



Strategies Used to Curb Alcohol Abuse Among Boda Boda Riders in Juba, South Sudan

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern in Juba town where Boda boda riders are increasingly abusing alcohol resulting to unnecessary accidents, antisocial behavior and other mental disorders. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that can be used to curb alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders in Juba South Sudan. The objective guiding this study was to identify the strategies that can be used to curb alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders in Juba South Sudan. The study was anchored on Application of the Personality Theory of Drug Abuse. The study adopted embedded mixed method design, with quantitative data being primary while qualitative to be secondary. The target population was 1,200 Boda boda riders in Juba Town from where a sample size of 291 was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. Five South Sudan Boda boda Association officials were selected purposively for qualitative data. The researcher used both questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. The study established that the alcohol abuse prevalence ranged from 77% to 80%, which is considered high, by the use of Pearson correlation to report the association in L-values as the identifier and R value concept pulls or fetches the value of the expression with consensus on the negative impacts of alcohol misuse including depression, domestic violence, and neglect of familial responsibilities. The study revealed that to address the problem of alcohol abuse requires multifaceted strategies, including early screening, prevention efforts, regulatory measures, taxation, awareness campaigns, and promotion of healthy activities among the Boda boda riders. The study recommended that the government should implement prevention programs targeting alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders. These initiatives should address factors such as family and peer influences, stress coping mechanisms, and socio-economic challenges.

Key words: Boda boda riders, South Sudan; Alcohol abuse; Strategies to curb alcohol abuse

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol abuse problem is increasingly becoming a health concern and attracting interest among researchers. Alcohol is the most abused and most widely used psychoactive drug and has been

legalized in most countries (Inaba & Cohen, 2000). Alcohol is regarded as a drug due to its sedative, tranquilizing, as well as a hypnotic or anesthetic effect. An alcoholic is a person who consumes alcohol to such an extent that it interferes with their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. In the Boda boda sector, alcohol abuse is rampant. Adamba (2019) attributes the high prevalence of Boda boda riders who abuses alcohol due to ease of availability. It is therefore common for most riders to become drunk during working hours and most of them are unable to control the urge to abuse alcohol. The global prevalence of alcohol abuse is on the increase. The global prevalence of alcohol abuse places Russia (2.61%) at the first position, followed by Australia at 2.58%; while Samoa has the least number of alcoholics, holding number 182 at prevalence of 0.00%. The association between alcohol abuse and psychological wellbeing has been investigated.

Alcohol abuse places a very huge health burden on citizens across the world. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) indicates that 3.3 million deaths (5.9%) of all global deaths annually were attributed to alcohol abuse; while 5.1% of the global burden of disease and injury were attributed to alcohol abuse. The highest number of alcohol abusers is youth. According to Matara and Winga (2021), in Kenya, prevalence of alcohol abuse by youths aged 18-35 years was 17.6% against the national average of the general populace, which is at 13.6%.

Mental illnesses associated with alcohol and substance abuse are on the rise. WHO (2022) notes that abusing alcohol is closely associated with risk of developing health problems such as mental and behavioral disorders including alcohol dependence. The harmful use of alcohol causes a high burden of disease and has significant social and economic consequences. WHO (2022) further observes that societal factors that contribute to alcohol abuse included level of economic development, culture, social norms, availability of alcohol, and implementation and enforcement of alcohol policies. Poorer societies are susceptible to adverse health impacts and social harm.

Psychosocial well-being, often referred to as mental well-being or emotional well-being, is a broad concept that encompasses the overall state of an individual's mental and emotional health. It involves a person's cognitive, emotional, and social functioning, reflecting their satisfaction with life, emotional resilience, and ability to cope with stress and adversity (Mason et al., 2023).

The prevalence of poor psychological wellbeing was 7.8% and females who abused alcohol were more emotionally unstable than males. In South Africa, Visser (2007) established that adolescents who abused alcohol significantly lower levels of psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction in general. In Nigeria, Omoegun and Alli (2020) observed that many youths indulge in taking alcohol in order to belong or feel comfortable among their peers. Some take solace in alcohol consumption as an escape route from feeling of depression or unhappiness. Some negative consequences of alcohol consumption include risky sexual behavior, increased suicidal rate, violence, Juvenile delinquency, greater risk of accidents and illicit drug use.

Motorcycles are known by different names in the African continent; from PikiPiki (Swahili term) and Boda boda (East Africa), Okada (Pidgin English – Nigeria), Oléyiain Togo, to Bendskin in Cameroon. The two-wheeled medium has become a very popular means of transportation in many African villages, towns and cities. In fact, it is estimated that motorcycles make up more than 40 percent of all the automobiles (including cars, buses, trucks and so on) (Iwuoha, 2013). Globally, motorcycles have been the prime means of motorized transport. In Taiwan, around one out of four people use automobiles while the ratio of motorcycles use is about 1:2. Alcohol use is increasing at an alarming rate in Vietnam, especially among young people, according to a conference held by the Ministry of Information and Communication in collaboration with the (Health Bridge Organization (2022). Alcohol consumption has increased rapidly in China in recent years, and has

brought with it an increase in health-related and social problems [1]. It is estimated that 8.4% of men and .2% of women have an alcohol use disorder in China [2]; and there are very high rates of binge drinking According to Okebiro et al. (2023), in Kenya, Boda boda sector is thriving and has contributed to socio-economic development of the country. However, the riders' risky behaviour that is mostly influenced by alcohol abuse is associated with road accidents, injuries and death. Sudan is at number 161 at 0.54% (WHO, 2022). In Ethiopia, Ayanoet al. (2019) noted that the prevalence of alcohol consumption among university students was 38.88%. However, the prevalence of hazardous alcohol consumption was remarkably higher in men (11.58%) than in women (1.21%). Male gender was found to be a significant predictor of alcohol consumption.

Juba is the capital and largest city of South Sudan, a country that gained independence from Sudan in 2011. It is the political, cultural, and economic center of the nation and therefore plays a crucial role in the life and development of South Sudan. Historically, Juba has its roots dating back to the 1920s when it was a small trading post under British colonial rule. The city played a significant role during the Second Sudanese Civil War, which eventually led to the country's independence. The city was an important center for rebel forces fighting for independence from Sudan (Collins, 2023).

Geographically, Juba is situated in the southeastern part of South Sudan, near the borders with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is located along the White Nile River, making it an important transportation hub for the region. Economically, Juba is the economic hub of South Sudan. Its economy is primarily based on trade, government services, and the presence of various international organizations and aid agencies. The city has invested heavily in infrastructure and other development projects as the country seeks to rebuild after years of conflict. Culturally, Juba city is a melting pot of cultures, reflecting the ethnic and linguistic diversity of South Sudan.

The city is home to people from various ethnic groups, including the Bari, Lokoya, Mundari, Yangwara, Pojulu Olubo and many others. Hence, Juba is a place where different languages, traditions, and customs come together, creating a unique cultural tapestry (Collins, 2023) Juba city is where the government of South Sudan is based at and therefore is the place where the country's political decisions are made and where international diplomatic missions are often located. The city has been a focal point for the country's ongoing political struggles and reconciliation efforts. Like the rest of South Sudan, Juba has faced challenges related to political instability, security issues, and economic development. The city has also experienced urbanization and population growth, putting pressure on infrastructure and services (Collins, 2023).

The use of Boda bodas (motorcycle taxis) in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, is a common phenomenon and popular means of transportation. Boda bodas are widely used for short-distance travel within the city, and they offer a relatively inexpensive and convenient way to navigate through Juba's often congested and poorly maintained road network (Magga & Ofori-Atta, 2012).

Alcohol abuse among the bodaboda riders is a significant problem in Juba Town, South Sudan, as it is in many parts of Africa. Several factors contribute to this issue, and addressing it requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, including government, communities, and healthcare providers. For instance, there are high levels of poverty and unemployment that lead

some young people to seek solace or escape through alcohol consumption. Peer pressure and the desire to fit in with peers who use alcohol can also contribute to youth alcohol abuse. Similarly, alcohol is often easily accessible and widely available in Juba Town, which can make it more likely for boda boda riders to experiment with it. There is also lack of awareness and education among the riders. There may be a lack of awareness about the risks associated with alcohol abuse, and education on responsible drinking and its consequences may be insufficient. Some riders may turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism for mental health issues, such as stress, depression, or trauma. Alcohol abuse also has health consequences as it can lead to a range of health problems, including liver damage, addiction, and a higher risk of accidents and injuries (Lien et al., 2016).

It is also common for alcohol abusers to get involved in violence and criminal behaviour, which poses a danger to both the individuals involved and the community at large. It can also lead to criminal activities and interactions with law enforcement. Excessive alcohol consumption can disrupt a young person's education, leading to dropouts and reduced prospects for their future. Alcohol abuse can also strain family and social relationships, leading to conflicts and isolation (Lien et al., 2016).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There is increasing attention given to the field of prevention of alcohol abuse. Prevention strategies are currently evidence-based interventions and multifaceted and, therefore, are expected to provide solutions and make a positive impact on societies. For instance, World Health Organization (2021) developed a global alcohol action plan for 2022-2030 to strengthen the implementation of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol. The action plan aims to strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability, advance and enforce drink-driving countermeasures, facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment, enforce bans on alcohol advertising and raise prices on alcohol through taxes. These measures are meant to reduce abuse of alcohol. Similarly, the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) (2021) has developed National Guidelines on Alcohol and Drug Use Prevention. The objectives of these guidelines are to advise on the best practices in prevention, interventions and policies, to ensure professionalism in prevention interventions, protect the victims and foster development of a national prevention system. The guidelines offer that there should be regulation and control of manufacture, sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks. This entails prohibition of promotion of alcoholic beverages to those under the age of 18 years, create awareness about health consequences, addictive nature and mortal threat posed by excessive alcoholic consumption and prohibition of issuance of licenses to sell alcoholic near institutions of learning. These kinds of guidelines are likely to lower the abuse of alcohol and improve the psychological wellbeing of the Boda boda riders in South Sudan.

Mupara et al. (2021) investigated alcohol and substance use prevention within 56 African countries. This study adopted the use of a scoping review to systematically be evaluated the prevailing research evidence on the prevention of alcohol and substance use in Africa. The literature search conducted in the area of alcohol and substance use prevention between 2008 and 2018 in African countries using PubMed, EBSCO host, and Web of Science databases. The scoping review guided by Arksey and O'Malley framework. The study selected 34 peer-reviewed studies. The study noted that alcohol was the most predominantly used substance in Africa, among many other substances. The study identified a wide range of prevention interventions measures used throughout the African continent. Prevention interventions were found to be multifaceted and

could be categorized into individual, family, school, workplace, environmental, media, as well as community-based prevention interventions.

The study noted that although a variety of targeted prevention interventions have been implemented in the African continent, their effectiveness remains to be further clarified and tested. The study recommended community-based interventions in collaboration with Primary Health Care Workers (PHCW) to increase awareness about the availability of treatment and continuing care services to prevent relapse. It recommended that interventions must seek out the victims and link them up to treatment. The reviewed study has shed more light on the importance of using multifaceted approaches to the problem of alcohol abuse.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted embedded mixed method design. The design involved collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, but with a larger quantitative design. Hence, quantitative data was the primary and qualitative secondary was used to reinforce quantitative data. According to (Hirose & Creswell, 2022), mixed methods approach is superior over using either qualitative or quantitative approach alone as it combines inductive and deductive thinking, therefore enriching the study by providing more comprehensive evidence.

According to South Sudan Motorcycle Association, there are 70,000 Boda boda riders across the country and Juba has the highest concentration. However, the association has only registered about 5000 riders in Juba. Hence, the target population for this study is 1,200 registered motorcycles in Juba. The Boda boda riders are mostly under 35 years of age. (Memo, 2022). However, the study only targeted those registered and operating in the Central business districts (CBD). These participants were believed to have the information being sought by this study.

Table 1: Sample Matrix using proportionate stratified random sampling

Categories of population	Target Population	Sample Size
Quantitative		
Unity Street	245	59
Airport Street	155	38
Jubek Street	300	73
Martyrs Street	400	97
Custom Street	100	24
Total	1,200	291

The Target Population was 1,200 Boda boda riders and the sample size was 291, which was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The researcher stratified Juba Central Business District (CBD) into five main streets and selected the number of the riders from each street through random sampling method as indicated above to ensure that any of the riders could have a chance to participate. Hence, the quantitative approach enlisted 291 riders. Qualitative approach purposively selected five South Sudan Boda boda Association officials. The study used self-administered questionnaires to collect quantitative data and interview schedules to collect qualitative data.

FINDINGS

The study embarked on establishing the strategies that could help to curb alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The results of the analyses of items of this objective are presented as follows.

Table 2: Strategies to Curb Alcohol Abuse

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Statements					
Early screening would encourage early identification, treatments and management of harmful drinking habits.	28.3%	71.7%	0%	0%	0%
Prevention of alcohol abuse would help avoid cases of alcoholism	42.4%	57.6%	0%	0%	0%
Restrictions of alcohol taking can help curb cases of alcoholism	42.4%	43.4%	14.1%	0%	0%
Regulation of drinking hours can minimize abuse of alcohol	29.3%	28.3%	28.3%	0%	14.1%
The alcohol sector needs to be taxed heavily to reduce access	42.4%	57.6%	0%	0%	0%
Increasing awareness among boda boda about health consequences of alcohol may help to reduce alcoholism	28.3%	71.7%	0%	0%	0%
The Boda boda riders should engage in healthy after-work sports to keep them busy and away from alcohol.	56.6%	43.4%	0%	0%	0%

Early Screening

The respondents were asked to respond to the statement that, “early screening would encourage early identification, treatments and management of drinking habits, to which 28.3% strongly agreed and 71% agreed. This indicates a high level of support among the respondents for the idea that early screening could effectively facilitate the early identification, treatment, and management of drinking habits among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The fact that over two-thirds (71%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, in addition to the 28.3% who strongly agreed, suggests a widespread recognition among the surveyed group of the potential benefits of early screening initiatives. These initiatives could play a crucial role in addressing alcohol abuse within the community by allowing for timely interventions and support for individuals with problematic drinking behaviors.

This finding underscores the importance of implementing strategies such as early screening programs as part of broader efforts to curb alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. Such initiatives could contribute significantly to promoting the health and well-being of both individuals and the community as a whole.

Prevention of Alcohol Abuse

Regarding whether prevention of alcohol abuse would help avoid cases of alcoholism, 42.4% strongly agreed while another 57.6% of the respondents also agreed. This indicates that a significant majority of the respondents, comprising both those who strongly agreed and those who agreed, believe that prevention efforts targeting alcohol abuse could indeed help avoid cases of alcoholism among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The combined percentage of 42.4%

strongly agreeing and 57.6% agreeing suggests a widespread acknowledgment among the surveyed group that proactive measures aimed at prevention can be effective in mitigating the development of alcoholism. This aligns with established public health principles, which emphasize the importance of prevention in reducing the burden of substance abuse and related disorders. Overall, this data underscores the potential value of prevention initiatives in addressing alcoholism within the community of Boda boda riders, highlighting the importance of implementing targeted interventions and strategies to promote healthier behaviors and prevent the escalation of alcohol misuse to more severe forms of addiction.

Restrictions of Alcohol Taking

Regarding whether restrictions of alcohol taking can help curb cases of alcoholism, 85.8% concurred while 14% were undecided. This indicates a strong consensus among the respondents that implementing restrictions on alcohol consumption could be an effective strategy in curbing cases of alcoholism among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The high percentage of respondents (85.8%) who concurred with the statement suggests a widespread belief within the surveyed group that regulatory measures, such as restrictions on alcohol availability or advertising, could play a significant role in reducing the prevalence of alcoholism. This aligns with existing evidence showing that policy interventions targeting alcohol availability and marketing can have a positive impact on reducing alcohol-related harm. The 14% of the respondents who were undecided may reflect varying levels of awareness or understanding among the respondents regarding the potential effectiveness of alcohol restrictions in addressing alcoholism. Overall, this data suggests that there is strong support among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan, for regulatory measures aimed at curbing alcoholism, highlighting the importance of incorporating policy interventions into broader efforts to address alcohol misuse within the community.

Regulation of Drinking Hours

On whether regulation of drinking hours can minimize abuse of alcohol, 57.6% of the respondents concurred, 28.3% were undecided while 14% strongly disagreed. This indicates that majority of the respondents believe that regulating drinking hours can indeed minimize the abuse of alcohol among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The fact that over half of the respondents agreed with the statement suggests a prevailing belief within the surveyed group that implementing regulations on drinking hours could be an effective measure in reducing alcohol abuse. Such regulations may include restrictions on the sale of alcohol during certain times of the day or limitations on operating hours for alcohol-serving establishments. The 28.3% who were undecided may indicate varying levels of awareness or uncertainty among the respondents regarding the potential impact of regulating drinking hours on alcohol abuse. The 14% who strongly disagreed may hold differing opinions, possibly believing that regulation of drinking hours may not effectively address alcohol abuse or that it could have negative consequences. Overall, this data suggests that there is considerable support among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan, for implementing regulations on drinking hours as a potential strategy to minimize alcohol abuse, although there is also some uncertainty and dissent within the surveyed group.

Taxing Alcohol Sector Heavily to Reduce Access

When asked whether the alcohol sector needs to be taxed heavily to reduce access, 42.4% strongly agreed and another 57.6% also agreed. This indicates a significant majority of the respondents, comprising both those who strongly agreed and those who agreed believe that heavy taxation of the alcohol sector could help reduce access to alcohol among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The combined percentage of 42.4% strongly agreeing and 57.6% agreeing suggests a widespread acknowledgment within the surveyed group that increasing taxes on

alcohol products could serve as an effective deterrent to alcohol consumption. Higher prices resulting from taxation may discourage excessive alcohol consumption and reduce the accessibility of alcohol, particularly for those with limited financial resources.

This data underscores the potential effectiveness of fiscal policies, such as taxation, in addressing alcohol misuse within the community. It highlights the importance of considering economic interventions alongside other strategies when developing comprehensive approaches to tackling alcohol-related issues among Boda boda riders and in broader contexts.

Increasing Awareness among Boda boda Riders on Health Consequences of Alcohol

On whether increasing awareness among Boda boda riders about health consequences of alcohol may help to reduce alcoholism, 28.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and another 71.7% agreed. This indicates a significant consensus among the respondents that increasing awareness about the health consequences of alcohol among Boda boda riders could indeed help reduce alcoholism in Juba, South Sudan.

The combined percentage of 28.3% strongly agreeing and 71.7% agreeing suggests a widespread acknowledgment within the surveyed group that education and awareness initiatives are important in addressing alcohol-related issues. By increasing understanding of the potential health risks associated with alcohol consumption, individuals may be more motivated to moderate their drinking habits or seek help if needed.

This data underscores the importance of implementing educational programs and awareness campaigns as part of comprehensive efforts to tackle alcohol misuse within the community. By empowering individuals with knowledge about the consequences of their actions, stakeholders can work towards preventing and reducing alcoholism among Boda Boda riders and promoting healthier behaviors overall.

Riders Engaging in Healthy Sports to Keep them Away from Alcohol

Regarding whether the Boda boda riders should engage in healthy after-work sports to keep them busy and away from alcohol, 56.6% strongly agreed and 43.4% agreed. This indicates a significant majority of the respondents, comprising both those who strongly agreed and those who agreed, believe that encouraging Boda boda riders to participate in healthy after-work sports could help keep them occupied and away from alcohol consumption in Juba, South Sudan.

The combined percentage of 56.6% strongly agreeing and 43.4% agreeing suggests a widespread acknowledgment within the surveyed group that promoting alternative activities, such as sports, can be an effective strategy in reducing alcohol consumption among Boda boda riders. Engaging in physical activities not only provides a healthy outlet for stress and energy but also promotes social interactions and a sense of community, which can serve as protective factors against alcohol misuse.

This data underscores the importance of providing opportunities for Boda boda riders to engage in constructive and health-promoting activities outside of work hours. By encouraging participation in sports and other recreational pursuits, stakeholders can contribute to efforts aimed at reducing alcoholism and promoting overall well-being within the community.

DISCUSSION

The study established that early screening can facilitate the identification, treatment, and management of drinking habits. Proactive measures targeting prevention efforts targeting alcohol abuse can help avoid cases of alcoholism. The study also found out that implementation of restrictions on alcohol consumption as noted by 86% of the respondents was an effective strategy

in curbing alcoholism. Regulation of drinking hours was also found to be effective in minimizing alcohol abuse. Further, heavy taxing of alcohol sector as recommended by over 99% could help reduce access to alcohol.

The study revealed that according to 99% of respondents, increasing awareness about the health consequences of alcohol could help reduce alcoholism. Education and awareness initiatives are seen as important tools in addressing alcohol-related issues within the community as well as encouraging healthy after-work activities to help keep Boda boda riders away from alcohol consumption. Engaging in constructive activities outside of work hours is perceived as a way to reduce alcohol consumption. Other strategies include provision of employment opportunities for youth, punitive laws for contraventions, restriction of drinking hours, and awareness campaigns.

CONCLUSION

Addressing alcohol abuse requires multifaceted strategies, including early screening, prevention efforts, regulatory measures, taxation, awareness campaigns, and promotion of healthy activities. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions targeting individual behaviors, peer and familial dynamics, stress management, and socio-economic factors to effectively reduce alcohol abuse and promote healthier behaviors among Boda boda riders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study observes that different stakeholders have different roles to play to ensure there is reduction of cases of alcohol abuse among Boda boda riders in Juba, South Sudan. The following are the recommendations of the study:

- The government may implement early screening programs to identify and intervene in problematic drinking habits among Boda boda riders. This can facilitate timely access to treatment and support services as not all of them are abusing alcohol yet there is a need to control those among them who do abuse alcohol.
- There may be collaborative efforts between government agencies, community organizations, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to implement comprehensive alcohol abuse prevention and intervention strategies among those few riders who abuse alcohol.
- There may be a continuous evaluation of effectiveness of implemented interventions and adjustment of strategies as needed based on ongoing monitoring and feedback from the community to holistically change the life of the Boda Boda community.
- The Boda Boda Association should ensure that, every rider must wear a helmet and the passenger must have a helmet. There are Boda-bodas that used to carry luggage, and those individuals are advised to transport only luggage without any passengers to avoid accidents, they are not to drink or speed.
- Family support system should be strengthened to provide a safety net for their family members who are riders

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