

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effectiveness of Brewers’ “Responsible Drinking Messages” to Fight against Alcohol Abuse among Students of Higher Education Institutions in Buea, Cameroon

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Abstract

When the World Health Organisation (WHO) observed that alcohol abuse had become a global pandemic, it invited its member states in 2005 to fight against the phenomenon by regulating the marketing and sales activities of the alcohol industry. Faced with this stigmatisation, Breweries in Cameroon decided to join the fight against alcohol abuse by tucking the words “Drink Responsibly” to their classical brand advertisements. Irrespective of the dissemination of these advertisements, scholars observed that the per capita volume of alcohol consumed worldwide is still higher than the WHO recommended volume. The WHO thereafter recommended that such moderation interventions should constantly be evaluated. This study evaluates the effectiveness of Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages (RDMs) among students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea. It employed a quantitative approach and survey method. The sample of 774 respondents was selected through multiple non-probability sampling techniques from the University of Buea (UB), Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) and Higher Institute of Business Management and Technology (HIBMAT). Descriptive and inferential analyses (ANOVA, Chi square and regression) were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.0. The findings reveal that 774 (100%) respondents are significantly aware of the dissemination of RDMs, 668 (86.3%) understand what brewers mean by “Drink Responsibly” and 471(60.9%) feel that the RDMs are not convincing or credible tools for the fight against alcohol abuse. They think RDMs are not effective because “there is still excessive drinking” taking place in Cameroon, especially amongst students at Higher Education Institutes. The paper, therefore, recommends that the government of Cameroon should rigorously regulate the marketing and sales of beer brands while Brewers should produce separate messages that should be disseminated with an equal share of voice for beer brand advertisements and “Responsible Drinking” campaigns.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages, Alcohol Abuse, Higher Education Institutes.

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1. Introduction

The consumption of beer or any other type of alcoholic drink the world over has been an integral part of many cultures for thousands of years (McGovern, 2009; Abby, Smith & Scot, 1993 & Mulford & Miller, 1960). People drink alcohol when they want to celebrate, commiserate, relax, socialise during events and funerals (Mental Health Foundation, 2022). Life to them is all about sharing a memorable moment with a drink irrespective of the health-related risks. On observing in 2005 that the excessive consumption of alcohol was becoming a global health hazard, the World Health Organisation (WHO) accused the alcohol industry of being the promoters of alcohol abuse due to their indiscriminate marketing and sales promotions activities. It therefore advised state governments to develop and implement effective strategies and programmes that will help reduce the negative health and social consequences of the harmful use of alcohol (Monteiro, 2007). They were equally encouraged to control the pervasive marketing and sales activities of the alcohol industry through the application of restrictive legislation and regulation. Faced with draconian regulations initiated by state governments, the alcohol industry in America and Europe decided to tuck words like 'Drink Responsibly', "Enjoy Responsibly" or "Party Responsibly" to their standard beer brand advertisement. The alcohol industry asserts that the messages are expected to educate people about the risks associated to the excessive consumption of alcohol and at the same time encourage them to change their alcohol related attitudes and behaviours (Hill, 2004). These messages are hereby referred to as Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages and should be differentiated from Public Service Announcements (PSA) initiated by the government or community agencies for the same purpose. Irrespective of the continuous broadcast of these messages, the World Health Organisation has been nurturing doubts on their effectiveness in the fight against alcohol abuse. Justification for this stance lies in the fact that volumes of alcohol being consumed per capita in all regions of the world are still higher than the recommended WHO volume. In addition, it has been observed that health problems related to alcohol abuse are equally on the increase. In effect, alcohol consumption and related diseases are increasing instead of declining (Rehm, Mathers, Popova, Thavorncharoensap, Teerawattananon, & Patra, 2009).

In alignment with the observations of the WHO, scholars who have carried out studies on the

effectiveness of health related campaigns organised by governments, corporations and voluntary organisations that frequently make use of the mass media to convey messages or to provide motivation for behaviour change, have questioned the overall effectiveness of the messages in obtaining the expected outcomes (Atkin & Arkin, 1990; Brown & Walsh-Childers, 1994; Flay, 1987; Rice & Atkin, 1994; Vingilis & Coultres, 1990; Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan, & Themba, 1993; Dumbili, Uwa-Robinson, & Odeigah, 2022).

Scholars also have contradictory positions on the effectiveness of "Responsible Drinking Messages" in the fight against alcohol abuse. Some (Pilling & Brannon, 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2016; Barber, Bradshaw & Walsh, 1989) assert that RDMs are effective while others refute the claim (Wakefield, Loken & Hornik, 2010; Moss, Albery, Dyer, Frings, Humphreys, Inkelaar, Harding & Speller, 2015; Moss, Evans & Albery, 2017; Hill et al., 2005). This study is based on three research objectives and there in seeks to ascertain whether:

1. The students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea are aware of the dissemination of Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages tucked to beer brand advertisements in the mass media in Cameroon.
2. The students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea understand what Brewers mean by "Drink Responsibly".
3. The students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea perceive Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages tucked to beer classical brand advertisements as credible tool for the fight against alcohol abuse.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Responsible Drinking Messages

Frings, Moss, Albert, Eskisan, Wilcockson and Marchant (2018 p.46) assert that "Responsible Drinking Messages" focus on promoting drinking practices that are less likely to cause harm, rather than focusing on the health consequences of misusing alcohol". According to Glock, Klapproth and Müller (2015), these messages are generally disseminated in formats such as public service announcements on television (Barber, Bradshaw & Walsh, 1989), online (Pilling & Brannon, 2007) and print advertisements.

Mass media campaigns using television, radio, outdoor, print media, product labels and the internet have been used for many years for the dissemination

of Responsible Drinking Messages that target alcohol consumers with the objective of creating message awareness, comprehension, retention and a change in alcohol related attitude and behaviour. Unfortunately, these messages might hardly achieve their objectives since they are characteristically passive and quite often compete for the attention of the consumer with distractive factors such as pervasive product marketing, powerful social norms and a culture that favours alcohol abuse (Wakefield, Loken, & Hornik, 2014). The situation is even aggravated in the case of Cameroon wherein the message design strategy simply tucks the words "Drink Responsibly" to the beer brands' classical advertisement. Under this circumstance, it becomes difficult for Responsible Drinking Messages to achieve the objectives set in the campaigns.

2.2 Effectiveness of Brewers Responsible Drinking Messages in Creating Awareness

A review of existing literature on the audience awareness of Brewers' Responsible Drinking messages highlights two relatively opposing positions on this question. Some researchers have suggested that "Responsible Drinking Messages" embedded in or tucked to beer brand advertisements are not attractive enough to engage the attention of consumers to the extent of creating significant levels of awareness. On the contrary other scholars feel that the messages will create awareness after a prolonged period of exposure.

Scholars like Kaskutas and Greefield (1997) and Young et al. (2018) assert that Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages are effective in raising audience awareness levels of the risks associated to alcohol abuse. Such awareness gets even higher with more frequent dissemination of the message and in the absence of any frontal competition coming from messages. In contrast to cases where consumers were said to be aware of the existence of "Responsible Drinking" messages embedded in beer brand advertising, research carried out by Smith, Cukier and Jernigan (2014) using descriptive textual analysis of 'drink responsibly' messages appearing in all advertisements pertaining to beer, spirits and alcopop products placed in U.S. national newsstand magazines from 2008 to 2010 found out that Responsible Drinking Messages were not quite effective in creating awareness. Justification for this assertion lies in the fact that in 95% of the advertisements, the words "Drink Responsibly" were embedded in beer brand advertisements either in a

very soft or less audible voice. In addition, they were equally written in miniscule fonts that do not match the fonts and visuals promoting the advertised product in print advertisements. Kersbergen and Field (2017), Smith, Cukier and Jernigan (2014) and Alcohol Justice (2012) are aligned to the stance that Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages are not effective in making people to be aware of the fight against alcohol abuse because of weaknesses associated to their design.

2.3 Effectiveness in Creating Message Comprehension

In a descriptive textual analysis of 'drink responsibly' messages appearing in all advertisements pertaining to beer, spirits and alcopop products placed in U.S. national, newsstand magazines from 2008 to 2010, Smith, Cukier and Jernigan (2014) posited that a cardinal rule in social and behaviour change communication is that health warning messages must be clear and specific about what they want people to do or not to do. However, do the "Drink responsibly or Drink with moderation" messages pass this test? The answer as per Jennifer Romo, a 21-year-old political science major at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) is that nobody really takes the messages seriously since the receivers of the messages generally do not know what they stand for (Silverstein, 2014). Simone (2012) equally posits that the primary premise for evaluating the comprehension of "Responsible Drinking" messages can be in the view that their "Responsible Drinking" campaigns are simply a perfect cocktail of brand promotions and social responsibility communication. He highlighted the fact that pro-health feelings expressed in "Responsible Drinking" campaigns are simply a farce. He could not understand how the recipients of double barrel messages found in the advertisements of beer brands would understand what is expected of them when the advertisements extol the benefits inherent in the products and at the same time, encourage people to enjoy the product in a responsible manner. To further complicate the issue, Brewers do not qualify what they mean by "Responsible Drinking". Smith, Atkin and Roznowski (2006), Dejong, Atkin and Wallace (1992) and Smith, Cukier and Jernigan (2014) upheld the views supra while Barry (2007) citing Atkins, Smith and Bang complement them in saying that the messages do not indicate when the consumer has to stop drinking in terms of volumes consumed. Overall, scholars have generally concluded that Brewers' "Responsible Drinking Messages" and the Public Service Advertisements on Responsible Drinking have been ineffective in creating issue comprehension

irrespective of the stance of very few studies that hold a contrary view (Babor et al 2010; Boots & Midford, 2001).

2.4 Effectiveness in Creating Conviction or Acceptance

A message would easily be accepted by its receiver if he or she finds its content to be credible. Consequently, message credibility refers to the judgement that an individual would have on the message being authentic, accurate and believable. A review of the literature on the effectiveness of "Responsible Drinking Messages" in creating conviction reveals that recipients of the messages do not consider them to be credible because they use vague slogans that fail to define responsible drinking (Dejong, Atkin & Wallack, 1992). The scholars could not understand if responsible drinking meant drinking without getting drunk, drinking and even getting drunk so long as you have a driver or drinking any amount of alcohol so long as you do not cause any misunderstandings with your neighbours. These vague slogans and taglines would make it difficult for consumers to understand what "Responsible Drinking" really means and if they do not understand, such messages will fail in creating conviction. Simone (2012) supported the stance that consumers attribute very little credibility to Brewers' "Responsible Drinking Messages" when he referred to them as a perfect of cocktail of brand promotions and social responsibility initiatives. In so doing, he highlighted the fact that Brewers tend to include other motives to that of fighting against alcohol abuse when they run their "Responsible Drinking" campaigns. To complement Simone (2012), Smith et al., (2006), Atkin et al. (2008) and Belch and Belch (2001) assert that Brewers Responsible Drinking Messages are not effective in convincing the consumer about the risk associated to alcohol abuse because instead of focusing on alcohol abuse, Brewers use the messages to promote their products and at the same time, create a positive image or reputation for their firms by portraying themselves as corporate citizens who care for the wellbeing of the consumers.

Hovland (1954) and Doyle, Gaudet, Lay, MacLeo and Scaeffler (2014) posit that the acceptance or believability of a message quite often depends on the credibility that the receiver of the message attributes to its sender. Such credibility should create likeability and cause the target to be more receptive to the message coming from the source. In addition, the source of the message should be seen to be empathetic to the target population to the extent that the recipients easily find

an alignment with him on the message. A review of the literature on how consumers perceive the participation of Brewers in the fight against alcohol abuse reveals that brewers are not seen to be credible partners. The explanation for the lack of credibility for industry messages is grounded on the fact that industry messages display an obvious conflict of interest. The profit driven interests of brewers who count on volumes of beer sold and consumed for revenue stands in total dissonance with the desire to protect the consumer from alcohol abuse. These conflicting interests tend to push consumers to become sceptical about the intentions of the Brewers (Rifon et al., 2004). As a result, consumers tend to look at the brewers as hypocrites who are more interested in creating a positive image or reputation for themselves with the objective of using such positive images to disarm their critics (Smith, Atkins & Roznowski, 2006 as cited by Barry, 2007).

Petty, Briñol, and Cacioppo (1981) have equally posited that the consumer's acceptance of the "Responsible Drinking Message" will quite often depend on his or her attitude towards alcohol consumption and his or her ability to process the information delivered in the message. Given to the above, Andrews, Netemeyer, and Durvasula (1990) have highlighted the fact that people who hold favourable attitudes towards alcohol consumption tend to disbelieve specific-instance warnings. Heavy drinkers would not quickly accept Responsible Drinking Messages because of the cognitive responses they give to the message. Being addicted to drinking, any message that stands against alcohol and its abuse stands in dissonance with their beliefs about alcohol being a companion for happy moments or a means of drowning their sorrows and defeats in life. In such cases, instead of accepting the message as presented, addicts will pay selective attention to what is said and end up with selective perceptions of what the message is all about (Andrews et al., 1990).

2.5 Theoretical Review

The evaluation of the Effectiveness of Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages tucked to beer brand advertisement and disseminated in the mass media in Cameroon for the fight against alcohol abuse amongst students of higher Education Institutes in Buea is a theory-based exercise. The theories used in the study provide guidelines on the dissemination of the RDM while at the same time, set the standards on which the findings of the research will be compared (Chen, 1990; Weiss, 1970). Freimuth, Cole and Kirby (2000)

complement this stance by saying that "in a theory-based evaluation, the standard for comparison is the programme's theory, or sub-theories, if the evaluation is aimed at examining sub-components of the programme". In the same vein, Corcoran (2007) posits that, theories would help the practitioner to predict the outcomes and the relationship between variables in an intervention. Corcoran (2007) concluded that an evaluator can choose between using one theory to evaluate the intervention or multiple theories when the evaluation of sub-domains of the expected outcomes are considered. Based on these facts, this research will use multiple theories to elaborate on the message dissemination process, identify the dependent variables to be evaluated and provide the opportunity for the findings of the research to be compared to the standards set for each variable by the sub theories. This is therefore indicative of the fact that multiple theories are used to explain the findings of the process and summative aspects of the intervention.

The theoretical framework for the dissemination of Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages is provided by Lasswell's Communication Model (1948). The model sees communication as a linear process that has stages that are contained in the statement: "who says what, in which channel, to whom and with what effects?" The model demonstrates how the "Responsible Drinking Message" is disseminated by the source for the attention of the recipient of the message with the expectations that it would have some effects on him. The expected effects are highlighted in the McGuire Hierarchy-of Effects- Model (1968) that sets out the sequential objectives that a persuasive advertisement should achieve. The model expects the advertisement to create message exposure and obtain awareness, comprehension, acceptance/conviction, retention and action. For the message to achieve these outcomes, McGuire (1968) asserts that each of these steps must be effective. On the contrary, if the process falters at any of early stages the expected results will not be obtained (Dahl, 2007). Based on the assertions of Corcoran (2007), the sub theories used in the study with the objective of predicting outcomes and causal relationships between the independent and dependent variables are: Agenda Setting Theory (Awareness), Schramm's Communication Model (Comprehension), Message and Source Credibility Theory (conviction).

3. Methodology

This research adopted a quantitative approach of social inquiry. The approach focused on assessing

the effectiveness of brewers' responsible drinking messages in creating awareness, comprehension and conviction in the fight against alcohol abuse among students of the University of Buea (UB), the Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) and the Higher Institute of Business Management and Technology of Buea (HIBMAT). This research employs a survey method of data collection. The choice of this method is informed by Bowling (2014), who avers that survey is a method of quantitative research aims at collecting information as accurately and precisely as possible from a large sample with the objective of measuring variables like awareness, comprehension, and conviction.

The population comprised of 21,506 students: 20,306 from UB, 700 from CUIB and 500 from HIBMAT. The institutional frame is composed of all Undergraduate Departments of each school. On these grounds, UB has 38 departments while CUIB and HIBMAT have 19 and 13 respectively. Quotas for each department were obtained by dividing the sample size of each institution by the number of departments in the undergraduate programme. The students selected for the study were individuals: who were present in the campus or the classroom at the time of data collection; who were identified through their School Identity Cards to be undergraduate students of a specific level of education in a particular department of the said school; who declared that they are beer consumers.

Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample determination, the sample size is 842 respondents. This is composed of 377 UB students, 248 CUIB students and 217 HIBMAT students. Data were collected from the 8th to the 21st of December 2021. A total of 774 questionnaires were collected and used for data analysis. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.0. Cronbach's Alpha reliability test value is 0.87. This signifies a high level of internal consistency.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Out of the 774 respondents involved in this study, males were 466 (60.2%) while females were 308 (39.8%). The analyses of the ages of respondents revealed that 279 respondents (36%) were within the 18-20 age bracket, while 357 (46.1%) were within the 21-23, and 138 (17.8%) were aged 24 years and

above. The University of Buea (UB) had a split of 340 (43.9%) while the Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) had 241 (31.1%) and HIBMAT 193 (24.9%). As per the class or year of study, 348 respondents (45%) were in the first year of study, 243 (31.4%) in the second year and 182 (23.6%) in the final year. Equally, 717 (92.6%) were single at the time of the study, 43 (4.4%) were married, 20 (2.6%) were cohabiting and 3(0.4%) were widows. The findings on the students' preferred first language revealed that 677 (87.5%) were English speaking while 92 (11.9%) and 5 (0.6%) spoke French and Spanish respectively. The findings further indicate that 167 respondents

(21.6%) have lived in Buea for one year or less, 277 (35.8%) between two and four years, 88 (11.4%) between five and seven years, 86 (11.2%) between 8 to 30 years, and 86 (11.2%) throughout their entire lives. Forty-three respondents (5.6%) did not provide any responses to this question. Also, 465 respondents (60.1%) lived in Molyko while 299 (38.6%) lived in other quarters of Buea like Bomaka, Bokova, Small Soppo, Mile 14, Bakweri town, Clerks' Quarters. Ten (10) respondents schooling in Buea lived in Douala, Limbe, Mile 4 or Tiko. This represents 1.3% of the sample.

4.2 Students' Awareness of Brewers' Responsible Drinking Messages Tucked to the Beer Brand Advertisements in the Cameroonian Mass Media

Table 1. Respondents' Awareness of the existence of the Responsible Drinking Message

Measurement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	774	100
No	0	0
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

All respondents reported having seen, heard or read the words "Drink Responsibly" in beer brand advertisements disseminated in the mass media in Cameroon

Table 2. The frequency at which respondents encountered the Responsible Drinking message

Measurement	Frequency	Percent
Never	0	0.0%
Rarely (25%)	324	41.8
Sometimes (50%)	188	24.3
Often (75%)	196	25.3
Daily (100%)	66	8.5
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

Based on the findings, 66 respondents (8.5%) said that they were exposed to Responsible Drinking Messages in the media daily, while 196 (25.3%) said that they were quite often exposed to the messages. In addition

to this, 188 others (24.3%) said they sometimes encounter the messages. Those who rarely encounter the messages are 324 in number and they represent 41.8% of the sample.

4.3 Exposure to Responsible Drinking Messages in the Media

Table 3. Media in which Respondents encountered Responsible Drinking Messages

	TV		Radio		Newspapers		Outdoor Ad. Boards		Internet		Beer Bottles		Word of Mouth	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	553	71.4	243	31.4	210	27.1	414	53.5	433	55.9	430	55.6	488	65.5
No	221	28.6	531	68.6	564	72.9	360	46.5	341	44.1	344	44.4	286	34.5
Total	774	100	774	100	774	100	774	100	774	100	774	100	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

Irrespective of the fact that all respondents reported having seen, heard, or read the "Responsible Drinking Message", it is evident that they did not achieve a 100% viewership score from being exposure to a single medium. Consequently, this achievement came in because of a media dispersion strategy wherein multiple media are used in the dissemination of campaign messages. The top-ranking medium in which respondents encountered the "Responsible

Drinking Messages" is Television. Five hundred and fifty-three (553) respondents representing 71.4 % of the sample, came across the Responsible Drinking Messages on television. In addition, the internet 433 (55.9%), product label 430 (55.6%) and outdoor boards 414 (53.5%) came up at the second, third and fourth positions respectively. Low levels of exposure were attributed to the radio and newspapers at 31.4% (243) and 27.1% (210) respectively.

Table 4. Beer Brand advertisements in which Respondents encountered Responsible Drinking Messages

Drink Brand	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Guinness FES	295	38.1	106	13.7
Harp	122	15.8	156	20.2
Guinness Smooth	283	36.6	105	13.6
Gold Harp	96	12.4	158	20.4
Smirnoff	142	18.3	138	17.8
33 Export	208	26.9	118	15.2
Beaufort	110	14.2	153	19.8
Mutzig	124	16.0	151	19.5
Manyang	91	11.8	160	20.7
Amstel	96	12.4	154	19.9
Isenberg	78	10.1	167	21.6
Tuborg	58	7.5	167	21.6
Kadji	60	7.8	161	20.8
Others	115	14.9	145	18.7

Source: Authors, 2021

Overall, Guinness FES (38.1%) and Guinness Smooth (36.6%) stand out in the first and second positions of beer brands in whose advertisements respondents encountered (saw, read or heard) Responsible

Drinking Messages. The third brand in the ranking is 33 Export. On the contrary, the brands with the lowest scores were Tuborg (7.5%) and Kadji (7.8%)

Table 5. Part of the advertisement on which the advertiser lays more emphasis: Part promoting the product or Responsible Drinking

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Part promoting the product	298	38.5
Part saying "Drink Responsibly"	199	25.7
I do not know	277	35.8
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

When asked about the segment of the beer brand advertisement on which Brewers pay more persuasion emphasis, respondents indicated that Brewers lay more emphasis on the part of the message promoting the product (38.5%) rather than on the part that says, 'Drink Responsibly' (25.7%). Two hundred

and seventy-seven students said they did not know the part of the advertisement on which Brewers pay more attention. This highlights the fact that many respondents might not be looking at advertisements with a critical eye.

Table 6. Students' awareness of the existence of Responsible Drinking messages on beer labels

Measurement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	337	43.5
No	437	56.5
Total	774	100

Source: Field data 2021

The beer brand label is supposed to be the regular medium that is consumed by students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea because each beer consumption occasion offers them an opportunity to connect with the bottle and its label. Unfortunately, findings on whether students have ever read the contents of beer brand labels reveal that 437 respondents out of 774 (56.5%) have never read the content of the label. Only 337 students (43.5%) have read them. This finding once more supports the fact

that consumers are not quite inquisitive about the information provided by brewers on the packaging of their products.

4.4 Hypothesis One

Students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea are not significantly aware of the dissemination of Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages tucked to the beer brand advertisements in the Cameroonian mass media.

Table 7. *Exposure and Institutions of learning*

Rate	Response Outcome	
	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely (25%)	324	41.8
Sometimes (50%)	188	24.3
Often (75%)	196	25.3
Daily (100%)	66	8.5
Total	774	100

	df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	20.598	10.299	8.064	.000
Within Groups	771	984.705	1.277		
Total	773	1005.302			

Source: Authors, 2021

The results from the analysis indicate that students’ exposure to the media has a significant effect on awareness of drink responsibly messages, $F(2,771) = 8.06, p < .05$. The mean values vary across the various student populations (UB: $M = 3.02$; CUIB: $M = 2.95$;

HIBMAT: $M = 2.63$). A post hoc comparison with the conservative Scheffe test was used to identify the significant factor (s) through multiple comparisons as seen in the table:

Table 8. *Post Hoc Tests: Multiple Comparisons*

(I) Place of Study	(J) Place of Study	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
University of Buea	CUIB	.07108	.09528	.757	-.1626	.3048
	HIBMAT	.39882*	.10163	.000	.1496	.6481
CUIB	University of Buea	-.07108	.09528	.757	-.3048	.1626
	HIBMAT	.32774*	.10885	.011	.0608	.5947
HIBMAT	University of Buea	-.39882*	.10163	.000	-.6481	-.1496
	CUIB	-.32774*	.10885	.011	-.5947	-.0608

*Dependent Variable (Awareness): *How often have you come across the advertisement that tells you as a consumer to DRINK RESPONSIBLY?*

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Authors, 2021

According to Scheffe’s test, the significant dependence is seen between the population of the University of Buea and HIBMAT and CUIB and HIBMAT. This indicates that the significant exposure to drink responsible messages came from these pairs, as earlier indicated by the mean variations. In sum this hypothesis was

rejected at $F(2,771) = 8.06, p < .05$. This therefore means that students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea are significantly aware of the dissemination of “Drink Responsibly Messages” tucked to beer brand advertisements that are disseminated in the mass media in Cameroon.

4.5 Measurement of the Extent to Which Students Buea Understand What Brewers Mean by “Drink Responsibly”

Table 9. Message comprehension amongst institutions of higher learning

Place of Study	Message Understanding		Total
	Yes	No	
University of Buea	293	45	338
CUIB	197	44	241
HIBMAT	178	17	195
Total	668	106	774
Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Sig
Pearson Chi-Square	8.372 ^a	2	.015

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5

Source: Authors, 2021

Based on the findings, 86.3% (668) of the respondents declared that they understand what is meant by ‘Drink Responsibly’, as opposed to 13.7% (106) who say they do not, with more of them from the University of

Buea. The Chi-Square Test, (N = 774, df = 2) = 8.372, $p < .05$, shows a significant association between institutions of higher learning and drink responsibly message comprehension.

4.6 Suggested Number of Bottles of Beer to Consume on an Ordinary Occasion

Table 10. Suggested number of bottles of beer (65cl) to consume on an ordinary occasion.

Number of Beer Bottles	Response Outcome	
	Men	Women
1 bottle	(68) 8.8%	(286) 37%
2 bottles	(225) 29.1%	(332) 42.9%
3 bottles	(265) 34.2%	(91) 11.8%
4 bottles	(124) 16%	(33) 4.3%
5 bottles	(49) 6.3%	(10) 1.3%
6 bottles	(22) 2.8%	(12) 1.6%
7 bottles	(6) 0.8%	(4) 0.5%
8 bottle	(6) 0.8%	(4) 0.5%
9 bottles	(6) 0.8%	0
10 bottles	0.4%	0.3%
Total	(774) 100%	(744)100%

Source: Authors, 2021

To verify if the students effectively understand what “Responsible Drinking” means in terms of an alignment to the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) recommended volume of one bottle of beer at 5% Alcohol for women and two for men, the researcher obtained the findings indicated in the table 10. In effect, 286 out of 774 respondents (37%) asserted that a woman should drink one bottle of beer in a day. This aligns to the WHO recommendations and highlights the fact that 63% of the respondents did not know how much beer a woman can drink in a day if she has to drink responsibly. In what concerns Responsible

Drinking levels for men, the findings revealed that 225 respondents representing 29.1% of the sample said that men could drink two bottles of beer in a day. This is in alignment with the WHO recommended volume but it equally highlights the fact that 69.1% of the respondents did not know what the responsible drinking volume for men is. In sum, 63% and 69.1% of the respondents did not know the recommended volumes of alcohol for women and men respectively. Justification for this situation lies in the fact that, the RDM does not carry any information on recommended WHO volumes. Consequently, respondents would not

have been expected to know what they had never been informed of. As per the data the mean bottle of beer for consumption on an ordinary occasion for men is 3 bottles (M = 3.04; SD = 1.44) and for women 2 bottles (M = 2.01; SD = 1.22).

4.7 Hypothesis Two: Students Of Higher Education Institutes in Buea Do Not Significantly Understand What Brewers Mean by “Drink Responsibly”

A Univariate Analysis of Variance test was performed to predict overall effects of message understanding by institutions of higher education in Buea.

Table 11. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Institutions	447.617	2	223.809	4.734	.009	.012
	Grand Mean	Std. Error				
	15.597	.254				
	Institution means	Std. Error				
University of Buea	15.911	.374				
CUIB	14.494	.443				
HIBMAT	16.385	.492				

Source: Authors, 2021

The combined (overall) main effect of Institution and practical understanding of the drink responsibly message is significant, $F(2,771) = 4.734, p < .05$. Effect means (UB = 15.91; CUIB = 14.49; HIBMAT = 16.38) have statistical significant difference with the

grand mean of the dependent variable (M = 15.59). This therefore means that the hypothesis that states that Students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea do not significantly understand what Brewers mean by “Drink Responsibly” was rejected.

4.8 Measurement of the Extent to Which Students Consider Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages Tucked to Beer Brand Advertisements as Credible Tools to Fight Against Alcohol Abuse

Table 12. Credibility of Drink Responsibly messages

Measurement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	303	39.1
No	471	60.9
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

When respondents were asked, through a dichotomous question (Yes or No), to say whether an advertisement promoting beer consumption and at the same time asking consumers to drink responsibly could be

considered a credible tool for the fight against alcohol abuse, 303 respondents representing 39.1% of the sample said “Yes” while 471 (60.9%) of the sample said “No”

Table 13. Reasons why the message is credible

Rank order of reason why the message is credible	Freq.	%
Reminds consumers to be conscious (It helps people to reduce alcohol intake)	72	9.3
Brewers aim at making profit	33	4.3
Do not consume more than your capacity/ Dangers of over consumption, Drinking excessively is harmful	32	4.2
They educate us (They have done their part to create awareness)	29	3.7
Enticing content to promote consumption	26	3.3
Consumption level (high or low) is a personal decision (It is subject to the consumer’s decision).	19	2.5
Promo does not mean they are against what they preach	14	1.8

We believe the breweries	4	.5
Health benefits	3	.4
Excess consumption may destroy the harmony of a family	2	.3
It increases the standard of living for employees	1	.1
Message is credible	235	30.34 %
No Response	68	8.8%
Subtotal	303	39.1%
Message not credible	471	60.9%
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

Seventy-two (9.3%) respondents said the message is credible because it serves as a reminder for consumers to be cautious in their drinking. Being conscious of what they consume to the respondents could lead to a reduction in alcohol intake. Other respondents disclosed that the Responsible Drinking Message calls the attention of consumers to the fact that alcohol can create health problems and instability in families.

However, it is worthwhile mentioning that some of the reasons the respondents gave were clearly in dissonance with the idea of fighting against alcohol abuse. Asserting that the Responsible Drinking Message is effective because Brewers aim at making money or because it increases the standards of living for employees is simply an affront to common sense.

Table 14. Reasons why the message is not credible

Reasons why the message is not credible	Frequency	%
Brewers are out to make profit	99	12.8
There's still excessive drinking	90	11.6
Encourages consumption through promotions	26	3.4
No follow-up on consumers' drinking habit	19	2.5
Not healthy (high alcohol percentage)	18	2.3
It is a business strategy	11	1.4
Message is not visible on beer label	10	1.3
They allocate lesser time to the advert which aims at fighting alcohol abuse (less education)	4	.5
They need to take action	3	.4
Message is not credible	280	36.1%
No Response	191	24.7%
Subtotal	471	60.9%
Message is credible	303	39.1%
Total	774	100

Source: Authors, 2021

Conversely, the 471 respondents (60.9%) thought that the message is not credible for various reasons. Ninety-nine respondents (99) representing 12.8% of the sample felt that the message was not effective because "Brewers are out to make profit" instead of thinking about the health of consumers. Similarly, 90 respondents (11.6%) felt that Responsible Drinking Messages are not effective because "there is still excessive drinking" taking place in the country and especially amongst students at Higher Education Institutes. Another justification presented by 26 respondents is that the messages "encourages

consumption through promotion". In essence, the Responsible Drinking Message uses instructional words like "Drink", "Enjoy" and "Party" in the framing of the message and each of these words on its own, is an invitation to drink. The instructional message "Drink Responsibly" eventually becomes an affront to common sense in the fight against alcohol abuse when it is attached to the advertisements of crown cork promotions wherein advertisers encourage people to buy a bottle of beer and win more bottles of beer, cash prizes, and pieces of land or holidays abroad.

4.9 Hypothesis Three: Students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea Do Not Significantly Perceive Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages Tucked to Beer Brand Advertisements to be Credible Tools to Fight against Alcohol Abuse

Table 15. Credibility check on Brewers’ beer brand adverting as reliable partners in the fight against alcohol abuse

		Can Brewers be seen to be reliable partners in the fight against alcohol abuse?		Total
		Yes	No	
Would you consider a Brewers’ beer brand advertising credible?	Yes	180	123	303
	No	116	355	471
Total		296	478	774
Chi-Square Tests				
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square		94.424a	1	.000

Source: Authors, 2021

The Chi-Square test is significant, χ^2 (N = 774, df = 1) = 94.424, $p < .05$. According to the 2 tailed measures, there is a significant association between message credibility and fight against alcohol abuse. Nonetheless, more respondents thought that brewers cannot be seen as reliable partners in the fight against alcohol abuse. This revealed that students of higher education institutes in Buea do not significantly perceive Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages tucked to beer brand advertisements to be credible tools for the fight against alcohol abuse. The hypothesis was confirmed.

5. Discussion

The findings revealed that the students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea are significantly aware of the existence of the mass media disseminated Responsible Drinking Messages. There are two schools of thoughts on the awareness of “Responsible Drinking” messages embedded in beer brand advertisements. Kaskutas and Greefield (1997) and Young, Lewis, Katikireddi, Bauld, Stead, Angus, Campbell and Hilton (2017) realised that the dissemination of Responsible Drinking Messages in the mass media creates significant levels of awareness. Their position is backed by Catalan-Matamoros (2011), who asserts that most mass media campaigns significantly increase awareness and the levels of awareness would get even higher with more frequent dissemination of the messages. In the same vein, Dumbili (2018) who carried out a study on the awareness and understanding of Responsible Drinking Messages amongst undergraduate students in Nigeria,

found out that the students were significantly aware of the existence of Responsible Drinking Messages. Contrarily, Smith, Cukier and Jernigan, (2014) and Smart and Tan (2012) asserted that Brewers’ Responsible Drinking Messages are not attractive enough to engage the attention of consumers to the extent of creating significant levels of awareness. Amongst the justifications they offered to back their assertions are the fact that, on television and radio, the instructional message is quite often delivered in a very soft and less audible tone when compared to the classical message touting the benefits of the product. Furthermore, they asserted that the design of the Responsible Drinking Message in the posters, newspapers and brand labels is not attractive enough to engage the attention of consumers to the extent of creating significant levels of awareness because brewers quite often print the messages in dull colours and miniscule fonts at hidden angles of the advertisements.

The findings also indicated that the Students of Higher Education Institutes in Buea significantly understand what Brewers mean by “Drink Responsibly”. The findings do not align to those of past research wherein, consumers posited that they did not significantly understand what Brewers meant by “Drink Responsibly”. In sum, respondents in past research said that the alcohol industry was not really clear and specific about what they meant by Responsible Drinking” (Dejong, Atkin & Wallace, 1992; Smith, Cukier & Jernigan, 2014; Hessari & Petticrew, 2018). Based on these insights, researchers concluded that

Brewers intentionally created the ambiguous double barrel messages because they did not want to indicate to consumers that a particular level of consumption would be or would not be Responsible Drinking. In effect Brewers wanted to use the same messages in promoting their brands while trying to give the impression that they were fighting alcohol abuse (Smith, Atkin & Roznowski, 2006).

On the credibility of the message itself, 60.9% of respondents said the message is not credible because it is a double barrel message asking people to drink or enjoy alcohol and at the same time telling them to drink responsibly without indicating the level of consumption that would be considered as responsible. In the like manner, 61.8% of respondents say the message is not credible and they associate the absence of credibility to the fact that the Brewers who send out these messages are not credible partners for the fight against alcohol abuse. Justification for this stance is grounded on the fact that respondents feel that Brewers are out to make profits in the sale of alcohol and cannot be seen to be fighting against their own interest. In addition, Brewers equally organise crown cork promotions to push consumers to drink more beer and win more bottles of beer or other prizes. Telling consumers to drink with moderation or responsibly under these circumstances can only be an affront to common sense. The findings are in alignment with past research. Hovland (1954) posited that a receiver of a message will attribute no credibility to it if he or she feels that the sender of the message is not credible. Brewers have equally been accused of using such messages purposefully to obtain a favourable image from the government and therein avoid stringent regulation and taxation initiatives that can be detrimental to their business. In the like manner, Simone (2012), Belch and Belch (2001) and Atkin et al. (2008) assert that consumers of alcohol attribute very little credibility to "Drink Responsibly Messages because they are a perfect cocktail of brands promotional and corporate social responsible initiatives that are aimed at building a good image and reputation for the corporation instead of fighting alcohol abuse. In the like manner Atkins, Smith and Band as cited in Agostinelli and Grube (2002) posited that young people do not attribute any credibility to the Brewer's Responsible Drinking Message because they encourage liberal drinking and do not foresee abstinence as a choice.

6. Conclusion

The overall findings of the research indicate that the

dissemination of the Brewers' Responsible Drinking Message can be significantly effective in making the target audience to be aware of the fight against alcohol abuse and to comprehend the risks associated to alcohol abuse. The awareness is achieved because of the high frequency of message dissemination in multiple media and channels. On the contrary, the students do not consider the messages to be a credible tool in the fight against alcohol abuse because they feel that they are ambiguous. They equally feel that the senders of the message (brewers) are not credible partners for the fight against alcohol abuse because they are still pervasively marketing their products and even go to the extent of organising crown cork promotion that encourage consumers to buy a drink and win more beer, household items, land, or money. These activities are not compatible with the idea of fighting against alcohol abuse.

Based on these findings, brewers are herein advised to address the fact that respondents do not consider their Responsible Drinking Messages to be convincing or credible. They should ensure that the messages are clear (void of ambiguity) and focused on giving an acceptable a balance to both the promotional message and the health warning. Consequently, both aspects of the message should be allocated the same amount of prominence, tone of voice, visual backing and exposure. If this cannot easily be achieved on using the same advertisement, Brewers should consider producing independent Responsible Drinking advertisements. These advertisements should contain graphics fear appeal visual that can drive home the message that alcohol abuse is dangerous to the health of consumers. Brewers should equally come together to agree on a memorandum to suspend the running of crown cork promotion if they must avoid the dissonance that exist between fighting against alcohol abuse and promoting consumption. As a measure to reinforce these initiatives, the government should regulate the design of "Responsible Drinking Messages and therein ensure that information on the recommended daily consumption volumes of one bottle of beer for women and two for men is prominently announced or displayed in the advertisements of beer brands.

The main limitation of this study is the exclusion of brewers as part of the study's population. It would have been a plus for researcher to interview people from the alcohol industry since they are the ones who are designing and disseminating the messages. Unfortunately, the researchers did not work with the

alcohol industry nor solicit any assistance from them. Justification for this stance is found in the fact that the researchers did not want to be exposed to any negative influence from the Brewers that would have compromised the independent nature of the work.

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