem”.

From the result corruption has been recognized by even the government as a major problem in the implementation of the alcohol policies hence the government in collaboration with other stakeholders should address this issue.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study indicated that enforcement, licensing, and stakeholder engagement are critical strategies for regulating underage drinking in the region. Participants in the study, including government officials, teachers, parents, and bar attendants, all expressed awareness of the policies formulated by the government to address this issue. The findings showed that the majority of respondents believe these policies are somewhat effective in curbing underage drinking. However, they also highlighted several challenges that undermine their full effectiveness. These challenges include limited resources for enforcement, widespread corruption and bribery, and insufficient involvement of key stakeholders, such as parents and teachers, in the process of policy development and implementation.

The study emphasizes the need for the government to address these barriers to enhance the impact of alcohol control policies. For instance, inadequate resources such as insufficient funding, lack of patrol vehicles, and limited manpower hinder the ability of law enforcement to monitor and enforce alcohol regulations across all areas of the county. Additionally, the presence of corruption and bribery among some law enforcement officers, where alcohol vendors may pay off officers to overlook violations, exacerbates the problem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, licensing, enforcement, and stakeholder engagement are identified as critical components in regulating underage drinking in Nyandarua County. To significantly address the persistent issue of underage drinking in the region, the following recommendations should be prioritized.

First, the Nyandarua County government should enhance the effectiveness of enforcement policies by allocating additional resources such as logistic support which will effectively facilitate the law enforcement officers to penetrate both urban and rural areas of the county and hence proper patrol that will help reinforce necessary enforcement policies which regulate any cases of underage drinking in the region. Effective coverage across the entire county is essential to ensure that alcohol outlets are complying with regulations, especially in remote areas where enforcement is currently weaker.

Furthermore, the County Government should investigate and address any instances of corruption among law enforcement officers, which may undermine the enforcement of alcohol control measures and allow underage drinking to persist. Corruption has been a big drawback in the full realization of the potential of enforcement policies that have been formulated in the county. The government should ensure that in law enforcement structure accountability and transparency is upheld to ensure that the law is effectively and fairly enforced.

Lastly, the government should come up with very stringent penalties for any non-compliance with alcohol control policies.

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