

**AN INVESTIGATION OF ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG TEENAGE
LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF LEBITSO SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

There is dearth of information about the extent of alcohol abuse by teenagers, focusing mainly on the volume and the frequency of alcohol intake by teenagers especially in a rural setting. Most notable contributions are descriptive in nature and rely on cross-sectional analysis, with little specific focus on rural teenage alcohol abuse. To bridge the gap, this study quantifies the extent of alcohol abuse by teenagers in rural areas by means of a case study in Lebitso Senior Secondary School situated in Mopani District of Limpopo Province.

STUDY DESIGN

A mixed approach was used with the quantitative method taking the upper hand because of the nature of the variables for the hypotheses formulated which required statistical procedures. Simple random sampling was used as the study was characterized by the representation of the learners of one senior secondary school to represent the homogeneous nature of teenagers in a similar setting, in Limpopo Province.

RESULTS

The study population consisted of 251 male and female teenage learners of Lebitso Senior Secondary School. In the exploration of alcohol abuse by teenagers, the availability of liquor outlets in respect of the teenagers' households, and the socio-economic status of their families were revealed to have a bearing on their abuse of alcohol. 93% of teenagers had liquor outlets near their places of residence. The study has also shown that 87% of male learners and 13% of female learners had access to finances, which influenced their behaviour towards the abuse of alcohol.

CONCLUSION

Among the recommendations were that Education, Health, Safety and Security Sectors were to join hands in order to come up with preventative measures to deal with this problem.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

SGB	: School Governing Body
DoE	: Department of Education
MEC	: Member of the Executive Council
SANCA	: The South African National Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
SANSP	: South African National Strategic Plan
SAPS	: South African Police Service
SASA	: South African Schools Act
SMT	: School Management Team
WHO	: World Health Organization

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DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development in the Faculty of Management and Sciences has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

PMK MAGABANE (MRS)


18 February 2009
Date

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The abuse of substances such as alcohol has been a global problem since time immemorial. Alcohol abuse is not only an adult problem but a societal one, taking children and youths along the way. Its sphere of influence reaches across social, racial, cultural, language, religious and gender barriers and directly or indirectly affects all, according to the South African National Strategic Action Plan (SANSAP, 2000:81). The South African Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse (SAAPSA 1999:112) maintains that it is a national as well as an international problem. According to Phorano, Nthomang and Ntseane (2005:189), a growing body of research shows that there is an increase in the number of young adults and adolescents who abuse alcohol and excessive alcohol consumption plays a key role in gender-based violence, and sexual risk-taking which exacerbates the spread of HIV. At the National Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking Awareness conference held on 26 June 2006 in Johannesburg, the status of drug abuse in the country was brought under the spotlight (Bayever, 2006:01). He maintains that the trends in substance abuse in South Africa show that alcohol remains a primary element. Bayever (2006:17) states that alcohol and drugs are most commonly used illegally by adolescents in the United States of America. Hoberg (2001:211) concurs with Bayever and maintains that the trend of substance abuse in South Africa shows that alcohol remains the primary drug of abuse in South Africa. According to him 18 years is the age at which drinking becomes legal in South Africa, just as in many other countries, but younger adolescents, from the age of 13 also enter the same licensed public places and consume alcohol. This shows that the legal drinking age is accepted as legal control measure in principle but not in practice. As is

stated in the policy framework of the African National Congress (1994), for the Government of National Unity of South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme Framework (RDP) to be successful, the present levels of substance abuse are unacceptable and any increase should be prevented. Millions of South Africans abuse substances such as alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (dagga), petrol and glue. Action should be taken, or substance abuse is likely to increase (Mtembi, 1996:28). The present research has shown the extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers in the Limpopo Province with specific reference to Lebitso Senior Secondary School. The research study was conducted in one rural school in Mopani District in Shiluvane Circuit. The frequency of alcohol abuse and the volume of alcohol consumption each week among teenagers were investigated.

Shiluvane Circuit is a rural area where teenagers are delegated as the responsible persons to manage households while parents are away working as migrant labourers. Teenagers are expected to manage both the physical and human resources at home. They also manage the finances, controlling the household expenditure. Monitoring by the parents is difficult. These teenagers who are heading households are expected to take over the parental role, but they are irresponsible with the money provided by parents and purchase liquor to drink their days away.

The motivation for the study was prompted by observation of the deviant behaviour revealed by some of the learners at school. The investigator is an educator by profession, a member of School Management Team (SMT), the educators' component of the School Governing Body. Cases of learners under the influence of liquor emerged on a daily basis. The researcher believes that the modern educator is no longer merely a conveyor of knowledge or an officer who maintains discipline in the classroom. Instead she/he is an individual who is concerned with the total development and adjustment of children in a very complex society, as supported by Velleman (2003:45). The significance of the

study is to generate recommendations that may assist various stakeholders to address this situation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most teenagers in rural villages, especially around Lebitso Senior Secondary School, drink a great deal of alcohol, to the extent that liquor is brought within the school premises. Through informal discussions the majority of them have indicated that they are in control of finances. The investigator's has observed the behaviour in classrooms, during weekends and when attending cultural events in the village. They consume alcohol excessively and their attendance on Mondays is affected negatively. Their attention to school lessons and participation in some classes is minimal. Their achievement deteriorates and some drop out as supported by Pretorius (1998:120). During school trips, they purchase all kinds of alcohol and consume the whole lot. The problem continues to affect their lives as cited by Buizeidenhout (2003:55). Phaswana-Nuntsu (2002:21) maintains that these problems deprive young people of a quality life. The problem to be studied is stated as follows: What is the extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers in Lebitso Senior Secondary School?

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The investigator leads the disciplinary committee of Lebitso Senior Secondary School. During the past five years the investigator has observed the deviant behaviour shown by some of the learners at school. From the punishment registers, the investigator realized that some of the teenagers have been charged with shocking incidents, for example cases of consumption of liquor during school hours. The attendance registers informed the investigator that these learners showed little interest in attending school. From the diaries of other class educators and subject teachers the investigator realized that these learners were frequently abusing alcohol. Some teenagers would insult educators by using

vulgar words while under the influence of alcohol. From educator's forum meetings and workshops, educators from the neighbouring high schools were experiencing similar problems and were raising similar concerns. The investigator then realized that these unhealthy interpersonal relations warranted attention. Thus she embarked upon an investigation of the abuse of alcohol among teenagers in her school.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was:

- to investigate the abuse of alcohol among teenagers in Lebitso Senior Secondary School.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were:

- to investigate the consequences of alcohol abuse among teenagers in the family environment; and
- to establish how the role played by the social environment impacted on the teenagers' abuse of alcohol.

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

Hoberg (2001:219) describes the significance of a hypothesis as follows: "Formulation of a hypothesis gives definite point to the inquiry and aids in establishing direction in which to proceed and helps to delimit the field of inquiry by giving the pertinent facts on which to concentrate and by determining which facts should be set aside at least for the time being."

The hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H: The extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers is significantly related to the following explanatory variables:

- Age of learner
- Gender
- Access to domestic finance
- Nature of friends (whether they drink alcohol or not)
- Nature of family members (whether parent(s) or sister(s)/brother(s) consume alcohol or not)
- Presence of liquor outlets in the residential area
- Distance from liquor outlets
- Size of family
- Amount of free time in hours per day

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will help with the measures which can be taken to resolve problems of alcohol abuse in the social and family environment for teenagers to become proper members of the society.

1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Alcohol abuse: According to Moraba (1997:150) abuse of alcohol is defined as continual use for reasons other than medical purposes. Solomon (1995:142) points out that abuse of alcohol is the use to a degree that causes physical, social or intellectual harm or with a view to conceptual functioning and behaviour that harms others. In this context the researcher understood alcohol abuse as excessive intake or consumption that leads to unacceptable behaviour. Note that in this study, unless it is stated, the term *alcohol abuse* sometimes used to refer *alcohol consumption*.

Learner: The South African Schools Act (SASA) (2001: 2a-43) defines a learner as a person, whether a child or an adult who receives education or must receive education. According to Hornby (2000:167), a learner is one who gains knowledge. This study will adopt the definition of learner as defined by SASA.

Teenagers: According to Hornby (2000:888), teenagers are girls or boys in their teens, up to 21 or 22 years of age. Ghallagher (1997:60) defines teenagers as adolescents. Adolescence can be defined as the period between childhood and maturity. The South African Schools Act (SASA, 2001:2A-4) defines teenagers as youth aged 16-25. In this context, the researcher refers to teenagers as children from 15 to 21 years of age who are at school.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consent was obtained from educational authorities by prior contact with the circuit managers, school principals and school governing bodies. The purpose of the study was explained to the learners and voluntary consent was obtained before the questionnaires were administered. Individual consent was granted.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study intended to administer the questionnaire to four senior secondary schools, but due to time constraints and uprisings in three schools, the investigator had to limit the investigations to Lebitso Senior Secondary School, where she is employed. This was done when educators and learners were attending the farewell functions organized for grade 12 learners. The results might have been better if stratified random sampling had been used to cater for each school and each grade, but instead simple random sampling was used in the present study. The researcher hopes that other researchers will continue from where she stopped and perhaps apply stratified random sampling for better results.

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

There are five chapters in this mini dissertation. Chapter 1 gives the background of the study; Chapter 2 reviews the literature on alcohol abuse and issues related to it; Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used in the study; Chapter 4 contains the results and discussions and Chapter 5 deals with the conclusion and recommendations. References and the Appendix (which contains the questionnaire used to collect the data, and letters) form the last part of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This research on current teenage alcohol abuse is aimed primarily at establishing the extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers at Lebitso Senior Secondary School in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. It focuses mainly on measuring the frequency and the volume of alcohol consumed by teenagers. This chapter presents an exposition of the literature on teenage alcohol abuse. A review of the available literature is an essential step in the process of undertaking a research study because it provides the investigator with the latest information relevant to the topic of research (Hoberg, 2001:570). The literature information was of use in the structuring of a questionnaire to collect data from primary sources (Page, 2002:89). Much has been said and written about teenage alcohol abuse, but this has been, to a large extent, a concern of European countries. Although similar studies have been undertaken in South Africa, few have been focused particularly on the extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers in Black rural schools. This chapter focuses on the state of knowledge, the underlying theory in a sociological context, youth and alcohol, the impact of alcohol abuse including the extent, causes, problems including household problems, performance of teenagers, breakdown of traditional family values in alcohol abuse, global research, alcohol abuse in South Africa and alcohol abuse in Limpopo Province.

The problem of drinking among Black teenagers is much talked about nowadays (Betancourt & Herrera, 2006:90). Following the incident at Forest High School in Johannesburg where a boy was stabbed to death in October 2006, the Minister of Education in South Africa, Naledi Pandor, suspected that alcohol and drug abuse might be behind this incident, which she referred to as psychotic behaviour. She therefore suggested that a drug-testing campaign in should be

initiated in high schools. Whether the drug-testing campaign suggested by the Minister would cover all national high schools, urban or rural, or only the metropolitan high schools was not clear. The South African Police Service (SAPS, 2003) refers to alcohol and other related drugs as downers. They maintain that long-term use of alcohol causes lethargy and makes it harder for one to do the things one needs to do as a functional member of society. Schoolchildren and learners who use these substances find it harder to study or complete assignments and relationships inevitably suffer. It ultimately causes the systems of the body to shut down and eventually leads to death if too much is used. According to them the facts about alcohol are that the more one takes, the more one needs to take and it is not weak people that become addicts but addicts who become weak people. Lastly they argue that life is tough enough and downers only make it tougher. The South African National Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SANCA, 2006) shares the same idea as SAPS and maintains that alcohol and drugs are substances that change the person's mental and physical state. They work on the central nervous system and one can become addicted after using them only once. They go on to identify signs of alcohol abuse as confusion, disorientation, unsteady walking and weakened vision. The South African Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which is cited by the African National Congress (ANC, 1994), states that a comprehensive alcohol abuse strategy of prevention should include alcohol education programmes, reduction of alcohol advertising, increase in the price of alcohol and tobacco and strong penalties for major drug traffickers. According to Nkonzo-Mtembi (1998:40), these policy initiatives can stem the tide and be sustained with the cooperation of and coordination and implementation by the Department of Education, public support and individuals. Hoberg (2001:220) concurs with Nkonzo-Mtembi by stating that schools are recognized as the obvious sites for further traditional educational missions. They have long served as the core of drug abuse prevention efforts. The perspective is relevant to the present study because it recognizes that problems of alcohol abuse are the school's problems too and the school's major function is to perpetuate the values and traditions

inherent in a democratic society (Barnes, 2000:67). Hence the investigator decided to embark on this current study.

Brook (2004), Black (2003) and Goehring (2004) have undertaken extensive research on alcohol abuse among teenagers which is in keeping with research done by Rocha-Silva (1998) that the factors that influence alcohol abuse by teenagers can be divided into three broad categories, namely individual factors, school-related, and outside-of-school factors. Alcohol abuse has been a problem that has faced man since creation, as Grant (2001:238) puts it. Earlier studies focused extensively on the various issues. In New York, Grant (2001) studied alcohol use and its association with dependence. Brook (2004) and Black (2003) studied the contributing factors of teenagers' abuse of alcohol in California. A single approach to explain the abuse of alcohol by teenagers was used. In their findings parents were to be blamed for the negative behaviour of their children. The present study deviates from the approach which regards parents as a contributing factor. In the case of South Africa, particularly in the rural areas, there is a high rate of unemployment, political changes, forced removals, moral degeneration and little knowledge about alcohol and drug-related issues. In the case of urban areas there is modernization and a paradigm shift which could be the cause of the alarming rate of intake of alcohol by teenagers. Rocha-Silva (1998:13) supports the present study by stating that historically disadvantaged sectors in South Africa (especially rural areas) experience constraints with regard to access to drug-related services.

Several studies on alcohol abuse have been conducted in South Africa. In 1998 Rocha-Silva conducted a study of alcohol abuse in Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria in which the nature, extent and consequences of alcohol abuse among young people were researched. His findings noted that alcohol was still by far the major substance of abuse. Betancourt and Herrera (2006) assessed the use of alcohol and other drugs of abuse in three urban high schools in Mthata. Their findings revealed that alcohol was the most commonly

abused drug, followed by cannabis and mandrax. They mentioned that sexually or physically abused learners were at high risk of developing a substance-related problem. From the Department of Educational Studies at the University of South Africa, Hoberg (2001) conducted a research study on understanding the nature of alcohol abuse by probing adolescents. His findings revealed that respondents openly admitted to frequent alcohol abuse and binge drinking, that friends were the strongest motivational factor that influenced them to abuse alcohol, that alcohol abuse was a precursor to more serious forms of substance abuse and that the school should play a more constructive role in the prevention of adolescent substance abuse.

2.2 SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Research by Rocha-Silva (1998:120) shows that abuse of alcohol among Black teenagers has increased while the percentage of abuse among white teenagers is low. Furthermore, the study by Phaswana-Nuntsu (2002:19) indicates that alcohol abuse in Black rural areas has of late grown to alarming proportions. The South African National Strategic Action Plan (SANSAP, 2000:220) points out that comparatively heavy drinking used to be an urban phenomenon. In Black culture only adults would drink and youngsters only after initiation. It was one of the ways in which leisure time would be spent as indicated by Landikos, Prinsloo and Nesser (2003:113). But today things have changed. Both youngsters and females take the lead in alcohol consumption. With the advent of Western culture, alcohol abuse has penetrated the society and become a national problem (Nkonzo-Mtembi, 1998:26). Rice (1997:20) supports the above-mentioned statement by pointing out that adolescents use alcohol as an integral part of adult role-playing, as a rite of passage into the adult community. Is this just a rite of passage in a culture where alcohol is the norm among adults or is it a problem demanding attention? Alcohol is associated with social occasions and these give teenagers the opportunity to get hold of alcohol (Heinemann, 2006:112). It has become quite acceptable to have alcohol available at school

parties and legal age limits are not enforced. Heinemann also states that society is rapidly changing, with the result that peer pressure places extra stress on teenagers. Many of them turn to drink to cope with their problems. Page (2002:562) has shown in his study that the attitudes and behaviour of peers are important in terms of influencing teenager behaviour and he therefore agrees with Heinemann's idea. Bayever (2006:89) also agrees by stating that youth drink because of peer-group pressure and the need for peer identification, sociability and friendship. Rice (1997:20) disagrees with the statement and maintains that drinking by adolescents reflects their perception of adults' attitude and behaviour in our society because drinking is a widespread adult custom. McVeigh (1998:114) argues that sociological reasons for taking alcohol are environmental conditions and dominant subculture. Hoberg (2001:220) adds that alcohol abuse is a heterogeneous phenomenon involving the interaction of environmental determinants, psychological and biological dimensions. He also states that alcohol is used by some people who are shy in social situations. Landikos, Prinsloo and Nesser (2003:103) share McVeigh's view by mentioning that they use it to loosen up and Rice (1997:113) concurs by contending that it relieves shyness.

Moraba (1997:45) points out that from a social point of view alcohol is taken as a social lubricant for the attainment of pleasure and gratification of needs or as a means of relieving boredom and emptiness. It also provides relief from authority and restrictions that are considered intolerable. A person may also use it for overcoming feelings of inadequacy or inferiority. It is a means to ward off feelings of social rejection and deprivation. Whenever the teenager fails to develop close and meaningful interpersonal relationships or fails to deal with frustration and to control his/her impulses, he/she resorts to drinking as a means of dealing with personal tensions and discomfort due to an intolerable social environment (Phorano, Nthomang & Ntseane, 2005:98). Being rejected and unrecognized by society, the teenager becomes frustrated and feels denied the right to human dignity. Such hurts are never forgotten. They linger in the mind and breed

resentment that never dies, and finally they lead to depths of despair causing alcohol abuse which serves to poison the mind still further. The pattern of inter-group relations in the community, taking the form of fusible or brutal exclusion, may likewise create a painful life situation from which escape through drinking is compulsively sought (Nkonzo-Mtembi, 1998:50). The teenager may, from a social point of view, use alcohol as a form of expression and enhancement of ecstasy or joy at festivals, at Christmas time, at birthday parties, during holidays or other social situations (Phaswana-Nuntsu, 2002:89).

2.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Theoretical approaches which were used in some research studies to generalize alcohol abuse problems are:

2.3.1 Tridiac Influence Theory

Tridiac Influence Theory was used in California by Sussman (2000:373). The theory was derived from a number of theories of teen substance use and from this, an integrated model referred to as Tridiac Influence Theory was formed. The theory groupings are as follows: Cognitive affective, e.g. reasoned action, planned behaviour; Social learning; Commitment; Social attachment; Intrapersonal; Relatively comprehensive, e.g. peer cluster, vulnerability. According to Sussman (2000:373), three substantive domains derive from this theory namely:

- *Interpersonal Influence Domain:* This is based on teens' social support whereby there is peer approval of drug use and the cause of teenagers' alcohol abuse as home stress.
- *Attitudinal/Cultural Domain:* This includes community stress as causal factor of alcohol abuse whereby hedonic values or alienation play a role.
- *Intrapersonal Domain:* This includes biological temperament e.g. low self-esteem, depressed mood, and poor coping abilities.

The findings of Sussman et al. reveal that teenagers of White ethnicity who abuse alcohol, later develop dependency. Black (2003:90) supports this statement on dependency by citing that early-onset drinking is a powerful predictor of lifetime alcohol abuse and dependence and in his study more than 50 percent of teenagers who began to drink before the age of 16 are classified as alcohol dependent at some point in their lives. The shortcoming of Black's study is that it was conducted on White youths only, and therefore the result cannot be generalized to Black youths because of different norms and culture. According to Moraba (1997:89), members of the traditional Black community who were allowed to take alcohol were elderly men of the community and therefore women of any age, girls and boys did not have access to alcohol because the traditional norms did not allow it.

2.3.2 Socialization Theory

This theory was proposed by Barnes (2000:234) in Coronado and is based on family and parenting factors. It is argued that parental support, control and monitoring are critically important influences on teenage trajectories in alcohol misuse throughout adolescence. The findings in this theory maintain that parental control determines adolescent outcomes in terms of behaviour. It is also found that Black teenagers are less likely to initiate alcohol misuse than their White counterparts. The implication is that with adequate monitoring, parents become aware of friends and situations that may encourage exposure to alcohol. Moraba (1997:25) supports the theory by expressing that parents are the ones to help teenagers who abuse alcohol by open communication. The present study deviates from the above theoretical approach by arguing that in most cases and most of the time, parents are the last to know about their children's behaviour, but their friends do. Most parents are likely to be away due to their employment and as a result, monitoring is not always possible. (Landikos, Prinsloo & Nesser, 2003:135) support this argument by highlighting the fact that parents are frustrated because teenagers spend most of their time with peers and the information given by them (the parents) is not heeded, but rather the peer

approval kind of information. Control is also subject to debate. Control can be measured, for example, rigidity meaning too much control, laxness meaning too little control, yelling or hitting meaning coercive control and inductive control meaning to offer explanations for undesirable behaviour (Adolescent Crises Team, 2004:06). Barnes does not stipulate which kind of control. Coercion as a control component may represent negative parental support and induction can also have no effect on teenagers' outcomes as teenagers experiment and are curious, trying new things (Betancourt & Herrea, 2006:78).

2.3.3 Theoretical Model

In this model Barnes (2000:239) argues that children learn social behaviour, including drinking alcohol, during socialization processes by ongoing interaction with significant others, initially with parents and subsequently with adolescent peers. Goehring (2004:19) agrees by pointing out that some teenagers get alcohol from parents either directly or indirectly and efforts to curb the problem need to focus on adults and society at large because parents are the main influence on their children's decision whether to drink or not. The theory maintains that the parent-child relationship is primary, occurring early in development and continues throughout adolescence. Therefore the model supports the socialization theory.

2.3.4 Social Mold Perspective

This is the result of an empirical research by Moraba (1997:26). In this theory it is found that parental support determines adolescent outcomes in terms of behaviour. It shares the same sentiments with the theoretical model.

2.3.5 Psychological Theory

This is the work of Hoffman (1998:205). The theory demonstrates that the abuse of alcohol by teenagers is determined by the existence of a significant family structure. He found that the risk of alcohol abuse is lowest in mother-father families. The psychological theory takes into account that alcohol abuse among

teenagers is highest in father or mother-custody families. The present study deviates from the above theoretical approach because living with mother and father has never prevented teenagers from abusing alcohol especially if one of the parents or both parents are modelling the use of alcohol. In support of the statement, Miller (2001:323) asserts that high risk of early abuse of alcohol by children is prevalent in cases where their parents are abusers of alcohol. Grant (2001:238) also conducted a study in New York to describe the course of alcohol abuse among a nationally representative sample of young adults. They were re-interviewed after five years. The aim of the study was to find out whether family history had an impact on teenagers' abuse of alcohol. The findings were that alcohol abuse is related to a family history of alcohol problems. Heinemann (2006:120) supports the idea that children who abuse alcohol come from homes where their parents abuse alcohol. There is a shortcoming in Grant's study, however, because it is not known how the finding was made that people abused alcohol. People may have been judged by difficulties experienced rather than on the presence of symptoms of alcohol-use disorders.

2.3.6 Religiousness Theory

Miller (2001:323) conducted a research on the association between alcohol abuse among teenagers and religiousness. The findings were that religiousness protects against alcohol abuse. The shortcomings of this study are that religiousness was measured by endorsement of a broad variable rather than along more specific dimensions of religiosity and the sample of the study was entirely urban. The study cannot be generalized to people of non-Christian denominations and rural settings. In some way the study appears to be reciprocal in influence. One way it says alcohol abuse estranges teenagers from religion and in another way it says that a low level of religiousness increases the risk of alcohol abuse.

2.4 YOUTH AND ALCOHOL

Young people in South Africa are at high risk of alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS and other social pathologies. Teenagers are an important component of the population of South Africa in terms of social and economic development as expressed by the Adolescent Crises Team (2004). Experimentation with alcohol during teenage years is common and teenagers do not see the link between their actions today and consequences tomorrow. They use alcohol to try new things, to feel grown up, etc. (Bayever, 2006:98). Ximena and Oskamp (1998:181) argue that boredom is the cause of alcohol abuse among the youth. Boredom is a negative leisure experience. The perception of nothing to do and nowhere to go has been linked with a number of problem behaviour manifestations such as alcohol abuse. Landikos, Prinsloo and Nesser, (2003:123) argue that alcohol is the main drug problem among the nation's youth. The youth use alcohol to change from their usual reserved character to being the life of the party.

2.5 THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

The consequences of underage drinking can be devastating. Teenagers tend to drink to excess when they do drink (Goehring, 2004:19). Road accidents, suicide, educational difficulties, violence and unsafe sexual activities are some of the consequences of underage drinking. Alcohol abuse has a negative impact on the lives of people, as McVeigh (1998:20) maintains. Alcohol abuse can lead to physical problems such as fatigue, repeated health complaints, red eyes, lasting cough, and emotional problems such as personality change, mood swings and depression, and can also cause social problems such as choosing new friends with less interest in school activities and more interest in truancy, breaking rules, and dropping out. Alcohol abuse is associated with the leading causes of death and injury because it leads to poor judgment among teenagers and adults. Alcohol abuse is related to sexual assault, rape cases and violence among teens (Nesser, 2003:123). Landikos, Prinsloo and Nesser (2003:136) point out that

abusing alcohol poses serious health risks, clouds one's judgment, interferes with the development of social skills and school achievement. In their research study, Landikos *et al.* (2003) demonstrate that teenagers who take alcohol recall a smaller percentage what they have learnt than teenagers who do not take alcohol.

Alcohol goes directly into the bloodstream and that is why it has an effect on every system of the body. Alcohol can cause cancer of the liver and decrease the amount of testosterone if abused (Miller, 2001:323). In a man's body, it can lead to impotence and may also result in suicide. According to De Jongh (2002:441), alcohol alters perceptions, vision, hearing and coordination for it blocks messages going to the brain, which leads to blockage of memory function. Landikos, Prinsloo and Nesser (2003:137) argue that chronic use could cause alcoholism. This implies that alcohol abuse dooms the abuser. Alcohol gives temporary feelings of pleasure and power, but in the long run it leads to a disease which, if left untreated, grows more virulent, driving its victims further and further from the normal world, and deeper and deeper into an abyss which has only two outlets: insanity or death (Moraba, 1997:71). Alcohol abuse affects all people and it is the cause of disintegration of the Black community (Rocha-Silva, 1998:89). Its sphere of influence reaches across social, racial, cultural, language, religious and gender barriers. He further points out that the prevalence of alcohol abuse places teenagers at risk of serious alcohol abuse in future. Page (2002:567) states that alcohol abuse results in conditions associated with problems of reduced workplace performance, productivity, increased absenteeism, falling asleep on the job and conflicts with supervisors, injury at work, road accidents and divorce. Alcohol abuse leads to absence from school and this causes scholastic progress to suffer greatly. Learners become careless of their school work and their achievement decreases. Alcohol abuse leads to changed patterns of behaviour, while self-control, recognition of authority and responsibility for self and others are also affected. The result is misunderstanding in all aspects of life, at home, at school and among friends. The drinker becomes

a habitual partaker, a problem or heavy drinker and eventually an alcoholic, who becomes a burden and problem to himself, relatives and friends (Phorano *et al.*, 2005:58). Grant (2001:70) reports on his findings that the relationship between alcohol and crime is based on how it is used, how it is sold and the antisocial behaviour it elicits. His study reveals that people become aggressive, violent and sexually aroused under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Brook (2004:38) supports this view by saying that alcohol is the mother of want, the nurse of crime and therefore drunkenness is responsible for rape, homicide and perverted attacks on children. Grant (2003:70) says that it has been found that the higher rate of alcohol use has played a causal role in the events that have resulted in the imprisonment of most criminals. Both male and female partakers of alcohol become aggressive and attack either themselves or members of the public within their reach. Grant regards alcohol as the most persistent purveyor of agony and premature death because it is accompanied by suicidal ideas and actual attempts.

2.6 THE EXTENT OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

Adolescent alcohol abuse is at record level with treatment centres countrywide reporting unprecedented numbers of teenagers seeking help (World Drug Report, 2001:41). The Sunday Times (2006:6) presented a Medical Research Council report which indicated a high proportion of adolescent alcohol abuse between January and June 2006. The statistics for the report were collected from more than 50 treatment centres and state institutions, such as psychiatric hospitals and trauma units. Goehring (2004:19) highlights that 50% of teenagers have had at least one drink by the time they reach grade 8 and 50% of grade 12 learners have had more than five drinks at one time during the last two weeks. Furthermore, drinking of alcohol is perceived as a blessing because of its ability to ward off misery, giving immediate pleasure and independence of the outer world; at any time a person can slip away from the repression of reality and find refuge in a world of his/her own where painful feelings do not enter.

2.7 PROBLEMS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

Escalating rates of HIV infection may be fuelled by alcohol consumption. Data presented by Phorano, Nthomang and Ntseane (2005:19) have revealed that alcohol abuse increases the risk of exposure to HIV infection through its association with high-risk sexual behaviour such as the incorrect use of condoms. They contend that individuals who drink alcohol are inhibited from using condoms. The present study differs slightly with the statement by arguing that inhibition cannot be the sole cause but some drink because they want to avoid using condoms. The drinking of alcohol according to Moraba (1997:65) is mostly associated with a person's encountering problems that frustrate him and he in turn resorts to drinking as a temporary measure to resolve them. With such problems experienced, the individual will definitely have relationship problems of either a socio-cultural nature or a psycho-physiological nature or both.

2.7.1 Household problems

Alcohol consumption has a direct causal relationship with gender-based violence because its psycho-physiological consequences are that the alcohol abuser's sense of judgment is impaired resulting in acts of violence (Phorano *et al.*, 2005:27). Grant (2001:38) cites that the alcohol abuser experiences no peace and happiness. He experiences degradation, self-imposed solitary confinement, a serious risk of death from alcohol poisoning, suicide or accidents. Diseases such as gastritis, peptic ulcer and cirrhosis may develop. And all these bring disharmony in the family. Both warmth and understanding lessen and he may be forced to leave home for the peer group (Black, 2003:70). Such a person becomes a problem to the family because he withdraws himself from the family's activities and the family experiences a tough time coping with a person who in reality has become a mental case, a person who knows no normality, happiness, compliance or co-operation, but only sadness, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, hallucinations and paranoia (Brook, 2004:78). Rocha-Silva (1998:67) maintains that the family, especially the parents, develops emotional maladjustment of

some kind and tends to resist the idea that their child is abusing alcohol because they feel guilty and do not know what to do. Such a family, according to him, faces a lot of doubts about its integrity in relation to the society at large with such strained relationships.

2.7.2 Relationship problems with peers

Grant (2001:55) highlights that the peer group has its own subculture with prescribed behavioural patterns to which the members must conform. It behaves contrary to the adult population's patterns and each member is expected to abide by these standards, and failure to conform normally results in rejection. Thus a youth whose behaviour seems neither to conform to their norms nor to those of the opposing group (parents and members of the adult society), is taken by the peer group to be a misfit and the peer group does not accept him/her. He further points out that sometimes a peer group sets standards for academic performance and whoever does not satisfy those standards feels rejected. As many if not all abusers cannot comply with this, relations become strained. Taking alcohol costs the adolescent his acceptance by the peer group, for more often than not he becomes vulgar, aggressive, shows a relaxation of sexual inhibitions and excessive hilarity. He can also become quarrelsome and with relations deteriorating, the frustrated adolescent moves from group to group facing progressive isolation and at last he reaches the point of no return (Nkonzo-Mtembi, 1998:68).

2.7.3 Relationship problems with authorities

By authority is meant those with the legitimate right to direct or influence the behaviour of others. It is the legal right of the state to do so. As children grow up they are conditioned to accept the authority and directives of their parents, their school teachers, and various figures in authority in the community. The school serves as a seat of learning as well as an institution in which children are trained to accept authority and discipline that will be imposed upon them when they participate as adults in an industrial society (Hoberg, 2001:69). Hoberg argues

that it is quite common that the abuser fails to control himself/herself or to comply with the rules and regulations laid down by the authorities. The person who abuses alcohol tends to take personal and social liberties, whatever his emotional impulses prompt him to take, and he/she seldom complies with the norms and values or with the regulations of society. This happens because he does not know his limits in relation to others. An adolescent that comes home drunk does not take heed of his parents' authority. The same applies to a drunken learner who cannot be in time for his lessons or accept the fact that he is to abide by the rules and regulations laid down at his school. A teenager who is resentful of authority and/or occupational authority will never recognize authority. As a result his life becomes a series of conflicts.

2.7.4 Relationship problems with the law

It is very common to come across instances where adolescents under the influence of alcohol disregard the law and thus become not only a danger to themselves, but also to the public (Betancourt & Herrea, 2006:65). Of the greatest concern here is driving under the influence of alcohol. Fatalities caused by those under the age of 20 years are recorded: the group forms over 50 percent of all fatal accidents encountered in the community's alcohol-related road accidents (Phaswana-Nuntsu, 2002:100). She sees it as essential that not only the state but also the parents and the peer group should be involved in controlling alcohol abuse by young drivers. There should also be alcohol education in the secondary schools and co-operation between the police and social workers regarding selective referral for treatment. She further argues that adolescents often transgress under the influence of alcohol and commit alcohol-related offences such as common assault, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, public drunkenness and liquor law violations.

2.7.5 Academic performance

Young drinkers are more likely to have academic and social problems compared to non-drinkers (Black, 2003:33); these young people are far more likely to steal, be suspended, drop out of school and engage in violent behaviour. Phorano *et al.* (2005:72) support Black's finding by pointing that teenage substance abusers suffer numerous social, academic, physical and legal consequences, e.g. problems at school and truncated development.

2.8 CAUSES OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

In their research study Betancourt and Herrea (2006:107) contend that alcohol abuse among youth can be attributed to lack of recreational and sporting activities and lots of young people drink because alcohol is easy to get hold of. Moraba (1997:37) agrees by pointing out that teenagers indulge in drinking alcohol as a way of entertainment. With soccer, and to limited extent netball, being the only common means of recreation, almost all the youth that have no interest in these sporting activities look for something else to keep themselves busy. It is observed that the research area of the current study has no recreation centres such as community halls. This results in learners failing to explore other avenues in line with their interest and potential. They only have to prove their worth in academic work, failing which there is no other alternative (Hoberg, 2001:89). The adolescents' socio-cultural background is sometimes held responsible for their resorting to alcohol drinking for example where parents hold culturally different points of view about drinking and when they disagree or show ambiguity concerning drinking practices, conflict arises. When no definite direction is provided to the adolescent, he/she becomes frustrated and experiences stress. The taking of alcohol becomes the only solution (Moraba, 1997:53). According to Nkonzo-Mtembi (1998:101), poor academic performance can lead to drinking and the abuse of alcohol. It has also been reported that this is more common among the youth from relatively educated families, and it has been realized that the parents are the cause. Parents who wish to achieve

through their children what they themselves could not achieve at school exert pressure on their children to achieve academically and the adolescent will then have to strive to fulfill his parents' wishes. Should the child fail to achieve and experience one failure after the other, feelings of unhappiness and worthlessness can lead to a negative self-concept; the child's frustration increases for he/she cannot please his/her parents.

The child then becomes a misfit both at home and at school and educators perceive him as not being interested in his school work, because of absenteeism and failing to submit homework in time or not at all. At home he is seen to be uncooperative and disobedient, preferring to spend his time away from home. Communication problems develop at home and at school. The child may try to avoid the scolding both at home and at school by drinking alcohol as a means of escape. The child will start to taking alcohol at regular intervals, but in due course he/she will begin to take it continually, and be on the way to becoming an alcoholic. This can lead to the child's dropping out of school, because learners that abuse alcohol are more likely to drop out of school than non-abusers (Landikos *et al.*, 2003:89). Most learners report that they started taking alcohol because they found themselves free from parental supervision as a result of the migrant labour system. In this case the children are left alone at home by parents who go away to sell their labour. Drinking alcohol may start as a way to please their friends and to conform to the demands of the group; secondly, it is a way of relieving the tension created by having to shoulder the responsibility of looking after the younger sisters and brothers. The oldest child becomes the boss and is in control of the money sent home to support the family. With all the powers vested in him, the "boss" does what he wants with the money. In many cases he uses it to buy alcoholic beverages (Landikos *et al.*, 2003:67).

The present study may differ from the above idea that some parents leave their families to seek work and neglect the children and send no money or food for the children. The eldest child must then take up the responsibility of looking after the

younger ones. Normally the responsibility becomes so much that the poor child feels frustrated and as a result looks for something to relieve the tension. Drinking alcohol often becomes the only outlet. Permissive parents are reported to be the cause of teenage alcohol abuse. They allow their children a great deal of freedom. They often approve of adolescents' using hard liquor in the home (Ximena & Oskamp, 1998:89). The rapid increase in the number of teenagers taking alcohol is alarming and this can be aggravated by the mushrooming of shebeens that have come to take the place of recreational facilities. The abuse of alcohol has become the order of the day for the simple reason that parents, to a large extent, have lost control over their children. They cannot discipline them any more (Phorano *et al.*, 2005:95). Rejection by their peer group can also lead to alcohol abuse, because for a person to enjoy a healthy and sound personality he/she should feel socially accepted by the group with which he identifies himself. An adolescent who fails to adjust himself to his peer group and is rejected feels so out of place that he develops a poor image of himself. He feels he cannot conform to the norms of the peer group. He develops a low self-concept, feels bored, depressed and desires to get away from this intolerable situation. To avoid all these negative experiences the individual will be fully prepared to conform at all costs. When all possible means to ameliorate the situation have failed, he resorts to drinking alcohol (Phorano *et al.*, 2005:87). Such isolated teenagers are much more likely to lack self-confidence and to over conform to peer values, making them more prone to mental illness and delinquent behaviour and this can also imply alcohol abuse.

2.8.1 The breakdown of the traditional family

Nkonzo-Mtembi (1998:89) says that cultural background has a remarkable influence on the tendency to abuse alcohol. The Western civilization has had a tremendous influence on Black society and as a result of this influence, the Black African society has indeed moved from a primitive to a more complicated type of society. This change has not left the drinking pattern of Black society untouched. Moraba (1997:67) highlights that the new pattern of drinking is detrimental to the

Black society because the taking of alcohol has now amounted to a kind of abuse whereby it is no longer only the elderly men that take alcohol, but everybody, irrespective of age or sex. Alcohol has become a social problem in all walks of life – in the school, church, in the work situation and the family (Rocha-Silva, 1998:101). As a result it is of paramount importance for the present study to find out the extent and causes of alcohol abuse among teenagers.

2.9 ALCOHOL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Most research on alcohol abuse in South Africa has been conducted in urban areas. Little has been done to investigate the prevalence or abuse of alcohol in rural areas. This was also realized by the forum held in Johannesburg on 15 and 16 March 1999. In that forum a South African National Strategic Plan was formed. It comprises a task force to drive the implementation and facilitation of collaboration and shared vision among preventive agents at all levels, from policy makers to grassroots community workers (Rocha-Silva, 1998:120). The National Surveillance of the Republic of South Africa (NSRSA, 1998:20) reflects that research which was conducted in South Africa on alcohol abuse between 1960 and 1998 were synthesized in a document entitled “The Nature and Extent of Drug Use and Prevalence of Related Problems in South Africa”. The cities which were covered by this research were four metropolitan centres, namely Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria.

The study was about the nature, extent and harmful consequences of alcohol abuse among young people in South Africa. The findings of the study noted that alcohol abuse among teenagers is still by far the major substance abuse compared to other drugs. The study has also shown that more than 50% of teenagers are abusing alcohol. The shortcoming of the study was that rural teenagers were not included, i.e. it had an urban bias. The percentage could be more, given the situation of rocketing alcohol abuse in rural areas. Nesser (2003:125) supports the statement by pointing out that the prevalence of drinking

alcohol has increasingly spread to rural areas. The South African National Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SANCA, 2006) also reviewed the documents on alcohol abuse and noted that among substance abuse, alcohol was the most highly abused drug by teenagers. The South African National Strategic Plan (SANSP, 2000:231) identified the following risk factors for alcohol abuse among young people in South Africa: social environment, poverty, cultural norms and values, non-involvement of communities, lack of resources, law enforcement, parental control between school and home, lack of parental skill and knowledge; and socialization skills.

The study is relevant to the present study as concentration and attention will be given to rural teenagers that are poverty-stricken, where resources for entertainment are scarce, parents are away due to employment, teenagers are delegated household responsibilities, the community is underprivileged and lack knowledge about the impact of alcohol on and its danger in the lives of teenagers.

2.10 ALCOHOL ABUSE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

Most teenagers in villages around Limpopo Province are left alone at their homes due to the migration of parents. In these instances, responsibilities including handling the finances are delegated to them. The result is that they may buy alcohol with the money they are supposed to use for family needs. According to Rice (1999:342) alcohol abuse among teenagers is often a response to problems of loneliness and anxiety. SANCA (2002:19) highlights that historically disadvantaged sectors in rural areas experience constraints with regard to access to drug-related specialized preventive services. As a result alcohol abuse continues to spread throughout the rural areas. In Limpopo Province, Peltzer (1999:58) conducted a study about the extent and nature of alcohol abuse among rural secondary schools in South Africa when he realized that the prevalence rate of alcohol abuse in rural schools in Limpopo called for

appropriate health education to acquaint youths with the dangers of alcohol abuse. In his study 209 secondary school learners were involved. His findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between availability of alcohol, and family members with peer pressure influence. Stress relief was identified as another reason. According to his results, other drugs such as marijuana were used less often than alcohol. He agrees with Rocha-Silva (1998:101) where similar sources for alcohol abuse in urban and rural Black South Africa are held accountable or attributed to, namely friends and family.

In Greater Tzaneen Municipality, counsellors or social workers are involved in substance abuse programmes. Lemmer, a Project Manager for the Substance Abuse Centre in Tzaneen, states that she regularly encounters alcohol abuse and addiction (Lemmer, 2006). She argues that without exception, by the time an individual, couple or family seeks help, the impact of alcohol abuse in their lives seems to have taken its toll. She maintains that the causes seem to be unique in every situation and among the older people. The habit sometimes started in the army during the time people had to do compulsory military service. Stress plays a role. Modelling since childhood also seems to impact on the value system of the abuser and younger people seem to do so because everyone drinks. She found that in many instances there is a family history of substance abuse, that people start using alcohol at a younger age, and that it is not only boys who drink alcohol, but young girls seem to love the modern alcoholic beverages. She points out that it seems as if young people become hooked more easily and sooner than older alcohol users. From her point of view, preventive measures should be taken at a very young age in order to help our youth become more responsible when using alcohol. She maintains that rehabilitation should be the second option.

From her perspective alcohol abuse is the stage where the use of alcohol conflicts with the needs of the significant others in the abuser's life, and also when it negatively affects the roles and functions of the abuser within his family.

This can be in the emotional, physical, financial and social spheres of the family's life.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon in which we are interested or about which we are concerned, research is used as a process which systematically collects, analyses and interprets data (Leedy, 1996:2). Research methodology is the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step (Leedy, 1996:2). It is a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts (Neuman, 1997:63). Applied research was chosen for this study, which is mainly for knowledge utilization and intervention (De Vos, 1998:120). This kind of research was deemed suitable for this investigation because it was directed toward shedding light on or providing possible solutions to practical problems (De Vos, 1998:133). The current study investigated the problem of alcohol abuse by teenagers and the extent to which they abused alcohol. This chapter deals with research design, population, sampling, choice of instrument, planning data collection and collection procedures. Applied research was also found to be relevant for this study because a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context was investigated. This kind of research proved to be even more useful given that the investigator was interested in finding out through questions relating to how why and where (Phorano , Nthomeng & Ntseane , 2005:26).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the complete strategy of attack on the central problem (Leedy, 1996:26). It is a detailed plan of how research will be carried out (Armstrong & Grace, 1994:16). Rankapole (2002:49) defines research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to

answer questions posed by the researcher. According to De Vos (1998:150), research design is a recipe or blueprint for the investigation which provides a guideline according to which a selection can be made of data collection methods which will be the most appropriate to the researcher, the researcher's goal and to the selected design. This idea explains the fact that the research design shows which individuals were to be studied, when, where and under which circumstances the study took place, while design denoted a plan of the way in which objectives were to be attained and the information obtained. The research design therefore gives direction to sampling procedures, level of measurement, frequency of measurement and data collection methods (Hagu & Jackson, 1996:76).

There are various research designs namely exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, experimental, and evaluation as outlined by Nkantini (2005:25), and these are discussed in the following sections.

3.2.1 Exploratory design

De Vos, *et al.* (2005:147) define exploratory design as a design to gain new insights into a phenomenon about which little is yet known.

3.2.2 Descriptive design

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:246) refer to descriptive design as stating the characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative data through either observation or interview techniques. It can also be used to test hypotheses or research questions.

3.2.3 Explanatory design

According to Neuman (2000:20) the goals of explanatory study are to determine the accuracy of a theory, to find out which competing explanation is better and to build and elaborate a theory so it becomes more complete. It is also to advance knowledge about an underlying process, to link issues or topics under a common

general statement as well as to provide evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. The purpose of explanatory study is to explain things (Leedy, 1996:26).

3.2.4 Experimental design

According to Nkantini (2005:87), experimental design is characterized by randomization of the objects from which data may be collected.

3.2.5 Evaluation design

Armstrong and Grace (1994:180) regard this design as providing a means through which the researcher can judge the effectiveness of a particular practice or innovation.

The present study follows a qualitative and quantitative approach with the quantitative approach taking the upper hand. The design is explanatory because of the nature of the variables for the hypothesis formulated. The investigator has an explanatory purpose if he/she wishes to know why there is high intake or consumption of alcohol by teenagers. According to Nkantini (2005:78) there are various types of explanatory designs and these are classic experiment design, randomised Solomon four-group design and randomised posttest-only control group design.

Qualitative studies enable the researcher to study individuals in their natural settings to establish the way in which they attribute meaning in social situations (De Vos, 1998:197). On the other hand, quantitative studies focus on a numerical method of describing observation material or characteristics composed of variables, measured with numbers and analyses with statistical procedures (De Vos, 1998:197). According to Cresswell (2000:102) quantitative research is highly formalized, and more focused on relatively specific questions or hypotheses, and statistical methods are used to determine associations or differences between variables. In this study, the extent of alcohol abuse and the

frequency of alcohol consumption per week were measured using a structured questionnaire.

3.3 AREA OF STUDY

The present study was planned to cover the four schools in Mopani District under Greater Tzaneen Municipality. However, due to uprisings in the three schools the study was administered in only one Senior Secondary School, namely Lebitso, which is situated in the rural village of Pharare, in Mopani District, under Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpopo Province. The school falls under the jurisdiction of Shiluvane Circuit. Lebitso is classified as quintile 3, which, according to the Department of Education, is partly indigent. Pharare village is underdeveloped and consists of many impoverished families that rely on government social grants for a living. Many of the households are headed by teenagers that have been delegated the responsibility by their parents, while they (the parents) are working far from home and they only come home at the end of the month. Part of the workforce has informal jobs on the nearby farms. During weekends they resort to liquor. Places selling liquor like taverns and shebeens dominate as business entities in this area. Municipal control of these types of businesses is minimal or non-existent.

3.4 POPULATION

According to Creswell (2000:105), population refers to the general group from which the targeted few are drawn. In other words, population is the total set from which the individuals or units to be studied are chosen. Bless (2000:85) defines population as a set of elements on which the investigator focuses and to which the results obtained should be generalized. The population for the study is African Senior Secondary School teenagers from Shiluvane Circuit, Mopani District in Limpopo Province. The present study was supposed to cover four senior secondary schools, but due to uprisings in three schools, the investigator

only managed to handle one school, namely Lebitso Senior Secondary School. This was done when educators and learners were attending a farewell function organized for the grade 12 learners.

The investigator initially targeted a population which would consist of male and female teenagers between the ages 14 and 20 enrolled for grade 10 to 12. This was due to the policy of the Department of Education which requires that learners' age at Senior Secondary School should not exceed 20. However it was realized that some of the learners were older than 20 years because many rural schools were lax in implementing the policy. The population comprised 251 learners, with 122 males and 129 females.

3.5 SAMPLING METHODS

3.5.1 Description of the research sample

If one wants to collect accurate information about a group of persons or objects, the best strategy is to examine every single member or element of the group, which could be very difficult sometimes. Bless (2000:83) maintains that it is also possible to reach accurate conclusions by examining only a portion of the total group. He defines sampling as a technical accounting device to rationalise the collection of information, to choose in an appropriate way the restricted set of objects, persons, events and so forth from which the actual information will be drawn.

The investigator drew a sample from the population, as it was an inherent requirement in the case of a relatively big population. According to Leedy (1996:199) a sample is constituted by subjects or individuals who are selected from the population for the study purpose. The investigator must single out part of the population for closer investigation. The selection of subjects from the population was done in such a manner that each individual stood an equal chance of being selected. The results obtained from the sample were regarded

as being representative of the population from which the sample was drawn. In order to avoid bias and to attain representation, subjects constituting a sample were randomly selected from the entire population. Since it is usually costly and cumbersome to study each subject or individual in the population, particularly where a large population is involved, a sample is used to generalize the results and still presents them as valid (De Vos, 1998:190). According to Babbie (2004:197), sampling is a means of taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population. It is that element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. He goes further to say that a sample is a scientific endeavour whereby the investigator ensures that the sample is representative. For the purpose of this study, simple random sampling was employed.

Armstrong and Grace (1994:87) define simple random sampling as the method that ensures that each person in the population has an equal chance of being selected. It makes it possible to calculate an idea of sample size required by using statistical techniques. According to Bless (2000:89), simple random sampling is a sampling technique which provides equal opportunities for selection for each element of population. A school register was used as a frame. All learners were written in alphabetical order and numbers were given to each one of them. A table of random digits by Viljoen, and Van der Merwe,, and (2000:25) was used to select the sampling units, i.e. learners. A number for the learner which appeared in the table was jotted down and that which did not appear was left out.

The names of the learners whose numbers appeared were written down and their educators were informed that they were the ones the investigator would like to include in her study. When picking up numbers, a number was not repeated, i.e. the sampling method was without replacement. The numbers for the males and females were not the same because their population differed.

3.5.2 Sample size

The sample size for this study was determined using tables from Bartlett, Kotrik and Higgins (2001:48) and Krejcie and Morgan (1970:608). According to these tables, for categorical data with population size of 250, alpha levels of 0.05 and a margin of error 0.05, the minimum sample size is 152. The population size for this study consists of 251 learners. Using a 5% margin of error, which is acceptable for social science research (Bartlett *et al.*, 2001:45), and a 0.05 level of significance, the sample size is approximately 152.

3.6 CHOICE OF INSTRUMENTS

Two types of data collection instruments were used namely the questionnaire and the interview.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used as the investigator was looking for exactly the same information from each respondent. The respondents were gathered in the school hall and issued with the questionnaires. The whole process took approximately one and a half hours. The relevance of the structured questionnaire for this study was that it is most appropriate for collecting information from a relatively homogeneous group of people who tend to share the same general perspective and characteristics. It is also advantageous in situations where the investigator knows much about the subject and the respondents so that she knows what to ask and how to ask it (Armstrong & Grace, 1994:66).

At the start of each section the investigator gave some general information about the completion of that section. Respondents were guided on which questions to skip if those questions were not applicable to them. The questionnaire was designed with the intention of making it as clear, detailed and unambiguous as possible. Specific instructions were used with each section to assist participants

with the completion of questions which included phrases such as "Please tick one box only", "Tick as many boxes as necessary", or "Put a cross at the appropriate place on the line". Questions were kept simple, so as not to mislead respondents.

The major limitation of this method is that when it is used with many respondents who do not share the investigator's views and values, the assumptions that are incorporated into the questionnaire are invalid. The design and construction of questionnaires is predominantly a subjective process that is largely guided by the experience of the designer; the more questionnaires you have created, the more likely it is that the next survey will be closer to 'perfect'. One limitation that the investigator is aware of is where respondents fail, for one reason or another, to answer the questions truthfully.

3.7 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study for the questionnaire was done at Shiluvane in August 2006. It helped the researcher to improve the questionnaire items. It was used to test the questionnaire's efficiency and whether any of the questions were ambiguous. However, there were three schools which the investigator could not manage to include in this study due to the reason mentioned under "Limitation of the Study". They took part in the pilot study during which the standard of the questionnaire was tested. The drafted questionnaire was given to the statistician at the University of Limpopo to verify. It was also administered to colleagues. This information was used to improve the questionnaire. After the pilot study the investigator came to realize that the closed questions were ambiguous and it gave the investigator an opportunity to focus them. It has also helped to redevelop the open-ended questions.

3.8 PLANNING OF DATA COLLECTION

Two letters were written to ask the selected schools' permission to conduct the study in July 2006. One letter was for the circuit manager and the other for the school manager with his/her School Management Team and School Governing Body.

3.8.1 Statistical methods

The researcher checked the completed questionnaires for errors such as omissions and questions not answered correctly. The questionnaires with errors were returned to the respondents/learners for rectification. The data were captured in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The coding of variables in the questionnaires before capturing and cleaning of the captured data were done by the statistician.

A step-by-step approach was taken in the data analysis process. First, basic analysis such as frequencies, cross-tabulations and descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data collected. Then chi-square test of association was used to study the association of alcohol abuse of teenagers with the variables listed in Section 3.2.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results discussed in this chapter emanate from the survey conducted in Lebitso Senior Secondary School in Shiluvane Circuit, under the jurisdiction of Greater Tzaneen Municipality in Limpopo Province. In this study, respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire which required information related to the extent of alcohol abuse among teenagers. The main aim of the study was to investigate the abuse of alcohol among teenagers in that school and test the various hypotheses stated in Chapter 3.

The targeted sample size was one hundred and fifty-two (152). However, to maximize the response rate or to get complete responses for this targeted sample size one hundred and eighty-five (185) questionnaires were prepared to be distributed to 185 respondents. Only one hundred and thirty-seven (137) learners completed the questionnaire. One of the respondents did not specify the age group. The results of the study are presented in the following sections.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section focuses on the description of the demographic characteristics of the learners and other variables in the study.

The results in Table 4.1 show that 48.2 percent of the respondents were males and 51.8 percent were females. The table further indicates that 95.5 percent of the male learners consumed alcohol and 4.5 percent did not. Among the female respondents 85.9 percent consumed alcohol and 14.1 percent did not.

Table 4.1 Distribution of learners by gender and alcohol consumption

Gender	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	63 (95.5%)	3 (4.5%)	66
Female	61 (85.9%)	10 (14.1%)	71

Table 4.2 Distribution of learners by gender and age group

Age group	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
10 – 14	4 (6.1%)	5 (7.1%)	9 (6.6%)
15 – 19	34 (51.5%)	33 (47.1%)	67 (49.3%)
20 – 24	25 (37.9%)	25 (35.7%)	50 (36.8%)
25 or more	3 (4.5%)	7 (10.0%)	10 (7.4%)
Total	66 (100%)	70 (100.0%)	136 (100.0%)

The average age of the participants was 19.32 (SD = 3.715; range = 12-37), with one participant not specifying his/her age. Most of the learners (49.3%) in the study belong to the age group 15 to 19 years and this was followed by the age group between 20 to 24 years (36.8%). A similar trend was observed in the male and female group (Table 4.2). There did not seem to be any difference in terms of distribution of learners by age in male and female groups.

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.1 present the respondents who reported that they were the head of the family. The results show that a large number of learners who responded had both parents (44.5%). About 23, 15 and 14 percent of the learners came from families that were headed by the mother, grandparent(s), relatives and father respectively.

Table 4.3 Distribution of learners by head of household

Head of the household	Number of learners	Percentage of learners
Both parents	61	44.5
Mother	32	23.4
Father	19	13.9
Grandparent(s)/Relatives	20	14.6
Teenager(s)	5	3.6
Total	137	100.0

Figure 4.1 Distribution of learners by head of household

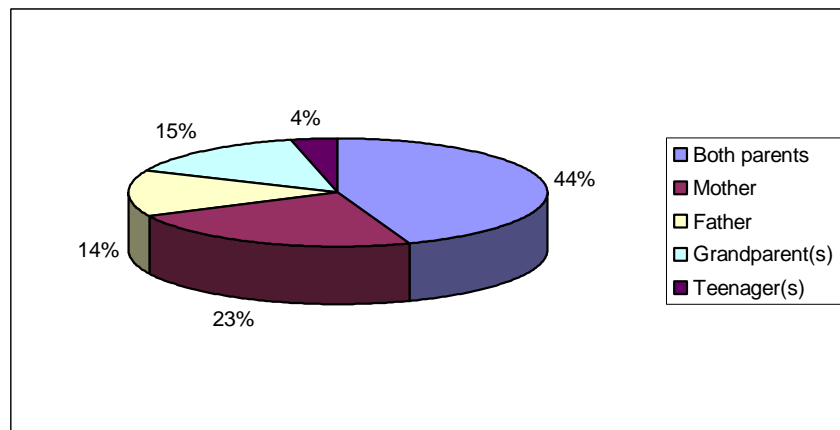


Table 4.4 Distribution of learners by number of occasions on which they consumed alcohol

Number of occasions	Number of learners	Percentage of learners
Once	28	20.9
Twice	22	16.4
Three times	28	20.9
4 or more	56	41.8
Total	134	100.0

Table 4.4 presents the distribution of learners by the number of occasions on which they consumed alcohol. Only three of them did not respond to the question “On how many occasions have you consumed alcohol?” The results in the table show that 20.9 percent had consumed alcohol once; 16.4 percent had consumed alcohol twice; 20.9 percent had consumed alcohol three times; and 41.8 percent had consumed alcohol on 4 or more occasions.

Table 4.5 Distribution of learners by frequency of alcohol consumption in a week within the previous month

Number of occasions	Number of learners	Percentage of learners
Once	32	24.1
Twice	25	18.8
Three times	31	23.3
4 or more	45	33.8
Total	133	100.0

The results in Table 4.5 show that 24.1 percent of the learners who responded to the question “How often did you drink alcohol in a week within the previous month?” consumed alcohol only once within a week; 18.8 percent consumed alcohol twice; 23.3 percent consumed alcohol three times; and 33.3 percent consumed alcohol 4 or more times within a week in the previous month.

Table 4.6 Distribution of learners by the amount of money they control

Amount of money	Number of learners	Percentage of learners
< R100	46	39.3
R100 – R200	30	25.6
R200 – R300	23	19.7
R300 and more	18	15.4
Total	117	100.0

Table 4.6 presents the respondents who reported the amount of money which they control per month. The results show that a large number of learners responded that they had control of less than R100.00 (39.3%).

Table 4.7 Distribution of learners by alcohol consumption and financial access

Do you have financial access?	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	108 (92.3%)	9 (7.7%)	117
No	15 (83.3%)	3 (16.7%)	18

Table 4.7 presents the distribution of learners by financial access and alcohol consumption. The results show that 92.3 percent of the respondents who had financial access consumed alcohol and 83.3 percent of the respondents who did not have financial access also consumed alcohol.

4.3 CHI-SQUARE TEST OF ASSOCIATION

This section presents the results of the chi-square tests of association that were carried out for the research hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. The chi-square method was used in order to test the association between a variable and alcohol consumption. However, when the counts in the table cells are too small or sparse (i.e. the expected cell frequencies less than 5), the Fisher exact test was used to test the association between variables (Stokes, Davis & Koch, 2000). In this study a 5 percent level of significance was used for all statistical tests ($\alpha = 0.05$). The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) if the p-value of the test (exact p-value for Fisher exact test) was less than alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$) and not to reject the null hypothesis if p-value of the test was greater than alpha ($\alpha = 0.05$).

4.3.1 Association between alcohol consumption and gender

The observed frequencies for the association between alcohol consumption and gender are displayed together with chi-square test results in Table 4.8. The expected frequencies for all cells are greater than 5 (not reported here), therefore the sample size requirements necessary for the chi-square distribution met. Note that the frequencies and percentages in this table are similar to those in Table 4.1. The computed value of $\chi^2 = 3.624$ is compared with the tabulated value of χ^2 with 1 degree of freedom, which equals to 3.841. Since the calculated value is less than the tabulated we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and gender.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and gender.

Note that the p-value for the test, 0.057, is greater than 0.05. We conclude, then that there was no association between alcohol consumption and gender. In other words, both female and male learners involved in this study consume alcohol.

Table 4.8 Chi-square test results for association between alcohol consumption and gender

Gender	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	63 (95.5%)	3 (4.5%)	66
Female	61 (85.9%)	10 (14.1%)	71
$\chi^2 = 3.624$, d.f. = 1 and p-value = .057			

4.3.2 Association between alcohol consumption and age group

Unlike to the chi-square test for the association between alcohol consumption and gender, the two of the expected cell frequencies are less than 5, therefore the Fisher exact test was used to test the association between alcohol consumption and age group. The Fisher exact p-value, 0.0507 (Table 4.9), is greater than 0.05, therefore we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and age group.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and age group.

We conclude then that there is no association between alcohol consumption and age group. The results in Table 4.9 also show that more teenagers in the age group 15-19 are taking liquor. This may be due to the fact that this is the age where most of them explore and fight for freedom.

Table 4.9 Fisher exact test results for association between alcohol consumption and age group

Age group	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
10 – 14	7	2	9
15 – 19	62	5	67
20 – 24	47	3	50
25 or more	7	3	10
Exact p-value = .0507			

4.3.3 Association between financial access and alcohol consumption

The observed frequencies for the association between financial access and alcohol consumption are displayed together with p-value for Fisher exact test in Table 4.10. Since the exact p-value, 0.2014, is greater than 0.05 we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between financial access and alcohol consumption.

H_1 : There is association between financial access and alcohol consumption.

We conclude then that there is no association between alcohol abuse and financial access. In other words, whether a learner at the school has financial access or not he/she abuses alcohol.

Table 4.10 Fisher exact test results for association between alcohol consumption and financial access

Do you have financial access	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	108	9	117
No	15	3	18
Exact p-value = .2014			

4.3.4 Association between alcohol consumption and the nature of friends

Observe that the cell frequencies are sparse. Further, five of the expected cell frequencies are less than 5, therefore the Fisher exact test was used for the test. Table 4.11 presents the Fisher exact test results for the association between alcohol consumption and the nature of friends (i.e. whether friends drink alcohol or not). Since the exact p-value, 0.5205, is greater than the alpha value, 0.05 we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and the nature of friends.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and the nature of friends.

We conclude, then, that a learner's alcohol abuse is independent of whether his/her friend consumes alcohol or not.

Table 4.11 Fisher exact test results for association between alcohol consumption and the nature of friends

Friends drink alcohol regularly	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Most	27	2	29
All	44	5	49
Some	49	4	53
None	3	1	4
Exact p-value = .5205			

4.3.5 Association between alcohol consumption and the nature of family members

The observed frequencies for the association between the nature of the family members, i.e. whether the learner parent(s)/sister(s)/brother(s) consume alcohol, and learner alcohol consumption are displayed together with chi-square test results in Table 4.12. The computed value of $\chi^2 = 0.141$ is compared with tabulated value of χ^2 with 1 degree of freedom, which equals to 3.841. Since the calculated value is less than the tabulated value we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between the nature of family members and alcohol consumption.

H_1 : There is association between the nature of family members and alcohol consumption.

Note that the p-value for the test, 0.707, is greater than 0.05. Consequently there is no association between alcohol abuse by a learner and the nature of family members. In other words, the proportion of learners who abuse alcohol given that his/her family members consume alcohol is equal to the proportion of learners who abuse alcohol given that his/her family members do not consume alcohol.

Table 4.12 Chi-square test results for association between learner alcohol consumption and the nature of family members

Parent(s)/sisters(s)/ brother(s) consume alcohol	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	63	6	69
No	59	7	66
$\chi^2 = 0.141$, d.f. = 1 and p-value = 0.707			

4.3.6 Association between alcohol consumption and presence of liquor outlets in the learners' residential area

The observed frequency of the association between alcohol consumption and the presence of liquor outlets in the learners' residential area are displayed together with Fisher exact test p-value in Table 4.13. The exact p-value, 0.5975 is greater than the alpha value 0.05, therefore we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and the presence of liquor outlets in learners' residential area.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and the presence of liquor outlets in learners' residential area.

We conclude, then, that there is no association between alcohol abuse by a learner and the presence of liquor outlets in the learners' area.

Table 4.13 Fisher exact test results for association between learner alcohol consumption and the presence of liquor outlets in learners' residential area

Are there liquor outlets in your area?	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	113	13	126
No	10	0	10
Exact p-value = .5975			

4.3.7 Association between alcohol consumption and distance to liquor outlets

Observe that the cell frequencies in Table 4.14 are sparse. Further, three of the expected cell frequencies are less than 5, therefore the Fisher exact test was used for the test. Table 4.14 shows that the exact p-value of the Fisher's exact test, 0.0054, is less than the alpha value 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and distance to the nearest liquor outlets.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and distance to the nearest liquor outlets.

We conclude that there is a significant association between alcohol abuse by a learner and the distance from his/her residential area to the nearest liquor outlet.

Table 4.14 Fisher exact test results for association between alcohol consumption and distance to the nearest liquor outlets

Distance to the nearest liquor outlet in kms	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
< 1	85	3	88
1 – 2	21	7	28
2 – 3	8	1	9
4 or more	8	1	9
Exact p-value = 0.0054			

4.3.8 Association between alcohol consumption and number of free hours per day

Unlike to the chi-square test for the association between alcohol consumption and gender, the two of the expected cell frequencies are less than 5, therefore the Fisher exact test was used to test the association between alcohol consumption and age group. The Fisher exact p-value, 0.0507 (Table 4.9), is greater than 0.05, therefore we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

Three of the expected cell frequencies, which were calculated from Table 4.15 data, are less than 5 thereof the association between alcohol consumption and the number of free hours the learner has per day was tested by using the Fisher exact test. Since the exact p-value, 0.4392 (Table 4.15) is greater than the alpha value 0.05 we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between alcohol consumption and number of free hours the learner has per day.

H_1 : There is association between alcohol consumption and number of free hours the learner has per day.

We conclude that alcohol abuse of a learner is independent of the number of free hours he/she has per day.

Table 4.15 Fisher exact test results for association between alcohol consumption and number of free hours per day

Number of free hours per day	Do you consume alcohol?		
	Yes	No	Total
< 1 hour	8	0	8
Between 1 & 2 hours	35	2	37
Between 2 & 3 hours	22	1	23
4 or more hours	48	8	56
$\chi^2 = 3.942$, d.f. = 3 and p-value = 0.268			

4.3.9 Association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week

Thirty eight percent of the cells in Table 4.16 have expected frequencies less 5. Therefore, the chi-square may not be a valid statistic to test the association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week. The p-value for the Fisher exact test is 0.0085 (Table 4.16). Since this p-value is less than the alpha value 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week.

H_1 : There is association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week.

We conclude that there is significant association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week.

Table 4.16 Fisher exact test results for association between the amount of money the learner controls and the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week

Amount of money under learner's control	Number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week			
	One	Two or three	More than three	Total
< R100	8	19	15	42
R100 – R200	1	7	19	27
R200 – R300	0	6	17	23
R300 or more	1	3	12	16
Exact p-value = 0.0085				

4.3.10 Association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and the learner's having unprotected sex after drinking

Table 4.17 presents the chi-square test results for the association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and the learner's having unprotected sex after drinking. Since the calculated chi-square value, 6.748, is greater than the tabulated chi-square value with 2 degrees of freedom, 5.991, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and a learner's having unprotected sex after drinking.

H_1 : There is association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and a learner's having unprotected sex after drinking.

A similar conclusion could be reached if we compare the p-value with the alpha value, 0.034. We conclude that there is a significant association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and a learner's having unprotected sex after drinking. This indicates the impact and negative outcomes of abusing alcohol. It degenerates morality and certainly has an impact on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. This has a negative effect on the state of the economy.

Table 4.17 Chi-square test results for association between learner alcohol consumption and learner’s having unprotected sex after drinking

Number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week	Have you had unprotected sex after drinking?		
	Yes	No	Total
One	3	9	12
Two or three	28	14	42
More than three	40	27	67
$\chi^2 = 6.748$, d.f. = 2 and p-value = 0.034			

4.3.11 Association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and gender

Table 4.18 presents the chi-square test results of the association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and gender. Since the calculated chi-square value, 1.961, is less than the tabulated chi-square value with 2 degrees of freedom, 5.991, we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and gender.

H_1 : There is association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and gender.

We conclude that the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week by a learner and the learner’s gender are independent. Table 4.18 also shows that 59.7% of males take more than three bottles of liquor in a week. This might be because in most cases males can accumulate more money than females, due to the fact that they are regarded as the stronger sex and money is always given to them for issues for which they have to take responsibility.

Table 4.18 Chi-square test results for association between the number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week and gender

Number of bottles of alcohol drunk in a week	Gender of respondent		
	Male	Female	Total
One	5	9	14
Two or three	20	22	42
More than three	37	30	67
$\chi^2 = 1.961$, d.f. = 2 and p-value = 0.375			

4.3.12 Association between gender and a learner having unprotected sex after drinking

Table 4.19 presents the chi-square test results for the association between gender and a learner having unprotected sex after drinking. Since the calculated chi-square value, 1.280, is less than the tabulated chi-square value with 1 degree of freedom, 3.841, we do not reject the null hypothesis (H_0), where

H_0 : There is no association between gender and a learner having unprotected sex after drinking.

H_1 : There is association between gender and a learner having unprotected sex after drinking.

We conclude that there is no significant association between gender and a learner having unprotected sex after drinking. However, Table 4.19 reflects that a greater percentage of females (53.5%) were engaged in unprotected sex than males (46.5%). It is believed that psychologically, women only become sexually aroused when under influence of alcohol. This is perhaps the reason why the percentage of females participating in unprotected sex is higher than males.

Table 4.19 Chi-square test results of association between gender and unprotected sex after drinking

Gender	Have you had unprotected sex after drinking?		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	33	29	62
Female	38	22	60
$\chi^2 = 1.280$, d.f. = 1 and p-value = 0.258			

4.4 INTERPRETATION

4.4.1 Introduction

The prevalence of alcohol abuse among teenagers is certainly becoming a trend in the rural villages surrounding Lebitso Senior Secondary School, and is a cause for concern. It is in stark contrast with the picture often painted by other researchers implying that rural teenagers are ethical because they obey their Black cultural norms, by letting only adults drink alcohol often, and they only drink after ceremonies such as initiation (Landikos, Prinsloo & Nesser, 2003:113). Based on the evidence of this research, which states that teenagers are continually and persistently abusing alcohol, it may not be entirely unreasonable to conclude that rural teenagers are increasingly becoming reckless and ruining their lives with alcohol. When comparing the statement of Landikos *et al.* above with the researcher's findings, there is a change in the pattern of alcohol consumption by teenagers. The change is that teenagers have moved from a trend of consuming alcohol for cultural purposes to casual and reckless consumption of alcohol.

4.4.2 Influence of the surrounding environment

According to the findings of the present study, teenagers usually start drinking alcohol between the ages of 10-14, although other researchers revealed that from the age of 13 adolescents enter licensed public places to consume alcohol (Hoberg, 2001:211). Heinneman (2006:112) also concurs with the study by maintaining that alcohol is readily available and legal age limits are not enforced. Researchers also argue that alcohol abuse is lowest in mother-father families and highest in father or mother-custody families as has been asserted by Hoffman (1998:205). However, the findings of the present study contradict these findings by revealing that teenagers in rural areas consume a lot of alcohol irrespective of whether they have parents or not. According to Phorano, Nthomang and Ntseane (2005:189), excessive alcohol consumption plays a key role in sexual risk which exacerbates the spread of HIV. The findings of the present study have confirmed the statement. It has revealed that the abuse of alcohol leads to unprotected sex that increases the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Data revealed that 40% of the learners practised unprotected sex after drinking more than three bottles of alcohol in a week.

One of the hypotheses of this study related to the distance between the participants' dwelling place and the liquor outlets. It indicated that the proximity of the liquor outlet had a direct influence on the level of the learner's consumption of alcohol. According to the findings of the study, teenagers who lived closer to liquor outlets were more likely to consume alcohol often than those who resided far from those outlets. Findings from this study revealed that alcohol abuse led to unprotected sex that increased the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

4.4.3 Influence of peer pressure

According to the literature, the findings of some researchers have revealed that peer pressure plays a major role in the abuse of alcohol by teenagers, while other researchers have not confirmed this. Heinneman (2006:112) mentions that peers want the teenagers to drink in order to belong and peer pressure places

extra stress on teenagers. Phorano *et al.* (2005:95) argue that a learner decides to drink in order to adjust to peer pressure because he/she feels rejected. The present study shows no link between alcohol consumption and peer pressure.

4.4.4 Influence of the parents

Some researchers confirm that teenagers' drinking behaviour is mostly related to their parents' involvement in their lives whereas some do not. Brook (2004:102) and Black (2003:57) argue that parents are to be blamed for teenagers' abuse of alcohol and Barnes (2002:34) maintains that parental support, control and monitoring influence teens in the abuse of alcohol. Ximena and Oskamps' (1998:89) findings are contrary to the former. They say that permissive parents cause teenagers to abuse alcohol by allowing a great deal of freedom. Landikos *et al.* (2003:89) concur by saying that teenagers drink because they find themselves free from parental supervision. According to Goehring (2004:19), parents decide whether teenagers should drink or not and he also says that teenagers get alcohol from parents. There is no relationship between parental influence and teenagers' intake of alcohol according to the present study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Teenage alcohol abuse often begins at the disturbingly tender age of 14 years. Alcohol is easily accessible; and there are liquor outlets at a distance of less than 1 kilometer from adolescents' places of residence. Considering how accessible liquor outlets with their temptations are, how teenagers can afford such large quantities of alcohol even if they have control over less than R100.00 per week, whether there is permission and influence or not, the impact of the abuse of alcohol on their sexual behaviour, where females usually engage in unprotected sex, it is important to realize that more research studies of this nature are needed, especially in rural and disadvantaged areas, in order to come up with solutions.

Bearing in mind that alcohol is a depressant of the nervous system and relaxes the user, this state of relaxation which is comfortable, can lead to devastating consequences such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, unintended teenage pregnancy, STIs, risky, violent behaviour and other related problems as it was shown in the findings that teenagers were practicing unprotected sex.

The school undoubtedly remains the most important and effective place to tap into the problem. Parents should also act as agents to prepare adolescents for their future in society, bearing in mind that it is not that, simple as the present study has shown that teenagers in the rural areas consume a lot of alcohol irrespective of whether they have parents or not.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In South African Schools, the full extent of teenage alcohol abuse has not been researched on a regular systematic basis, nor is it fully comprehended, especially in rural areas. There has not been adequate initiation of intervention programmes. To address this problem there have to be preventive measures in place, as cited by Phaswana-Nuntsu (2002:100). She maintains that there should be education on alcohol in schools and cooperation between the police and social workers.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the findings in the present study revealed no relationship between alcohol consumption by teenagers and peer pressure, or between alcohol consumption and parents' influence.

5.2.1 Peer pressure

There was no link between alcohol intake by teenagers and peer pressure. However the literature revealed that teenagers drink because they need peer identification and friendship. Sussmanea (2000:373) and Page (2002:562) share the same sentiments by stating that there is peer approval for teenagers' abuse of alcohol. This could be due to factors such as the environment and the economic background of the area where the study is conducted. Since we are living in a changing society, there may come a time when teenagers find themselves in a similar situation those found in the literature and for that reason the study recommends that parents and educators should play collaborative roles in preventive strategies by making learners aware of and able to distinguish between good and bad friends.

5.2.2 Parents' involvement

The study revealed that there was no link between parents' involvement and teenagers' consumption of alcohol. However the findings in the literature indicate that parents influence teenagers' abuse of alcohol. Rice (1997:20) maintains that

drinking reflects perceptions of attitude and behaviour of adults in our society. The reason could be the circumstances of the environment in which the study was conducted. The study recommends that parents should start alerting the teenagers to the dangers of alcohol. This should take place at home and in the community in the form of forums and community discussions. If alcohol abuse remains unattended to for a lengthy period it can give rise to more serious complications of substance abuse (SAPS, 2003). That is why preventive measures should be implemented without delay.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data on the extent of alcohol consumption among African teenagers in Shiluvane Circuit. All information collected is confidential and will be used to develop preventive programmes for alcohol abuse. Do not write your name on the form.

Make a cross (X) in the appropriate column.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE

1. GENDER: Male 1
 Female 2

2. AGE: _____(Fill in)

3. HEAD OF THE FAMILY: Both parents 1
 Mother 2
 Father 3
 Grandparent(s)/ relative(s) 4
 Teenager(s) 5

The following is a four-point scale allocation. Kindly choose and tick one of the following responses in the numerical order provided:

- Poor 1
 Low 2
 Average 3
 High 4

1. Do you consume alcohol? (Write Yes or No) _____ (Fill in)

	4	3	2	1
2. On how many occasions have you consumed alcohol?	Once	Twice	Three times	≥4
3. How often did you drink alcohol in a week within the previous month?	Once	Twice	Three times	≥4
4. Do you have financial access? Yes/No) If Yes go to question 5	Yes	No		
5. How much money is under your control monthly?	<R100	>R100- R 200	R 200- R300	R300 and more
6. How many bottles of alcohol drink do you take in a week?	1	2-3	> 3	
7. How many cans/ beers/ nip/ tots/ quarts do you take for you to get drunk?	1	2-3	>3	
8. How many of your friends drink alcohol regularly e.g. most weekends?	Most	All	Some	None
9. Do your parent(s)/ sister(s)/brother(s) consume alcohol? (Yes or No)	Yes	No		
10. How often does your parent(s), permit you to take alcohol?	Always	Some times	Rarely	Never
11. How many members constitute your family?	1	2	3	≥4

12. Do you have liquor outlets in your area? (Yes/No) if Yes go to question 13	Yes	No		
13. How many liquor outlets are there in your area?	1	2	3	≥4
14. How far is the nearest liquor outlet from your place of residence?	<1km	< 2km	2km-3km	≥ 4km
15. How much time are you free per day?	<hour	1-2hrs	2-3hrs	≥4hrs
16. Has someone else been injured as a result of your drinking (Yes/No)	No	Yes but not in past month	Yes during past month	
17. Has a relative, a friend, or a doctor suggested to you that you cut down your drinking?	Yes	No		
18. Have you been admitted to hospital after drinking? (Yes/No). If your answer for Question 18 is Yes proceed to Question 19	Yes	No		
19. What was the cause? Explain				
20. After drinking, have you quarreled? (Yes/No)	Yes	No		
21. Have you missed class attendance for the past 1 to 3 days of a month due to drinking problems?(Yes/No)	Yes	No		
22. Have you had unprotected sex after drinking? (Yes/No)	Yes	No		

APPENDIX B

Enq: Magabane P.M.K.

Contacts: 0737252871

LEBITSO HIGH SCHOOL

PRIVATE BAG X1414

LENYENYE

0857

THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

PRIVATE BAG X 2040

SHILUVANE

0853

Dear Sir

RE: Permission to conduct research study on the abuse of alcohol by teenagers with specific reference to a school in Shiluvane Circuit.

1. I am a Master of Development learner at Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership. My name is P.M.K. Magabane: Learner number 8801055.
2. I hereby request permission to gather data in public schools under your jurisdiction. The research is intended for study purposes on the topic titled **An investigation of alcohol abuse among teenage learners in Limpopo Province: A case study in Lebitso Senior Secondary School.**
3. Participants will take part on voluntary basis. Their rights, dignity and confidentiality will be respected.
4. A copy of the study may be available on completion at your request.
5. Thanking you in anticipation.

Signature

APPENDIX C

Enq: Magabane P.M.K.
Contacts: 0737252871

P.O BOX 898
LETABA
0870
14 AUGUST 2006

THE SCHOOL MANAGER
LEBITSO HIGH SCHOOL
PRIVATE BAG X1414
LENYENYE
0857

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Permission to conduct research study on the abuse of alcohol by teenagers in your school.

1. The undersigned is undertaking a research study as part of a Master's Degree in Development Studies at Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership.
2. Authorization is requested to conduct a study of this nature.
3. The help of Life Orientation teachers is requested in furnishing the total number of male and female learners in your school.
4. Kindly be informed that the research is for study purposes only.
5. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Title: An investigation of alcohol abuse among teenage learners in Limpopo Province: A case study in Lebitso Senior Secondary School.

Project Leader Surname: Magabane, P.M.K.

Contact: 0737252871

We appreciate your willingness to take part in answering the Questionnaire for this research project. The project leader or the assistant will contact you to arrange the time for the interview questionnaire.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. You are not obliged to divulge information you would prefer to remain private, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The project team will treat the information you provide as confidential. You will not be identified in any document including transcripts and research report, by your surname, first name, or by any other information. You will be referred to in the document under a code name. No one besides the project team will be informed that you participated in this research study. Every effort will be made to minimize possible risks that you could encounter as a result of this research.

The research findings will be made available to you should you request them. Should you have any queries about the research, now or in the future, you are welcome to contact the project leader at the contact number above.

We appreciate your willingness to be involved in this research project.

.....

I understand the content of this document and agree to participate in this research. However, I have not relinquished my legal or human rights. I may contact the Head of Research Committee at (015) 268 9111 (University of Limpopo) for further information.