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Assessment of The Impact of Alcohol and Cannabis/Marijuana Use on Students' Psychosocial Ramifications in Malawi's Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol and cannabis/marijuana are substances used by Malawian students. Studies have connected an increase in mental health disorders to drug and substance addiction. However, there is limited evidence to support the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on students' psychosocial ramifications in Malawi's HEIs. This study was conducted to assess the effects of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on students' psychosocial ramifications. The study used mixed methods where quantitative and qualitative methods employed correlational and phenomenological designs, respectively. Quantitative data using closed-ended questions through an online survey was collected to assess the extent to which alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage is connected with psychosocial impacts. Qualitative data using in-depth interviews via online surveys aided in understanding students' impressions of the effects of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage on their psychosocial lives. Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study revealed high usage (96%) of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana among HEI students. This is attributed to stress and anxiety, boredom and depression, negative peer pressure, heartbreaks, academic obstacles, lifestyles of university/college students, relationship issues, lack of guidance and counseling, lack of resilience, lack of income, and social media influence. The r -value of seeking psychosocial help about alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is 1.000 at a p -value of 1.000 (1-tailed). This implies a perfect linear relationship (one-to-one correspondence between the values of the variables). Hence, students involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use are likely to seek psychosocial help. However, 77.5% of the respondents have not sought psychosocial help. This might be attributed to a lack of awareness and self-denial among students. Thus, HEI authorities/health practitioners must enforce rules and regulations on alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage, provide guidance and counselling, engage students in various activities, e.g., sports, and ensure a drug-free campus.

INTRODUCTION

According to Jere *et al.* (2021), alcohol and cannabis/marijuana are the most often used substances among Malawian students, with long-term ramifications such as an increased chance of developing substance and use problems. To illustrate, drug and substance use put students at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Some of the social and biological illnesses, determinants of mental health, and psychopathology of health are also relevant to the current study. For instance, individual psychological and biological characteristics such as emotional skills, substance use, and heredity can increase people's susceptibility to mental health disorders (World Health Organization, 2022). Moreover, protective elements that occur throughout an individual's life, such as social and emotional abilities, as well as social contacts and community cohesion, can be accountable for shaping the youth to grow with good moral or bad behavior. Similarly, the current study looked at how social and biological factors, as well as predictors of mental health and psychopathology, influence students' alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use. The study conducted additional assessments of these elements' psychosocial ramifications. Thus, the study aimed to understand the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage on

students' psychological ramifications in Malawi's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Problem statement

Several studies have connected an increase in mental health disorders to drug and substance addiction. A mental health disorder is one of the outcomes of psychosocial problems, particularly among students in HEIs. However, there is limited evidence to support the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use and its effects among students in Malawi's HEIs. As a result, this study was conducted to assess the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on students' psychological ramifications in Malawi's HEIs.

Justification of the study

The study is significant because it investigated the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on all psychosocial components of students' lives, including mental, emotional, social, or spiritual dimensions. The emphasis was on determining the extent to which alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is associated with psychosocial consequences, as well as evaluating participants' perceptions of how these substances affect their psychosocial lives. Based on the study findings, the

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study also suggested feasible solutions to reduce alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs.

Main research question

To what extent are alcohol and cannabis/marijuana (marijuana) usage associated with psychosocial effects among students' lives in Malawi's HEIs?

Specific research questions

The following mixed-methods research questions were asked and addressed to meet the study's objectives:

1. What causes students in HEIs to begin using substances?
2. How frequently do students aged 20 to 35 consume alcohol and cannabis/marijuana?
3. To what extent are alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage associated with psychosocial effects on students' lives?
4. What are your perceptions/experiences with alcohol and marijuana usage on the psychosocial lives of students?

The rationale of the research questions

This research question was answered through a correlational and phenomenological research design. Correlational research designs aim to study the link between two or more variables (Philomath Research, 2023). This design used closed-ended online survey questions to investigate the relationship between alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use and psychosocial consequences among students. Phenomenology, on the other hand, is used to find phenomena, focus on subjective experiences, and examine their structure (Khan, 2014). Thus, it was used to study psychosocial factors such as mental, emotional, social, or spiritual factors using open-ended questions on an online survey. Furthermore, the design was used to investigate students' perceptions of the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on their psychosocial lives through the use of online, in-depth interview questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of substance abuse

Students in several African nations, including Malawi, engage in drug use and sexual practices that increase their risk of contracting HIV (Jere *et al.*, 2021). However, the World Health Organization (2011) states—as reported by Jere *et al.* (2021)—that young male individuals use all substances more frequently than young female adults. In the United States, cannabis/marijuana, also referred to as marijuana is the most widely used drug, used by 35.4% of 11.8 million youths (those between the ages of 20 and 25) (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2019). This suggests that the majority of youth in the United States face problems related to drug and substance abuse. Similarly, the study by Deng *et al.* (2012) reported that abuse of illicit drugs is a significant problem in more than 70% of Chinese counties, cities, or districts, and drug-related crime accounts for 70-80% of

all crimes in China. Although studies indicate that drug abuse has also become prevalent in rural areas of China, abuse of illicit drugs in these areas has not been studied extensively (Deng *et al.*, 2012). This is so because most of the government-level, academic research, and health-care efforts are focused on substance abuse problems in urban centres rather than in rural areas of China. Similarly, the majority of studies about substance abuse are conducted among young adults in urban areas rather than rural areas. However, some studies have shifted their research focus on substance abuse to HEIs.

Africa has a long history of substance abuse especially of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. According to Jumbe *et al.* (2024), East African region leads on substance abuse in Africa. Educators have expressed concern about drug abuse, which is one of the health issues affecting youth. This study by Okafor (2020) revealed gaps in understanding of drugs and the social consequences of drug use among young people in Nigeria. Okafor (2020) study investigated the causes and effects of drug abuse among students of the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The conclusion of the study showed that the need to overcome academic obstacles is the main factor leading to drug abuse among students of the University of Ilorin (Okafor, 2020). Low self-esteem was also found to be one of the major effects of drug addiction among students of the University of Ilorin (Okafor, 2020). It was also found that among students of the University of Ilorin, there were no significant differences in the causes and effects of drug abuse based on gender and faculty (Okafor, 2020). Nevertheless, it is proposed, *inter alia*, that governments take action against those who sell drugs without a specific purpose, monitor targeted areas and, if possible, investigate the behaviour of victims of drug abuse (Okafor, 2020). To accelerate the provision of services to support students with social and behavioural problems due to substance abuse, the Department of Education and the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) should establish appropriate interagency arrangements (Okafor, 2020). This study revealed the need for psychosocial support to students involved or intend to get involved in drug and substance abuse.

According to a study by Jere *et al.* (2021), students in Malawi most frequently use alcohol and cannabis/marijuana locally called “Chamba,” both of which have long-term effects, including an increased risk of drug use disorders. However, scant data on the use of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana in Malawi has indicated that adult substance abuse is on the rise and is associated with risky sexual conduct. Studies have also found that there is an increasing substance abuse in Malawi however there is limited research evidence to substantiate the claim. Thus, public health must comprehend the role of substance use and the associated psychological consequences. However, studies have also found that psychosocial counselling aimed at addressing both psychosocial and social needs of individuals, families, and communities is viewed as a new

phenomenon in Malawi (Jumbe *et al.*, 2024). This presents a challenge for the average Malawian to voluntarily seek psychosocial counselling. This is because counselling is viewed as western culture or something for the privileged (Jumbe *et al.*, 2024). Thus, many Malawians remain unwilling to seek psychosocial counselling about their problems. In light of this, the current study attempts to assess the impact of cannabis/marijuana and alcohol use on students' psychological lives and their ramifications.

Theoretical Framework: The Social Stress Model of Substance Abuse

The social stress model of drug abuse presented by Rhodes and Jason (1990) served as the basis for the current study. According to Rhodes and Jason (1990), the social stress model of drug abuse incorporates and extends the body of knowledge from a wide range of psychosocial theories and models. This model states that a person's propensity to take drugs depends on their amount of stress and how much stress modifiers like social networks, social competency, and resources counteract that stress (Rhodes & Jason, 1990). Many studies have linked drugs and drug addiction to increased mental health disorders. Additionally, statistics show that hazardous use of harmful substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine) is prevalent among women of childbearing potential (Rhodes & Jason, 1990). One of the consequences of psychosocial problems is mental disorders. Nevertheless, various theoretical frameworks and empirical research efforts have been attempted to elucidate the multiple factors that lead to drug use. One of these models is the social stress model of drug abuse, which aims to explain the factors that influence drug use. Therefore, this model was used in the current study to provide a framework for identifying factors that may contribute to youth's resilience when faced with strong urges to abuse drugs. Additionally, the current study used the social stress model of substance abuse to examine the effects of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on all psychosocial components, including the mental, emotional, social, or spiritual parts of students' lives in HEIs. The focus was to determine the extent to which alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is associated with psychosocial effects and to investigate how these substances affect the psychosocial lives of students who use them. The study also explored ways to reduce alcohol and cannabis/marijuana consumption among university/college students in Malawi.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Choy's research (2014), "there is no best approach between both research methodologies due to existing strengths and weaknesses among both types of research methodologies." To plan and perform research, selecting one research methodology will still result in research strengths and shortcomings (Choy, 2014). The current study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This is one of the study's strengths, as

quantitative data was confirmed with qualitative data. Another advantage is that the survey was done among various age groups of students from both public and private higher education institutions. In addition, the study included both male and female Malawian students. The study also adhered to all ethical protocols in its research techniques.

Research design

A mixed-methods research design (quantitative and qualitative research methods) was used in this study. The quantitative method employed a correlational research design, whereas the qualitative method used a phenomenology design.

Quantitative approach: Correlational research design

This study used a correlational research design. This is a quantitative research technique that looks into the link between two or more variables (Philomath Research, 2023). It is more concerned with identifying whether the variables are positively or negatively correlated, as well as the strength of the association. Thus, using online structured closed-ended questions from surveys, a correlational research design was employed to investigate the relationship between alcohol and marijuana use and psychological consequences among students.

Qualitative approach: Phenomenology research design

Phenomenology is a method for discovering phenomena, focusing on subjective experiences, and analysing the structure of those experiences (Khan, 2014). It is often utilized to go over in depth the common characteristics of the phenomenon that occurred. This design was employed in this study to investigate psychosocial aspects such as mental, emotional, social, or spiritual through the use of open-ended questions on an online survey. Furthermore, the design was applied to study students' perceptions of the impact of alcohol and marijuana use on their psychosocial lives through the use of online, in-depth interview questions.

Sample size and sampling technique

The study's target participants were students aged 20 to 35 (including males and females) from HEIs. These HEIs were purposefully selected. A total of 80 students registered in various HEIs and being members of the HEIs WhatsApp groups were surveyed. This investigation used simple random sampling. These participants were assigned identity numbers ranging from 001 to 161 using IBM SPSS Statistics Software Version 21. Following that, IBM SPSS Statistics generated a random sample of cases with a sample size of 50% utilizing the Data View window, the Data Tool tab, and finally the Case Selection tab. This resulted in a random selection of 80 students, with each selected case receiving a value of 1 and each unselected case receiving a value of 0 from the HEIs.

Data collection

The current study collected data via an online survey that included both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Structured, closed-ended questions

The use of structured, closed-ended questions aided in the collection of quantitative data that helped to assess the extent to which alcohol and marijuana usage is connected with psychosocial impacts.

Open-ended, semi-structured questions

The data was gathered through in-depth interviews using open-ended, semi-structured questions via an online survey questionnaire. This aided in understanding students' impressions of the effects of alcohol and marijuana usage on their psychosocial lives.

Data analysis

The data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Inferential statistics were used in quantitative analysis, with Pearson's correlation (r) analysis performed on two variables, alcohol and marijuana usage and psychosocial impacts. Thematic approaches were used in qualitative analysis to identify themes and patterns in open-ended responses. Following that, quantitative data is displayed in the form of tables, bar graphs, and pie charts generated by IBM SPSS Version 21, while qualitative data is provided in the form of paragraph-length writing.

Ethical Considerations**Academic integrity**

Before data collection began, permission was obtained from the University of the People's Research Ethics Committee (REC). The researcher kept on informing the university's REC on the study's progress regularly via the researcher's supervisory office.

Seeking permission

According to Cohen, Manion, and Marrison (2002), researchers must get official permission to study in certain research settings. Similarly, the University of the People's REC approved this study through the researcher's supervisory office.

Informed consent

Respondents were also asked to provide informed consent. They signed informed consent forms before being asked to answer study questions. This form was designed by the researcher.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The study-maintained participants' confidentiality and anonymity. To protect their privacy and confidentiality, the study did not reveal the respondents' contact information or identities. All research participants were

assigned pseudonyms, and their replies were analysed and reported anonymously.

Avoiding harm

If the study methods utilized may cause harm, the researcher must assess whether it is justified or mitigated (Hammersley & Trainou, 2012). Thus. There were no potential harms related to this study's research technique, such as data collection, analysis, and presentation.

Ethical issues around analysis

The researcher was the principal analyst for the study. As a result, the researcher identifies what is needed and which elements should be prioritized while collecting and analysing data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This appeared to be an ethical concern because there is the risk of data exclusion or data that contradicts with the researcher's beliefs. However, the topic under investigation was filtered through the researcher's viewpoint and ideas (Hughes, 2020).

Ethical issues in reporting data

While data collection and analysis are the subject of much ethical debate, Creswell (2002) asserts that presenting study results is just as crucial to an ethical research process. It has been maintained that a researcher conducting a study ought to acknowledge any work cited from other sources. This procedure assists researchers to avoid copying other researcher's work (Creswell, 2002). The in-text citation needs to contain the name of the author and the year of publication. A list of references must be included in the reference section as well. In addition, the results must be presented honestly, without being altered to fit the agendas or presumptions of the researcher or any other parties (Creswell, 2002). Even if the results defy conventional wisdom, they should still be released and shared. The study adhered to these ethical guidelines for data reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Ghasemi *et al.* (2019, p.1), "the discussion section of a scientific paper is supposed to interpret and elucidate the significance of the study findings, highlight current knowledge available on the research problem being investigated, and explain the novel aspects emerging from the findings of the study in moving the field forward." This section presents the study's findings on an assessment of the impact of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use on students' psychological ramifications.

Respondents' characteristics**Gender**

The study had 51.3% (41) male participants and 48.8% (39) female participants. The study had at least equal representation of gender. Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarise the gender representation of the study.

Table 1: Gender

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	41	51.3	51.3	51.3
Valid Female	39	48.8	48.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

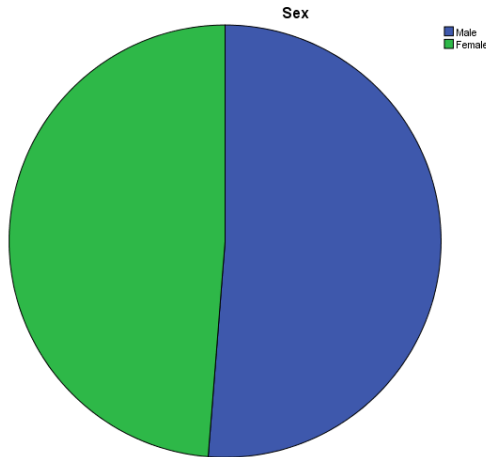


Figure 1: Gender

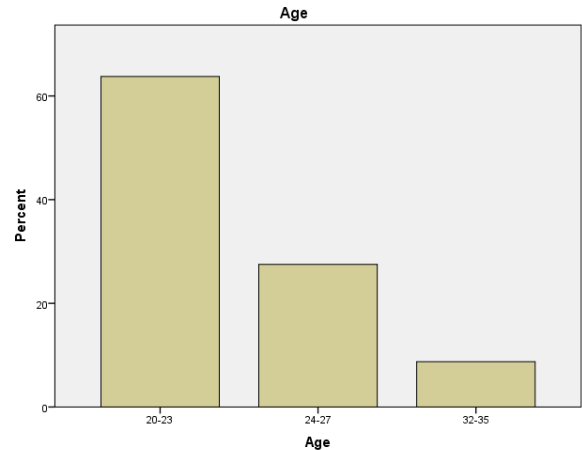


Figure 2: Age ranges of participants

Age

The study had a higher number of participants (above 60%) from the age range of 20-35 than 24-27 and 32-35, respectively.

Universities/Colleges and Education Qualifications

The study included participants from five (5) public universities and two Christian based universities. The majority of the respondents were from Christian based

universities. This might happen due to the random selection of participants. However, the study had 70% of the respondents holding a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), 23.8% are probably in their final year of studies or are doing a master's degree, and they hold a bachelor's degree, while the remaining 3.8% hold diploma qualifications.

Table 2: Respondents' education level

Education qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MSCE	56	70.0	70.0	70.0
Diploma	5	6.3	6.3	76.3
Valid Bachelor's Degree	19	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Status of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs and its causes

The study revealed that alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is common among students in HEIs. 96% of the respondents attributed this to stress and anxiety, boredom and depression, negative peer pressure, heartbreaks, academic issues such as too much workload on assignments, fear of exams, and family issues, some students take it as the lifestyle of a university student,

some men believe that real men do consume alcohol or cannabis/marijuana, relationship issues, lack of guidance and counselling, lack of resilience, lack of income and social media influence. The study findings are consistent with the social stress model because it also entails that a person's propensity to take drugs depends on their amount of stress and how much stress modifiers like social networks, social competency, and resources counteract that stress (Rhodes & Jason, 1990).

Table 3: Respondents' education level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	77	96.3	96.3	96.3
Valid No	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

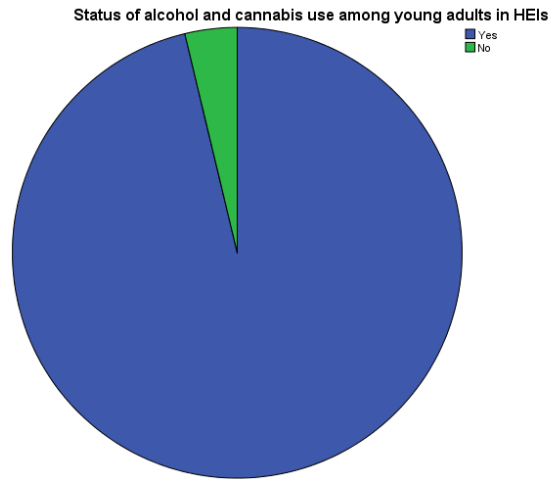


Figure 3: Status of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs

Comparison of the mean value of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage among students

The mean value of alcohol consumption (1.75) is lower than the mean value of cannabis/marijuana use (1.95). This might entail a high probability that those using cannabis/marijuana are also addicted to alcohol use. However, the frequency of their consumption entails that those who drink alcohol (mean 3.68) are less likely to consume cannabis/marijuana (mean 1.11). Moreover, students are more likely to get involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use per week.

Table 4: Mean values of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs

Descriptive Statistics	N	Range	Mean
Alcohol consumption	80	1	1.75
Cannabis/marijuana use	80	1	1.95
Frequency of alcohol consumption and cannabis/marijuana usage per week	80	4	3.68
Frequency of cannabis/marijuana (marijuana) usage per week	80	3	1.11
Valid N (listwise)	80		

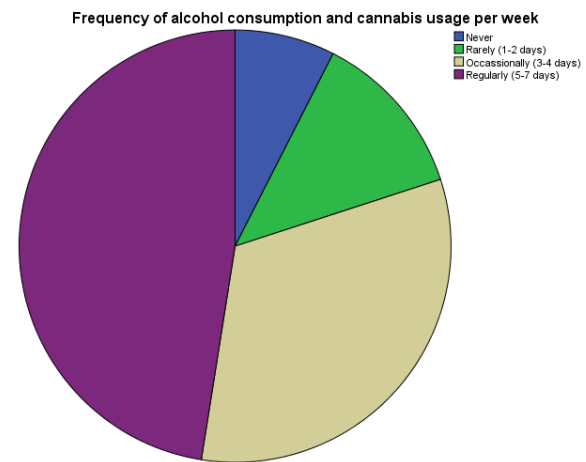


Figure 4: Frequency of alcohol consumption and cannabis/marijuana usage per week

Pearson's correlations between alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage and psychosocial effects

Table 5: Pearson's correlations

Control Variables			Alcohol consumption	Cannabis /marijuana use	Psychosocial help about alcohol or cannabis/marijuana use
	Alcohol consumption	Correlation	1.000	.000	.311
		Significance (1-tailed)	.	.500	.002
		df	0	78	78
none-a	Cannabis/marijuana use	Correlation	.000	1.000	.426
		Significance (1-tailed)	.500	.	.000
		df	78	0	78
	Psychosocial help about alcohol or cannabis/marijuana use	Correlation	.311	.426	1.000
		Significance (1-tailed)	.002	.000	.
		df	78	78	0
Psychosocial help about alcohol or cannabis/marijuana use	Alcohol consumption	Correlation	1.000	-.154	
		Significance (1-tailed)	.	.088	
		df	0	77	

	Cannabis/marijuana use	Correlation	-.154	1.000	
		Significance (1-tailed)	.088	.	
		df	77	0	
<i>a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.</i>					

Pearson’s correlation (r) between seeking psychosocial (mental, emotional, spiritual, or social) help about alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is 1.000 at a p -value of 1.000 (1-tailed). This implies that there is a perfect linear relationship (one-to-one correspondence between the values of the variables). Thus, students involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use are likely to seek psychosocial help. However, 77.5% (see table 6) of the respondents revealed that have not yet sought any psychosocial help. This might be attributed to a lack of awareness among students of specific institutions or organizations that provide psychosocial assistance related to alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use. The other reason could be self-denial. Nevertheless, 96.3% (see Table 7) of the respondents confirmed that there is a need for the provision of education and awareness on risks associated

with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs. Thus, the social stress model incorporated in this study might provide a framework for identifying factors that may contribute to youth’s resilience when faced with strong urges to abuse drugs. Nevertheless, healthcare science practitioners and health science policymakers must intensify and scale up preventative activities aimed at educating and raising awareness about the risks connected with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use, and provide frequent sensitization and awareness, guidance, and counselling to students in HEIs. This may assist students in understanding the harmful repercussions of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage, preventing their consumption, or seeking psychosocial help once consumed knowingly or unknowingly.

Table 6: Psychosocial help about alcohol or cannabis/marijuana use

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
Valid	No	62	77.5	77.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Education and awareness of risks associated with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana among adults in HEIs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	77	96.3	96.3	96.3
Valid	No	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Students’ knowledge, perceptions, or experiences on legal implications for alcohol or cannabis/marijuana use among students in HEIs

Positive experiences

Some respondents expressed that alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use help students stay free from stress and that it increases confidence, which may result in high participation in class. This also promotes active listening, which helps students grasp the main concept being taught during teaching and learning. However, this claim is not backed by evidence; hence, further research via experimental design can be done in this research area.

Negative experiences

The majority of respondents attributed alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use to several negative consequences, including reduced awareness, which is likely to lead to high crime rates; examination failure, academic withdrawal due to poor performance and suicide, mental disturbance, disorder, and madness, increase in theft at HEI among

students who get involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use; poor academic performance of the students, which is due to low participation in class work, and students who report substance use often experience higher levels of depression and anxiety, among others.

Legal implications

Respondents also expressed knowledge of the legal implications associated with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use. Some of them include: cannabis/marijuana is illegal in Malawi, and its possession, use, or distribution is considered a criminal offense; a violation of institution policy: do not allow any students to use alcohol or cannabis/marijuana if you have found them; they must be withdrawn; and legal drinking age: in Malawi, the legal drinking age is 18 years old and above. Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to ensure that students who are under the legal drinking age are not provided with alcohol on campus or at university events. As such, HEIs should enforce their rules and regulations on alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use.

The study findings are significant in the realm of health since it discovered that, while students believe that alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage can help them stay stress-free and boost confidence, it has its repercussions (World Health Organization, 2022). Thus, alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use are associated with high crime rates; examination failure, academic withdrawal due to poor performance and suicide, mental disturbance, disorder, and madness, high cases of theft at HEIs, and among students who get involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use; poor academic performance of students, which is due to low participation in class work, and students who report substance use often experience higher levels of depression and anxiety, among others.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed high usage (96%) of alcohol and cannabis/marijuana among students in Malawi's HEIs. This is attributed to stress and anxiety, boredom and depression, negative peer pressure, heartbreaks, academic issues such as too much workload on assignments, fear of exams, family issues, lack of guidance and counselling, lack of resilience, lack of income and social media influence, among others. However, Pearson's correlation (r) between seeking psychosocial (mental, emotional, spiritual, or social) help with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use is 1.000 at a p-value of 1.000 (1-tailed). This implied that there is a perfect linear relationship. Thus, students involved in alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use are likely to seek psychosocial help.

One of the current study's drawbacks was time limits. If the researcher had more time, the study would have been conducted with a bigger sample size and validated the online survey replies onsite. The greater sample size would also have allowed the study findings to be generalized to all Malawi's HEIs. In addition, the current study did not use the hypothesis, which would have allowed for some statistical inferences. However, the hypothesis was not included due to the nature of the study and in accordance with University of the People REC's standards. Nevertheless, this study recommends that HEI authorities and health science practitioners collaborate with health practitioners to prevent students under the legal drinking age from receiving alcohol on campus or during university events. As a result, HEI authorities and health science practitioners must enforce their rules and regulations on alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage. Moreover, HEI authorities and health science practitioners should provide guidance and counselling for students enrolled in their institutions. HEIs should also collaborate with health science practitioners to engage students in various activities, including sports, movies, and church activities. HEIs, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, shall convey alcohol and drug policies to students. To avoid legal consequences, HEIs must work with the Ministry of Health to ensure compliance with alcohol and cannabis/marijuana usage rules and regulations, for example, by not allowing underage students to consume alcohol and

prohibiting the consumption of cannabis/marijuana on school campuses. Failure to do so should result in fines to HEIs. Finally, HEIs must also collaborate with health science policymakers through the Ministry of Health to ensure a drug-free campus.

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