

## Perception of Alcohol Consumption Risk and Adolescents School Adaptation

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### ABSTRACT

In Cameroon, alcohol consumption seems to be increasing in schools, while the failure rate in school exams remains alarming. Thus, we wondered about the link that could possibly exist between the perception of the risk of alcohol consumption and the school adjustment problems that adolescents encounter. This is the objective of this study. The problem addressed here is that of knowing how school adolescents perceive the risk of alcohol consumption in relation to school adjustment. The main question of this study is therefore the following: does the perception of alcohol risk influence the school adaptation of adolescents? By listing certain psychological behaviors of adolescents such as the taste for risk, the quest for independence, impulsivity, and hypersensitivity, adolescents often have a perception of invulnerability, believing that they are less likely to suffer the negative consequences of their actions. It is therefore crucial to understand how adolescents perceive the risks associated with the consumption of psychoactive substances and how this perception influences their behavior and academic success. To answer these questions, we based this work on socio-cognitive theory and the theory of self-esteem. Methodologically, we used classic investigation tools, notably the questionnaire. The study population is made up of school-aged adolescents who enter the age group of 12 to 20 years old, divided into second, first and final-year classes. Data analysis was done based on the Pearson chi-square test and the logistic regression model. The results we obtained show that the consumption of psychoactive substances influences the school adaptation of adolescents. We also note the deterioration of health as a consequence of the consumption of these toxic substances. These substances, when they affect the health of the adolescent, therefore reduce the probability of enjoying going to school. In fact, if we combine appropriate educational, family, health and social interventions, it is possible to promote optimal school adaptation among adolescents and prevent risky behaviors that could compromise their educational success.

**Keywords:** perception; alcohol; consumption; risk; adolescents; school adaptation.

### INTRODUCTION

Substance use among adolescents is a major public health problem, with significant implications for their physical, psychological and social well-being. This problem is all the more worrying in the school context, where young people spend a large part of their time and where their academic adaptation can be influenced by various factors, including their behavior related to alcohol consumption. According to WHO 2016, alcohol consumption caused around 3 million deaths (5.3% of global mortality). No continent is spared from the harmfulness of alcohol. Since the 1960s, in black Africa, the population's enthusiasm for manufactured alcoholic beverages has contributed to a dizzying increase in the number of breweries and distilleries. Cameroon is experiencing enormous health problems attributed to high alcohol consumption. Indeed, the consumption of psychotropic substances increases significantly during high school, because the majority of young people of this age are introduced to the consumption of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes (Chen & Jacobson, 2012; Health Canada, 2018). Alcohol consumption in all its forms has become a common practice in high schools and colleges, causing indiscipline and exclusion of students.

In this context, Cameroon is facing a number of educational crises, including a decline in academic performance, low success rates in national exams. Each year there are several cases of violations of school regulations, especially with regard to the sale and consumption of narcotics within schools. However, the real extent of the consumption of these psychotropic drugs and their determinants remains poorly documented in French-speaking Africa. To therefore contribute to filling out this little-explored aspect in Cameroon, this study aims to explore in depth the link between the perception of the risk of consumption of psychoactive substances and the school adaptation of adolescents, by highlighting the factors which influence this perception and examining its implications for the health and well-being of young people in schools.

### METHODS

Our population is made up of students in second, first and final grades in the Yaoundé VI district. The technique used in this research is non-probability sampling. Its use is due to the fact that it gives this study economic and temporal advantages because it gives the possibility of selecting according to our own criteria and objectives the size of the groups

constituting our sample. The sample of our study therefore consists of 734 students. Data collection was carried out after explaining the study to the students in the selected classes, which made it possible to obtain their consent. The data was finally collected from a self-administered questionnaire. The work was placed on the sign of anonymity to respect the personal data of the respondents. Furthermore, the necessary authorizations were previously obtained from the heads of secondary education establishments in Yaoundé.

Data storage and processing was done using Epi INFO version 7 software. The descriptive analysis was carried out using EXCEL 2016 and Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 26 software. For the analysis of statistical connections, we used the Ki-square test and the logistic regression model.

## RESULTS

The analysis of the data collected made it possible to highlight the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, the prevalence of consumption of alcoholic beverages and the associated risk factors.

### The Sociodemographic Characteristics of The Respondents

The data collected shows that in total, this sample is made up of young people aged 12 to 20. Of the 734 students who actually responded, 143 students (19.5%) are in second grade, 227 (30.1%) in first grade, and 364 (49.6%) are in Tle. Likewise, this sample is made up of 336 (45.8%) women and 398 (54.2%) men. Among which, 140 (19.1%) repeaters and 594 (80.9%) non-repeaters. Regarding age, 08 students (1.09% of the sample) are in the bracket [12.14 years], 235 (or 32.02%), in the bracket [15.17 years], 415 (or 66.89%) in the bracket [18, 21 years].

As for the class attended, the study of this population tells us that almost half, or 46.59% of the students surveyed are in final year class. 30.93% are in first grade, while 19.48% of the students surveyed are in second grade.

Regarding the age group, more than 66.89% of the students surveyed are in the 18 to 20 age group. Followed by those in the 15-17-year-old age group, with 32.02% of those questioned. These two categories constitute nearly 98.91% of the population studied.

The least numerous in the second cycle are the students located in the 12-14-year-old bracket who represent only 1.09%. Which means that in the study population, the problems of school adjustment are real, from the moment when students aged 18 and over are still in high school, at more than 66.89% of the population.

Furthermore, 6.81% (resp. 22.75%) of those aged 18 and over are in second (resp. Première). This represents a percentage of approximately 29.56% of the students who are likely to have a school

adjustment problem, because they are at least 2 years behind the school-age corresponding to these classes for those not having repeated.

### Presentation of Data Related to The Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages

54.77% of the students surveyed are alcohol consumers. Against 45.23% of non-consumers. Of the 402 alcohol consumers, 30.05% (157) are girls, compared to 60.95% (245) of boys. Likewise, of this number of alcohol consumers, 78.36% (315) are non-repeaters, while 21.64% (87) are repeaters.

### Different Types of Alcoholic Beverages Consumed

Beer consumers represent 23.57% of the population surveyed. Whiskey consumers primarily represent 20.98% of the total population, while red wine drinkers primarily represent 9.4% of the population. Consumers of local drinks (bili bili, arki, odontol) are around 3.54%. Which explains the population of 54.77% of registered consumers.

### Perception of Risk Regarding Beverage Consumption

Asked about their perception of the risk of consuming alcoholic beverages, 54.77% of the study population, who are alcohol consumers, gave the reasons which push them to consume these alcoholic beverages. 36.57% of consumers take alcoholic drinks to blend into the atmosphere, the party, moments of relaxation, entertainment. 15.42% of alcohol drinkers consume it out of curiosity, to seek thrills. 13.43%, to satisfy a desire, or derive a certain pleasure from it. 9.45% do it through imitation, fashion effect, mass effect. The victims of depression, sadness, worries and boredom are 7.46%. The influences of bad companies are of the same order, i.e. 7.46%. Then the problems, the stress, the anger, the emotional problems and the need to gain courage, explain the rest in the risk-taking of the population studied, in terms of alcohol consumption.

### Analysis of Correspondences Between the Perception of Risks of Alcohol Consumption and School Adjustment

The taste for risk is perceived by adolescents, very often as if perfumed with the scent of alcohol. As such, a majority of 54.77% of adolescents surveyed consume alcoholic beverages. They are increasingly young and many indulge in real drinking parties organized at the end of the week. In fact, 15.12% of the total population studied is under 17 years old and already consumes alcoholic beverages. While 32.43% of adolescents surveyed are in the 18–20-year-old age group, and consume alcoholic beverages. The proportion of girls continues to increase while they drink the same strong alcohol as boys. Indeed, of the 402 alcohol consumers, 30.05% (i.e. 157) are girls, compared to 60.95% (245) who are boys.

Also, teenagers don't hide to drink, except from their parents. They appear in the bushes or bars near the school, indulging in real libations in full view of everyone. We drink especially at the end of the week or on weekends, a period when we have to unplug, disconnect, to no longer be in contact with the usual

obligations and worries of the pressure of school, and this as radically as possible. Here, we must distinguish between festive alcohol, as parents practice it, and alcohol ingested as a means of cutting oneself off from reality or one's anxieties. But in all cases, there is a risk of hurting yourself, because this leads to significant discomfort and a complicated relationship with alcohol, which will affect the child's ability to concentrate on their schoolwork.

Just as occasional drinking can lead to dependence in the future. In this case, self-control will decrease quickly under the effect of alcohol, and instinctive, impulsive, and aggressive behaviors will easily appear. As such, 253 adolescents, or 62.94% of adolescent alcohol consumers, admitted that they had already punched a classmate or friend. 80 adolescents, or 19.90% of adolescent alcohol consumers, admitted to having already experienced school disruptions (lack of concentration, agitation, violence, drowsiness, etc.) by consuming these alcoholic beverages.

To the euphoria sought is added the desire to share strong sensations, the temptation to place yourself

among the pairs by launching challenges, including the riskiest, and offering yourself the pleasure of transgressing the prohibitions to better to be accepted by friends. Cameroonian society claims to protect its young people from maximum danger, and sees them, without reacting, deliberately sinking into alcoholism, with undeniable risks such as road accidents, domestic falls with the risk of fractures, alcoholic comas which send a large number of adolescents to hospitals.

**Link between risk exposure and risk perception**

We know that socio-cognitive theory establishes a link between the influences which determine the perception of risk, said perception and the exposure to risk of individuals. This is confirmed by statistical link studies which establish strong dependencies between risk exposure variables and associated risk perceptions.

This is why, in the following statistical analyses, we can use risk exposure or risk perception variables indiscriminately, in the study of links with school adaptation.

**Analysis of The Statistical Links Between the Perception of Risks of Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages and School Adaptation**

**TABLE 1:** Study of the connections (Pearson's chi-square) between VI (Consumption of alcoholic beverages) and VD (School adaptation).

a) Alcohol consumption

Variable Ind. Dependent Variable	Do you ever consume alcoholic beverages?		
	P value	Phi and V of the Cramer	Decision
Have you changed school in the last five years?	0,002	0,114	Addiction
Since the beginning of the year, have you been reprimanded by one of your teachers?	0,001	0,122	Addiction
Do you regularly do your homework?	0	0,15	Addiction
In general, do you like going to school?	0,001	0,128	Addiction
Have you been absent from your classes for no particular reason during this school year?	0,001	0,126	Addiction
Do you think your studies will be useful to you in life?	0,024	0,024	dependency

b) Consultation with a doctor

Variable Ind. Dependent Variable	Have you ever had health problems while consuming these products (alcohol)		
	P value	Phi and V of the Cramer	Decision
Since the beginning of the year, have you been reprimanded by one of your teachers?	0,002	0,112	Addiction
In general, would you say that your relationships with your teachers are good?	0,036	0,077	Addiction
Have you been absent from your classes for no particular reason during this school year?	0,004	0,106	Addiction

Analysis of the results of the chi-square test shows that **alcohol consumption among adolescents** to a dependence (existence of a relationship between the two variables, they share something, the variation of one influences the variation of the other) with each of the following 5 variables of school adaptation:

a) Changing school in the last five years (addiction). Indeed, alcohol drinkers often have a bad reputation that they try to erase during school migration. As such, 279 of the 402 adolescent alcohol drinkers, or 69.40% of alcohol consumers, admitted to having changed school over the last five years.

b) During the year, having been reprimanded by one of the teachers (addiction)

Those who waste a significant part of their time in the distraction of alcoholic beverages and the time to pass the hangover that accompanies them, have, so to speak, less study time than peers who at that precise moment, were studying. What will be worth, not only the reprimands of the teaching staff for insufficient academic efforts, but also the attention disorders of which these alcohol consumers are victims, may not escape the attentive teacher, who will not skimp on the reprimands in the hope of bringing this teenager who had lost his way into alcohol to his senses. As such, 162 of the 402 adolescent alcohol drinkers, or 40.30% of alcohol consumers, admitted having been reprimanded by one of the teachers during the year of study.

c) Whether or not they regularly do their homework (addiction).

As we have said, those who spend a significant part of their time in the distraction of alcoholic drinks and the time to pass the hangover that accompanies them, could be victims of headaches, attention problems, resulting in less time to complete homework than peers who were studying at the time. This will lead to reprimands from the teaching staff for lack of attendance at homework. Thus, 185 of the 402 adolescent alcohol drinkers, or 46.02% of alcohol consumers, admitted to not regularly carrying out their homework.

d) Enjoying going to school in general (addiction)

And all these reprimands, all these incessant calls to order, this perpetual psychological bludgeoning, will seriously affect the learner's desire to go to school, which from then on becomes a place of torture for the young person, torn between his taste for alcohol, and the attention problems, memory problems, hangover disturbances that accompany them, and the social and academic pressure to excel in class. Thus, 80 of the 402 adolescent alcohol drinkers, or 19.90% of alcohol consumers, admitted that they did not like going to school, in general.

d) Absent from classes for no particular reason a few times during this school year. (Addiction)

The festive days afterward, where the young person has had a good laugh and feasted, are often accompanied by a heavy burden to bear (headaches, attention problems, memory problems, hangover disturbances, progressive addiction and the desire to

renew this pleasure of the day before, which constitutes a strong temptation for the adolescent to be absent from classes. Thus, 207 of the 402 adolescent alcohol drinkers, or 51.49% of alcohol consumers, admitted to having been absent from classes for no particular reason a few times during the school year studied.

### **Case of Adolescents Who Have Experienced Health Difficulties While Consuming These Alcoholic Drinks.**

The analysis of dependencies using the chi-square test showed that there are links between experiencing health problems by consuming alcoholic beverages and the school adaptation of adolescents. Thus, adolescent consumers who have had significant health problems have a dependency link (existence of a relationship between the two variables, they share something, the variation of one influences the variation of the other) with each of the following three variables of school adaptation:

- Since the start of the year, have you been reprimanded by one of your teachers?
- In general, would you say that your relationships with your teachers are good?
- Have you been absent from your classes for no particular reason during this school year?

Obviously, 31 adolescents out of the 734 interviewed experienced health problems following the consumption of alcoholic beverages. These are undoubtedly those who exceed the acceptable blood alcohol level, which causes serious health problems. Further on, we observe in question 34 that 67 adolescents, or 9.13%, experienced school disruptions (lack of concentration, agitation, violence, drowsiness, etc.) by consuming these alcoholic products. This can explain the reprimands by teachers, the deterioration of relations with teachers and absenteeism.

### **Conclusion: Alcohol Consumption is Linked to The Following School Adjustment Variables:**

- Have you changed school in the last five years?
- Since the beginning of the year, have you been reprimanded by one of your teachers?
- Do you regularly do your homework?
- In general, would you say that your relationships with your teachers are good?
- In general, do you like going to school?
- Have you been absent from your classes for no particular reason during this school year?
- Do you think your studies will be useful to you in life?

Given that statistical link studies establish strong dependencies between risk exposure variables, and associated risk perceptions, then we can confirm that this research hypothesis is verified. There is a link between the perception of the risk of alcohol consumption and the school adjustment of adolescents.

The analysis of risk perception shows us that the drinking games in which young people engage are a reflection of Cameroonian society, made up of a

multitude of bars at every crossroads or near schools and colleges. In the same way that elders use alcohol as a code of belonging to a group, materialized by sharing around a drink, in the same way, young people also identify with a group through their consumption around 'the same table. They like to laugh when they see a friend completely drunk. Through this, young people express a need to let go, as if it were necessary to create codes to free themselves from the numerous constraints they face, that of the pressure of middle school, high school or educational establishment and its search of excellence, to free oneself from this other constraint, which is that of accepting daily recriminations for one's behavior that adults do not appreciate, that of having to comply with the different demands and rules of society or school that they don't always understand.

### **Perception of Risk of Alcohol Consumption in Relation to Problems Adjusting to School**

The analysis of risk perception shows us that the drinking games in which young people engage are a reflection of Cameroonian society, made up of a multitude of bars at every crossroads or near schools and colleges. In the same way that elders use alcohol as a code of belonging to a group, materialized by sharing around a drink, in the same way, young people also identify with a group through their consumption around 'the same table. They like to laugh when they see a friend completely drunk. Or a girlfriend wiggling on a table in her panties in private clubs. Through this, young people express a need to let go, as if it were necessary to create codes to free themselves from the numerous constraints they face, that of the pressure of middle school, high school or educational establishment and its search of excellence, to free oneself from this other constraint, which is that of accepting daily recriminations family for their behavior that adults do not appreciate, that of having to comply with the different demands and rules of society or school that they do not always understand.

According to Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs about their abilities to achieve particular performances. It contributes to determining the choices of activity and environment, the investment of the subject in the pursuit of the goals he has set, the persistence of his effort and the emotional reactions he experiences when he encounters obstacles. In other words, self-efficacy corresponds to a belief in one's ability to organize the course of action required to produce the desired results. In the educational field, this refers to the belief in one's academic abilities. Students with high feelings of competence perform better. They are more motivated, set higher goals, choose more difficult tasks, persevere in the face of difficulties, regulate their efforts more, manage their anxiety and stress, engage more in their schooling and perform better than their peers who have lower feelings of competence. On the other hand, low feelings of competence are associated with poorer achievement, lower performance, less effort and,

consequently, a higher risk of dropping out of school. In view of the above, we note that the feeling of self-efficacy is a strong indicator of learners' success, self-regulation, their motivation and their academic perseverance.

In our population, regular alcohol consumption is accompanied by poorer emotional control, a lower sense of academic effectiveness and generally lower self-esteem. With reference to numerous research in this area (Choquet and Ledoux, 1994; Coslin, 1996), alcohol consumption tends to facilitate self-affirmation among young people. From there, the theoretical principle that we can formulate in relation to these results is the following: there is a relationship between the perception of the risk of consumption of psychoactive substances and the school adaptation of adolescents.

The frequency of school maladjustment increases when their level of self-esteem is lower. Ultimately, we agree with Bandura in his social cognitive theory which states that having a sense of self-efficacy (high level of self-esteem) seems to better explain persistence behavior in studies. A weak belief in his Personal efficacy or self-esteem on the other hand reduces the level of effort and perseverance in studies.

Drunkenness, the state of intoxication is then a form of escape for the young person, and allows forgetting, that is to say above all freedom from certain social, educational and parental codes or norms; and within groups of friends, where everyone feels sufficiently surrounded to allow themselves various excesses, we challenge each other, that of the best consumer, and many adolescents realize too late that they are in a daze, and have already exceeded the limits of what their body can handle. It is at the same time and often partly without their knowledge, a way for them to seek attention, to put themselves in danger to hope for a little affection from society, a way to test the limits of society, to confront them with that of the family and to observe how the social body seeks to protect and contain them with a provocative dimension that escapes no one. Many of these young people continue drinking until late at night, repeatedly or recurrently. Which obviously makes many of them sick. They regularly put themselves in danger, to the point of bordering on suicidal tendencies, because of this festive background taken to the extreme.

### **LOGISTICS REGRESSION**

In this part, we used logistic regression to adjust our explanatory models of the links between independent variables and dependent variables, given that the response variables were binary. For us, it was a question of knowing the impact of the independent variables of exposure to risks (hence risk perception) on the probability of having a school adjustment problem. Or again, we want to understand whether the independent variables of exposure to risks (and therefore risk perception) affect the probability of having a school adjustment disorder.

- The studies showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable which is school repetition during the second cycle and the independent variables (health difficulties following the consumption of psychotropic substances (coef: 0, 7514208 ;  $Z=2,70$  and  $P(> |Z|) = 0,007$ ). The associated coefficient is positive, this means that health difficulties following the consumption of psychotropic substances is a factor which increases the probability of repeating a grade.
- The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable which is the fact of liking going to school (love for school) and the independent variables which are: the fact of having consumed alcoholic beverages (coef: -0,5523218;  $Z= -2,36$  and  $P(> |Z|) = 0,018$ ), the fact of having already had health difficulties while consuming the products (beer, whiskey, red wine, odontol, bili bili arki and others) (Coef: -0,8053435 ;  $Z= -2,47$  and  $P(> |Z|) = 0,013$ ). Negative coefficients are linked to being an alcoholic, and also to having already had health difficulties while consuming the products mentioned. These substances, when they affect the health of the adolescent, therefore reduce the probability of enjoying going to school.

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to better understand the link between the perception of the risk of consuming alcoholic beverages. Our analyzes show overall that when it comes to alcohol, young people primarily consume beer, whiskey, red wine and dangerous products such as arki, odontol, bili bili, etc. In fact, beer consumers represent 23.57% of the population surveyed. Firstly, because on every street corner in the Central region, there is a drinking establishment that offers it cheaply, and without discrimination. Whiskey consumers primarily represent 20.98% of the total population, while red wine drinkers primarily represent 9.4% of the population. Consumers of local drinks (bili bili, arki, odontol) are around 3.54%. The results that we obtained as part of our study are compatible with scientific literature, in the sense that more than half of the students who consumed alcohol drank beer. Of these, more than two thirds were male.

These results are consistent with those found by Spilka et al (2013) showing that beer is the most consumed alcoholic beverage among high school students (82%) and high school girls (61%). According to Beck, de Peretti, and Legley (2006), these alcoholic practices could be responsible for academic failure and dropouts among students. Indeed, all authors are unanimous on the damage caused by the harmful use of alcohol. However, it should be noted that the environment plays a negative role in the precocity observed among consumers of psychoactive substances. It was demonstrated Harrabi et al. (2002) that the school

environment, family environment and friends greatly influence the consumption of practically all psychoactive substances among young people. Questioned about their perception of the risk of consuming alcoholic beverages, 54.77% of the study population who were of alcohol consumers gave the reasons which push them to consume these alcoholic beverages. 36.57% of consumers take alcoholic beverages to blend into the atmosphere, the party, moments of relaxation, entertainment. 15.42% of alcohol drinkers consume it out of curiosity, to seek thrills. 13.43%, to satisfy a desire, or derive a certain pleasure from it. 9.45% do it through imitation, fashion effect, mass effect. The victims of depression, sadness, worries and boredom are 7.46%. The influences of bad companies are of the same order, i.e. 7.46%. Without doubt, the mass effect or the imitation effect at parties constitutes the main perception which introduces young people to alcohol. During these festive gatherings, alcohol plays a bonding role and removes inhibitions. According to 2017 Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) data, every day, 10 Canadians die in hospital due to harm caused by substance use: 3 in 4 deaths are attributable to 'alcohol. In summary, the review of studies shows a significant correlation between risk perception and substance use behaviors among adolescents, highlighting the importance of strengthening risk perception in substance use prevention programs.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the fact that adolescents drink large quantities of alcohol in full view of everyone must be interpreted as a form of thinly veiled cry for help, an irresistible need both to be recognized as suffering and a call for intervention from society, so that this phenomenon is contained by society and that clear and precise limits are set at the level of the social body to stem this phenomenon of alcoholism among learners. In this sense, and in general, the sale of alcohol to minors must be seen as a real social problem. The fight against alcoholism must indeed be seen in our country as a health priority to prevent or limit morbidity and mortality (direct and indirect) linked to the harmful use of alcohol. If all populations are affected by the various preventive control policies, young people and especially young people in school constitute an essential target for the action to be taken.

In perspective, we think that a broader study including on the one hand both rural and urban areas and, on the other hand, young people in school and out of school, would make it possible to carry out a complete map of the consumption of these psychoactive substances by young people in school in our country.

However, the results obtained in this article make it possible to note that surveillance, awareness-raising and support actions are necessary in the various Cameroonian cities and educational establishments to limit the evolution of this eternal critical phenomenon.

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