Effects of alcohol abuse on parental guidance of children

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Abstract: *Alcohol abuse and dependence can be disabling to the family functioning and especially nurturing of the children. However, information on the effect of alcohol abuse and dependence on the role of parents as nurturers in the rural settings of Kenya is limited. The purpose of this study was to establish effects of Alcohol abuse and dependence on parents in the rural settings and how this impacted on their parental roles as nurtures and especially in guiding children. The parents who use alcohol frequently experienced alcohol related disorders that could be disabling them from their parental duties. The effects of alcohol abuse and dependence on parental guidance in Marachi central location in Butula Division in Busia County and Mathira division in Nyeri County were derived from a questionnaire and focus group discussions with parents who frequently use alcohol. A total of 83 parents, 41 from Butula Division Busia County and 42 from Mathira Division in Nyeri County participated in the study. The findings from this study indicate that alcohol abuse and dependence not only drained family resources but more importantly led to negative self assessment that worked against the role of parents as models and nurturers hence their inability in guiding children to grow into desirable persons for individual development and functioning of the society.*
Key Words: *Alcohol Abuse, Alcohol Dependency, Parental Guidance and counseling, self image*

I. Introduction

Alcohol use disorders and related problems continue to constitute a significant social problem touching on all spheres of the society including parenting. The co-occurrence of alcoholism with other psychiatric disorders has been widely recognized (Kessler, Crum, Warner, Nelson, Schulenberg and Anthony, 1997, Grant, Dawson, Stinson, Chou, Dufour and Pickering, 2004) as a factor contributing to dysfunction families. Alcohol has been identified as one of the factors that influence parental negligence of children, child abuse and poverty in families. Several studies on the effects of alcohol provide evidence on how alcohol abuse affects families in various ways . Mwai, Wamue and Mwangi (2013) citing Locono observe that adult children of alcoholic parents have lower self esteem, difficulties, higher incidence of depression and increased likelihood of becoming alcoholics. They further observe that alcohol drinking negatively affects family relations and that the family with an alcoholic parent displayed more negative family interactions during problem solving discussions. The direct and indirect effect of alcohol on the family functioning and stability is enormous and may account for a great percentage of dysfunctional families (Fieldman & Christense, 1997, Wedding, 2001, Ogden, 2004, Mwai et al, 2013). Alcohol abuse is among the most prevalent causes of mental disorder and is associated with personal and societal cost (Grant et al., 2004). The pharmacological effects of alcohol may impair communication and reasoning power and may also affect the emotional intelligence of a parent.

There is a growing concern worldwide that many children are growing up without proper guidance from their parents. This is despite the fact that many parents consider parenting to be the most satisfying and rewarding job in life. Many societies look upon the parents to nurture children so that they can grow up in accordance with the norms that would foster the development of a healthy society. It is presumed that the development of a healthy society is dependent on successful parenting. For children, parents represent authority to be looked up to, not only for provision of basic necessities, but also for guidance and counseling as they grow up. However, alcohol abuse among parents is becoming a challenge to these important parental roles. Many parents are reported to default on their social roles as nurturers, thereby making children vulnerable to negative experiences that put them as well as society at risk. In addition, parents with alcoholic problems are not able to efficiently provide basic necessities that are critical for the development of children.

In Kenya, media reports indicate that parents spent an increasing portion of their time and resources in drinking places. In rural areas, where poverty is prevalent, many parents with alcoholic problem spend the meager family resources on illicit brews in the village at the expense of family needs. Similarly, the valuable time that could be spent on family development issues is taken up by drinking activities. Accordingly, alcohol abuse is responsible for a wide variety of harmful effects that Kenyans are exposed to ranging from failing health, to diminished productivity and social disharmony among others (Republic of Kenya, 2010)

In assessing the socio-economic needs of Bukhalarire sub-location in Marachi Central of Butula district, Dondi, Adieri and Wanga (2007, unpublished work) found that most men in that location spent their time drinking

illicit brew rather than working on their farms. On the other hand, the mothers seemed to be overburdened with the role of providing for the family, so that they had no time left to guide the children and to provide emotional support. The authors concluded that most children in the sub-location were growing up without parental support and guidance.

Parenting involves providing for the child physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually (Marrison, 1978, Brooks, 1981, Bowlby, 1988, Davenport, 1994, Friedman, 1999, Wedding, 2001, Bowlby, 2004). The society expects parents to play a crucial role of supporting and nurturing their children (Wedding (2001). Nurturance, which is a psychological process of emotional gratification and meeting emotional needs of children is achieved through words, actions and physical touch (Bigner, 1979), Nurturance also shapes children development (Johnson & Jacob, 1997). This requires that parents are present physically and emotionally. Poor emotional bonding could lead to negative psychological effects on children. In their study Sigelman and Rider (2009) found out that, parental-emotional neglect occasioned serious psychological, and mental injuries to children that could be replicated in life. Similar findings were established by Ngwiri and Tumuti (2010), who found that that, poor parenting skills were a major contributing factor in the rising drug abuse among secondary schools students in Kenya.

Control, which refers to discipline and supervision, is another important role that parents undertake. Parental control facilitates the socialization of children into the desired social behaviour. This may involve informal learning where children learn as they work with their parents. It may also involve controlling and directing behaviour through reinforcement to encourage desired social behaviour or occasionally punishment to stop undesired behaviour (Ewen, 1993). Towards this end, parents need to preserve their self image to be able play their role of controlling children. Parents also have the responsibility of providing an environment that can foster desirable learning to enable children to acquire both technical and social skills. Through interactions with their children, parents are also models from which children learn through observation.

Meeting emotional needs of children requires that parents commit their time and resources to the upbringing of their children. The quality of relationship forged between children and parents is crucial. A similar study by Lines (2012) found out that children need to see their father and receive his support, approval and loving care to feel very special. Where a quality relationship is not established, ambivalent feelings may develop. Moreover, where a child is deprived parental love, particularly in the early years, psychopathic personality could develop (Horalambos & Holborn, 2000). Winkley (2002), observes that children need a firm emotional foundation on which to build their early life. According to Ellis (2009), the basis for this secure emotional foundation is found within the child's relationship with parents which is built up and established over childhood years and through to the adolescence stage. However, habitual alcohol abuser is unlikely to spend quality time with their children

In general, responsibilities for providing children's basic physical and emotional needs require that the parents themselves exhibit behaviours that are in line with their roles. Controlling children's behaviour demands that parents demonstrate high moral standards to earn respect from their children. However, studies show that parents who have an alcohol use disorder struggle with many challenges that impact negatively on their self image. Black cited by Mwai et al (2013) observes that alcoholic family environment is characterized by deviate parental role models, inadequate parenting and disturbed parent child relationship. Similarly, NACADA (2012) argue that excessive alcohol consumption depletes family finances leading to poverty and inability to meet family obligations including paying school fees, purchase of food and other amenities. These family related variables are thought to undermine self image of parents making them unable to guide children through their developmental process. However, few studies have examined how parents with alcoholic problem perceive themselves and how their self perception impacts on their role of guiding and counseling children. The present study examined the perceived self perception of parents with alcoholic problem and how this impacted on their role of guiding and counseling their children in Marachi central location in Busia County Kenya and Mathira Division in Nyeri County in Kenya.

1.2 Context Of The Study

Marachi Location is in Butula division of Busia County in western region of Kenya. It is largely ethnically homogeneous, being a home of the Marachi, one of the sub-tribes of the larger Luhya community. The main economic activity is farming; there are no industries in the area. There is a bit of sugarcane growing, but due to the high population, farming is mainly on a small scale. There is high level of poverty in the region, with most of the people surviving on less than a dollar per day. The rate of unemployment in the region is high. Three sub-locations which make up the entire Marachi central location of the newly created Butula division i.e. Bukhalarire, Kingandole and Esikoma, were targeted for the study.

On the other hand, Mathira lies on the slopes of Mt Kenya and is one of the divisions of Nyeri County in central part of Kenya. The division is in the peri-urban setting. The main economic activities are farming and, business and there are also tea and coffee factories in the region which provide employment to the locals.

Karatina, which is an established town, lies in the division. Most of the people in the region are in the middle class. The division is also largely ethnically homogeneous, being a home of the Agikuyu. Three sub-locations from the Mathira division of the larger Nyeri County were randomly selected to provide a sample for the study. These were Gatei, Gitunduti and Gathehu sub-locations.

Western Kenya is known for 'high-tech' knowledge in preparation of 'changaa' (which was until recently an illegal brew). According to National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) (2004) western Kenya leads in alcohol abuse. On the other hand, the central province has for a while been in the media for fatal effects of alcohol use. Many people have died, while some have lost eyesight as a result of taking illicit brew made locally known as 'kumi kumi' a term coined from the cheap price of illicit brew (it costs ten (kumi) shillings. According to research conducted by NACADA in Coast, Central and Western regions of Kenya between May 2010 and May 2011, Alcohol is associated with family disharmony including gender based violence.

The two regions selected for this research have high rates of alcohol use. Parental guidance appear to be problematic in Marachi location, Butula Division of Busia County and Mathira division of Nyeri County. This is despite the fact that all parents are believed to desire the best for their children. We believed that comparing data from different localities would yield more valid and reliable information that could possibly be comparable across regions in Kenya.

II.   Theory Informing The Study

To understand the effects of alcohol abuse and dependence on parental ability to guide their children, the psychodynamic theory of self, developed by Kohut & Wolf in 1978 was selected. According to the theory the 'Self' is the core aspect of our personality that strives for power and success over what we do, harbors the basic idealized goals of life and an intermediate area of basic talents and skills (Klein, cited by McLeod, 2003, Mahler,cited by McLeod, 2003, Kohut & Wolf, 1978). At the heart of self theory is the understanding that failure to achieve the idealized goals in adult life may lead to a damaged self. A damaged self may enfeeble an individual's power to succeed in social roles such as parenting through distorting family/societal goals and inhibiting individuals' ability to acquire skills and exploit his potential (Kohut & Wolf, 1978).

Although, the self may denote to the independent self, many cultures of the world, including Africa, 'self' is viewed as interdependent with the surrounding context and it is the others or the self relations to others that is the focal in the individual's experience (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing set of social relations and recognizing that one's behaviour is contingent on and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be thoughts, feelings and actions of others. The social context provides a framework within which the individuals evaluate themselves in achievement of life goals (Hoyer&, Robin, 2003). The positive self concept is thus derived from the perception that an individual has met social obligation. Parenting roles are socially structured and it is the expectation from the members of the society that parents will undertake their duties of parenting with commitment and dedication.

However, as highlighted, alcohol is associated with several effects that may hinder parents who alcohol use disorder from meeting their social obligations thus impacting negatively on the self. A parent who does not meet the basic needs of children due to his/her drinking habits may suffer from self guilt making him unable to guide his/her children. In essence, alcohol abuse lays assault to the 'self' of an abuser who engages making it difficult for them to effectively play their social role. For example, due to pharmacological effects alcoholic parents may engage in shameful anti-social behaviour that could in the long run derail their self confidence or personal worth. Understanding the effects of alcohol abuse and dependence on the 'self' is important in understanding the pathogens through which alcohol affects parental guidance of children.

In this study we remained sensitive to the notion that parenting is a challenging and demanding job and sobriety is a key aspect in successful parenting. Therefore, this research gave primacy to both direct and indirect effects of alcohol, with more emphasis on how they impacted on the self image of parents. We believed that to understand how alcohol abuse and dependence affected the parental guidance of children could be best established through relational analysis conducted through cross sectional surveys.

III.   Methodology

3.1   Sample

Eighty three (83) participants took part in the study, 67 men and 16 women. The participants were drawn from three sub locations of Marachi Central location of Butula division- Busia County and three sub locations in Mathira division of Nyeri County. All participants volunteered to take part in the study. The group from Marachi was accessed through the local authorities. Being a local community, the chief and sub-chiefs are among the main mediators in alcohol related conflicts in the families affected. Through a local baraza (meeting) the local chief invited those who were willing to take part in the research to come to his centre. In essence, a

convenience sampling approach was used to get the sample. A total of 41 participants 27 men and 14 women volunteered to take part in the study. The age range was between 22 to 65 years.

The group from Mathira was selected through snowballing technique and convenience sampling. A participant who had alcohol related problems known to the researcher was able to provide links to reach to other participants. In the process of meeting, those who volunteered to participate initially invited their colleagues. Those who availed themselves took part in the study. There were 40 men and 2 women. The age range was between 20 and 60 years. All the 83 participants responded to the questionnaire. However, for the focus group discussion three volunteers from each sub location participated. That is, in Butula District three parents from Bukhalarire, three from Kingandole and Esikoma, sub-locations respectively participated in the study. In Nyeri, three participants from each of the sub-locations namely, Gatei, Gitunduti and Gathehu participated in the discussion. A focus group discussion from each region had 9 participants

3.2 Design And Instrumentation

A cross sectional survey employing a mixed methods approach that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study. We constructed a 57 item questionnaire and divided it into three sections. Section A and B consisted of a structured questionnaire. Section A comprised of 26 items focused on demographic factors and the self perception of parents. Section B focused on general information that covered the perceived expected roles of parents that contribute to guidance of children and factors that contribute to alcohol use disorder. It had 25 questions. Section C was semi-structured questionnaire. It had six items which sought general information on the factors contributing to excessive alcohol use and the intervention methods that could be appropriate to help parents with alcohol use disorder. The research instruments were piloted in Nairobi County Kenya. Several researchers are in agreement that pre-testing of the research instruments is critical for establishing validity and reliability (Cohen, et al, 2000, Sullivan, 2001). Once the reliability and validity of the instruments was established, the researchers moved to the process of data collection. With the help of research assistants each participant was given a questionnaire to respond to.

In addition, a group discussion was conducted in each location. Focus group discussions were found suitable from an understanding that alcohol has pharmacological effects that drive the user to shameful acts that may make an individual remain shrouded in shame and hence resistant to talk about their emotional turmoil. Group discussions gave the participants an opportunity to interact and share specific attitudes and experiences, thus easing communication. Moreover, the spontaneity of responses by the participants provided insights in the area of interest as meanings and answers were socially constructed rather than individually created hence ensuring objectivity.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. The choice of descriptive statistics was selected for the ease of understanding for the targeted audience. The research was conducted in the local areas targeting mainly the rural sub-committees that often concern themselves with rural welfare. According to Sullivan (2001) the method of data presentation and analysis could be determined based on the audience targeted.

The open ended questions were analysed thematically in relation to the research objectives which was to understand the effects of alcohol on parental role as nurturers and especially guidance of children. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyze data collected from focus group discussions. The choice of CDA was informed by conceptualization of the role of language in a social system as advanced by Norman Fairclough. Fairclough (2001) sees CDA as an interdisciplinary approach that is dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life hence tends to engage social theoretical issues. In this study an attempt was made to understand the thoughts of parents who abuse and depend on alcohol and how this affects the social life as nurturers of children.

In the ethical consideration and concerns, permission was sought from the relevant authorities from the national to the sub-locational level. Similarly, informed consent was sought from the participants who took part in the study. Moreover, confidentiality and anonymity were assured and observed during data collection and management to those who participated at individual.

IV.   Results and discussion

Because there were few differences in the correlates of alcohol use by gender, data is represented as a whole from both location of study. However, in comparison by district, the results seemed to suggest that there are more people who are dependent on alcohol in Mathira division than in Butula division. This was evidenced by the higher percentage of daily alcohol consumption in Mathira division (67%) as compared to (46%) of respondents in Butula Division. This could be attributed to different contextual and cultural factors. In Western Kenya, most of cultural values associated with social support are still intact; hence demand for social responsibility may help limit dependency on alcohol. On the other hand, in Nyeri societal cultures have been watered down due capitalistic values associated with urbanization. As such, people are more individualistic and

experience low social support. Literature on social control indicates that social ties act as a buffer against harmful behaviours (Urmberson, 1987).   On the other hand, there seemed to be more parents who were occasional heavy drinkers of alcohol in Butula division. This could also be attributed to cultural differences and the way in which different communities take up their social responsibilities. Regarding gender differences by district, more women 14 out of 41 representing 34% from Butula division participated in the study as compared to 2 representing 4.7% from Mathira division.

4.1 Alcohol and self perception
From a general perspective it was clear from the data that a majority of the parents were aware of their alcohol use disorder and the adverse effects it had on their role as parents. The issue of negative self perception in relation to excessive use of alcohol was evidence in the data. The findings are shown in table 1 below.

Variable	Description of the variable	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes N	No N	Yes %	No %
Heavy drinking	Heavy drinking of alcohol is no good for parents	59	24	71	29
Socialization	Alcohol is good for socialization	60	23	72	28
Advice for children	Parents who are heavy drinkers are likely to have problems in advising children	73	10	88	12
Regret	I regret about some things I do when under the influence of alcohol	65	18	78.3	21.7
weakening	I feel that my alcoholic behaviour weakens my parenthood	63	23.8	75.9	24.1
Confidence	Because of my alcoholic behaviour I feel that I have no confidence in my self	66	17	79.5	20.5
Time	Alcohol consumes the time I could have spent with my children	61	22	73.5	26.5
Happy	I feel happy about my alcoholic behaviour	12	71	14.5	85.5
Guilty	I feel guilt because I waste family resources on Alcohol taking	71	12	84.5	14.5
Support	Even though I am a heavy drinker, I support my family effectively	18	65	21.4	77.4
Basic needs	At times my family lack basic needs because I spent so much on alcohol	70	13	84.3	15.7
Trouble	Sometimes I cause trouble in my family when I am drunk	52	31	62.7	37.3
Hangover	I experience hangover after heavy drinking and I am not able to work	64	19	77	23
Shame	I feel ashamed to be controlled by alcohol	66	17	79.5	20.5
Bold	Under the influence of alcohol I can be bold	21	62	25.3	74.7
Strength	Alcohol drains my strength so I am not able to undertake demanding jobs	70	13	84.3	15.7
Health	I often find myself sickly because of heavy drinking	73	10	88.0	12.0

Table 1 shows the variables that were measured to asses the self perception of parents who perceived themselves as heavy as frequent users of alcohol and occasional heavy drinkers.

The findings indicated that most parents were dissatisfied by the experience and the behaviour they exhibited under the influence and 'aftereffects' of alcohol. As can be seen in the tables 1 above, the lager percentage of parents appear not to be happy about their alcohol related behaviour and the effects it has on their families. It appears that inability to meet their family obligations has eroded their self confidence.

The findings above were further reinforced by the views of the parents in the open ended questionnaire and the focus group discussions. For example, in regard to after effects of heavy drinking, parents had this to say:

After heavy drinking I feel uncomfortable the next morning and I am not able to do any reasonable work. I just want to sleep which means that I can't work to support my family. ….FGB1

I always feel weak the next morning after drinking. It is perhaps because I sometimes drink on an empty stomach and that makes me feel horrible. But in that state I can't work to support my family…I can't get enough to eat ….FGB 2

Similarly in the open ended question, the respondents expressed the same view. In responding to the question on the effects of alcohol on their families, the participants expressed the view that alcohol had put them into trouble with their families, authority and the society at large. Some had lost their jobs while some said they acted violently when under the influence of alcohol. The extracts below illustrate some of the views of the respondents extracted from open ended questionnaire

I lost my job because of alcohol, I have tried applying and each time I am invited for interview I am drunk (PM)

When I am drunk I am aggressive and this puts me in trouble with my family and the authority (PB)

When I am drunk I end up harassing my family members when under the influence of alcohol (PM)

I have put aside all my goals and social obligations because of my drinking problems (PM)

In general the majority of participants felt that the behaviour exhibited when under the influence of alcohol eroded their self image making them unable to perform their role of nurturing and directing their children in social desired behaviour.

4.1. 2 Alcohol Use Disorder And Parenting
The participants were asked to respond to questions focusing on how their alcohol habit influenced their interaction with the children, especially focusing on nurturance and control. The data are reported in table 2 below

Variable	Question	Always %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %
Home early	I get home before my children go to sleep	8	24	56	12
Work	I work with my children on weekends and holidays	10	13	54	23
discussion	I sit with my children to discuss several issues	17	28	37	18
Basic needs	I am happy with the way I provide basic needs for my family	4	11	25	60
Homework	I get time to help my children with their homework	3	10	24	63
Visit school	I have time to visit my children at school to see how they are doing	14	35	33	18
Communicate	I communicate with my children effectively	16	28	44	12
violence	I treat my family violently when I am under the influence of alcohol	20	32	12	36
Keep away	My children keep away from me when I am drunk	8	21	38	33
Trouble	I get in trouble with the law and the rest of the community when I am drunk this makes my family to keep distance from me	27	36	29	8

As can be seen from the table, most of the parents rarely engage with their children many activities and are not at home in time to interact with their children. Lack of close interaction with the children makes the parents who abuse alcohol to miss out on many opportunities that would enable them guide the e children. For indicated, 63 % of the participants said they never get time help their children with the homework. In addition 63 % of the parents were not happy with the way they provided for the basic needs of the children. From the focus group discussion the participants said that they spent their meager income on buying alcohol hence making them unable to meet the needs of their children. From focus group discussion it was clear that the parents felt that alcohol was not only time consuming but also took up the resources they could have used on family development.

4.1.3 Factors Contributing To Alcohol Use Disorder Among Parents
The fact that the parents seemed well aware of the effects of alcohol on their parental roles but the behaviour persisted was one of the objectives that the study sought to find out. Specifically, the study sought to find out factors that contribute to alcohol abuse and dependence. The results are shown in the table 3 below

Variable	Description of the variable	Frequency	percentage
Finance	I drink to forget my financial difficulties	59	71%
Family problems	I have so many problems so I have to drink	56	67%
Availability	Alcohol is everywhere so I drink	50	60%
Peer pressure	All my friends drink alcohol, I have to be part of them	29	35%
Plenty of time	I do not have a job, idle around and this makes me drink	24	29%

As can be seen from table three, most parents said that they drink to forget financial challenges at 71 %, to forget the problems they have at 67 % and because of ease in accessibility at 60 %. The views were reinforced by the interviews in focus group discussions that attributed drinking habits to poverty and other social problems. The following extracts sum up the views of the participants

The thoughts and worries about my life problems push me into drinking. It is only when I am drunk that I experience brief moments of happiness. It is also when I am drunk that I am able to forget my problems. Otherwise when I am sober, I see the problems but I can't do anything. I feel very low and useless as a man… it hurts.(FGB)

I drink because of desperation brought about by life problems. The little money I have cannot meet my family needs. So I drink to try and forget the problems I face (FGM)

I have a lot of problems with my wife so I have to drink to get some peace (FGM)

4. 1. 4 Interventions Method

Desire to stop or correct their use of alcohol was clear among the majority of the participants in the study. The participants lamented that they even lacked forums where they could discuss their problems. Towards this end, 90% of the respondents felt that there was need to create awareness in the local communities through seminars and group discussion. The participants felt that building community capacity in terms of knowledge on effects of alcohol would enable them to be positively reflective on the problems that alcohol brings in the society.

4.2 Discussion

A careful analysis of the respondents' views reveals the devastating effects of alcohol on the 'self' of parents. Negative self perception is supported by data as shown in table 1. The failure to successfully undertake the expected social roles appears to make parents feel guilty and this erodes their confidence and self esteem thus damaging the self. As suggested by the self theory, damaged self enfeebles an individual's power to succeed in social roles such as parenting through distorting family/societal goals and inhibiting individuals' ability to acquire skills and exploit his potential (Kohut & Wolf, 1978). Parents worldwide have both personal and social responsibility to nurture and control their children (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000). Failure to achieve the socially assigned roles affects one's identity and is likely to be a major cause of psychopathology in individuals (Ewen, 1993). It is therefore not surprising that most parents who abuse and depend on alcohol feel guilty and lack confidence. Kiplan (1983) argued that the burdens imposed by a person's social roles are good recipes for stress. Accordingly, the subjective evaluation of the role combines with the objective properties of demands placed by the role to determine whether or not the strain will result. The implication is that all those in family institutions are aware of what is expected of them and therefore conceptualize the self as part of the larger society (McCann &Pearlman, 1990, Hoyer & Roodin, 2003). The beliefs and expectations that form part of the individual schemas play a central role to influence the way parents interact with the children. The feelings of failure which parents with alcoholic use disorder often experienced by alcoholic parents make it difficult for them to nurture and control their children.

4.2.1 Alcohol use disorder and pareting

In regards to the behaviour exhibited by parents who depend or abuse alcohol the present analysis can be characterized as dealing with the psycho-pharmacological effects of alcohol. There is evidence from various studies on alcohol that show that alcohol has addictive effects (Wedding, 2001, NACADA, 2010).This makes those who dependant on alcohol to spent resources and their time in drinking places since they have to 'quench' their thirst for alcohol. In the process, many of their family roles go unattended. The participants revealed that because of alcoholic habits, they had little time to spend with their children; they rarely helped their children in home work, or monitored their development and also used the family resources to sustain their drinking habits. This made it difficult for the affected parents to play the paternalistic/ maternalistic roles that are often associated with image of persons in control. The implication is that such parents may not be in a position to guide their children. As one parent expressed during focus group discussion

What do you tell the children when in the first place you can't discipline yourself? You lack self control, alcohol controls you, what do you say? Do you have a face (self image) (FGB)

These findings seem to confirm the self theory. Accordingly, the parental roles are affected negatively. As highlighted earlier, the social legitimacy of parenting and hence the psychological security of the person of a parent rests in their ability to effectively play their parental roles. Human beings are reflective and communicative (Cooper, 2003) and are able to understand their failures. Failure in parental roles brings about the feelings of guilt making the parents unable to carry out their role of controlling children. Moreover, as revealed by the data, alcohol behaviour disorder becomes an escape route through which the parents find their way when they experience severe threats on their self image. Unfortunately running to alcohol for ego 'self' security creates alcohol dependence syndrome that has spiral effects creating more problems for the family

Accordingly, majority (56%) of the participants reported taking alcohol to forget the problems they faced in life rather than for enjoyment. Although alcohol has many negative effects, it does have some benefits to those who use it. Accordingly, alcohol has mood altering effect that brings euphoric feelings often desired by many people (Fieldman & Christensen, 1997). The contradictory expectations and outcomes from alcohol use foreclose the thinking of users. Rollnick, Kinnersley and Stott (1993) argue that choosing between two courses of actions that are contradictory heightens psychological conflict and can be confusing leading to resistance to change. Sterren (2008) reinforces this view when he posits that when the feelings and beliefs are opposite each other the feelings tend to dominate and suppress cognitive evaluation. Accordingly, the positive feelings that the parents who abuse and depend on alcohol experience are reinforcing, hence they encourage them to use alcohol even with the devastating effects it has on the family. This may help explain why parents with alcoholic use disorder hardly make any effort to deal with the challenges they experience in live. As result life challenges stay on and continue to push them to alcoholism which seems to offer the easy escape route.

Clearly the results of this study suggest complex effects of alcohol on parents in various ways that can impinge on their social roles. Parents are not only providers of basic needs; they are role models, educators and counselors. The parents who depend on or abuse alcohol find it difficult to play their role of guiding and counseling. Rehabilitating parents who have alcohol use disorder through equipping empowering them with skills and knowledge that would restore their self confidence and regulate their behaviour seems important to help them deal with the problem of alcohol. In addition there is need for inventing a more holistic approach that will not only deal with alcohol abuse and dependency, but also with other factors that contribute to alcohol use disorder. This would help serve to prevent parents from drifting to alcoholism. Moreover, there is need for putting in place intervention mechanisms that could assist the parents who are already affected. Affordable rehabilitation centers in the rural settings seem necessary if the problem of alcohol is to be fully addressed. Currently a few rehabilitation centres are found in urban areas and are usually expensive beyond the reach of the rural poor. There is therefore need for more affordable rehabilitation centres in the rural setting. The government, Non-Governmental organizations and other interested parties need to work with the local communities to establish a more holistic approach that is both preventive and curative.

However, further research is needed to establish a large database of information to provide a more comprehensive understanding on how alcohol affects parents in their role of guiding children. In addition scholarship is required to establish the effectiveness of 'self' theory as a conceptual framework for understanding the effect of alcohol on parental roles.

V. Conclusion

This paper has examined the perceptions of the parents with alcohol use disorder on their drinking habits and the effects it has on their parental roles. The findings show that although the parents who abuse and depend on alcohol are aware of the negative effects on their families, the contradictory effects of alcohol make it difficult for them to initiate efforts to stop drinking. Instead they drift more to alcohol use as an escape route to the perceived problems that make them abuse and drift in alcoholism. However, the continuous dependence and abuse of alcohol creates antisocial behaviour in parents that make them abdicate their role of guiding children. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration both the factors and the effects when addressing the problem of alcohol within the society.

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