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**THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON ALCOHOL
USE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF
BUSIA DISTRICT-KENYA.**

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SHIKUKU KAFWA MARTIN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL
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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to establish the influence of gender, age and school type on students' perception on alcohol use in secondary schools in Busia district-Kenya. The objectives were: to identify the influence of gender on students' perception on use of alcohol among secondary schools, to investigate the influence of students' age and school type on alcohol consumption. The study was based on two theories: Theory of social learning by Bandura (1977) and Theory of Gestalt School of Psychology (1969). Bandura (1977) proposed that people form habits by imitating from their immediate environment while Gestalt (1969) suggests that people make certain decisions that are determined by the principles of proximity, similarity, continuity, and closure. The study design was descriptive survey. A combination of stratified sampling technique, purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the participants in the study. The respondents included 240 students. The instrument utilized in data collection was the questionnaire. The data was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study findings revealed that modern media (cell phone, internet, radio and television set), peer and parents/ guardians greatly influence the students use of alcohol due to their aggressive advertisements and proximity. Poverty and the foreign culture also influenced alcohol drinking within the local communities. Urbanization and easy availability of alcohol also encouraged alcohol drinking. The study further established that both male and female students consume alcohol but with a higher percentage of male. The study also noted that students aged 16-19 years have high preference for alcohol because of their adolescent age. However other students over 20 years had great influence on the junior students in alcohol drinking. The study also found out that mixed day schools had higher level of alcohol consumption than other school categories. In the light of the above findings the following recommendations were made: The Ministry of education should establish a clear policy prohibiting students from drinking alcohol; the teachers, parents and other stake-holders in education should encourage students to use non alcohol beverages such as soya, coffee, tea and cocoa; the guidance and counseling departments in secondary schools should be equipped in order to offer effective guidance and counseling services to students facing the dangers of alcohol drinking; the parents, public and mass media should stop exposing children to alcohol use at early ages through poor role modeling and aggressive advertisement. The Kenya government should effectively implement alcohol drinking control act (2010) in order to eliminate alcohol business near school environments.