

Effect of Marketing on Alcohol Consumption among Young People in Brazzaville: An Approach by the AFCM

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to analyse the effects of marketing on alcohol consumption among young people in Brazzaville, according to consumer profiles, in the nine districts of Brazzaville. Primary data were collected from 880 young people. A descriptive research plan was used to better characterise and identify the profile of young people according to their sensitivity to marketing. The results of this study revealed a paradoxical effect of marketing on alcohol consumption by young people in Brazzaville. Those who are supposed to be most influenced deny it, while those who are influenced resist this influence. Therefore, in order to combat alcohol marketing, a social marketing strategy must be implemented, targeting actions in places where alcohol is commonly consumed, and developing alcohol-free leisure activities to strengthen the psychosocial skills of occasional consumers.

Keywords

Consumption, Alcohol Marketing, Young People, Brazzaville

1. Introduction

Alcohol consumption among young people is a major public health issue worldwide. For example, in 2016, the WHO noted that nearly 320,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 die each year from alcohol-related causes. This represents 10% of deaths in this age group. In Africa, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is also worrying, with 22% of young people consuming alcohol (Gassaye et al., 2015). This consumption is exacerbated by the widespread

availability of alcohol, urbanisation, aggressive marketing, an increase in unlicensed alcohol outlets and the absence of restrictions on alcohol advertising (Dumbili, 2014; Lasebikan & Ola, 2016).

Observation of the situation in Brazzaville reveals that young people have not remained on the sidelines of this situation and that alcohol marketing practices (advertising, promotions, availability of alcohol, etc.) subsequently generate factors that appear to contribute to increased consumption of alcoholic beverages. In line with this perspective, a study by Kouta et al. (2023) indicates that the emblematic promotional practices of local breweries commonly known as “Mopiko”, which consist of buying three bottles of beer for the price of one, have generated factors that contribute to increased alcohol consumption among young people. This strategy has encouraged alcohol abuse to such an extent that the Congolese authorities issued Circular No. 0141 of 02/10/2018 temporarily banning alcohol sales promotions until the law prohibiting alcohol promotions is enacted.

Given these findings, it is therefore essential to examine the effects of marketing on alcohol consumption among young people according to typical consumer profiles in the nine districts of Brazzaville. Conceptually, this investigation aims to understand the differentiated effects of marketing on alcohol consumption according to the profiles of young people. Although several studies in Western countries have documented the impact of marketing on youth consumption, very few have adopted a holistic approach incorporating the AFCM model to analyse the effects of marketing on alcohol consumption among young people. Hence its originality in the Brazzaville context and its value in filling the gap in the literature on this subject. At the managerial level, the interest of this study lies in mobilising social marketing practices with the aim of influencing alcohol consumption behaviour for social well-being. Thus, differentiated knowledge of typical alcohol consumer profiles in relation to the effects of marketing will enable policy makers to use the results of this study to formulate positive policies to combat alcohol abuse based on a relevant framework that is sensitive to the forces influencing the alcohol industry in Congo. To this end, a primary quantitative study based on young people aged 15 to 35 living in the nine districts of Brazzaville will be conducted. The expected results are a typology of young people who react differently to the effects of marketing according to their risk areas and contexts, and ultimately action for targeted prevention policies.

Overall, this paper is structured in three parts: first, there is a review of the literature focusing on the concept of alcohol consumption and marketing. Next, the second part addresses the standard methodology used in this study, while the third part presents the analysis and discussion of the main results in relation to the empirical literature used in this study.

2. Literature Review

The literature review on this subject focuses on two points. First, it seeks to understand the concept of alcohol consumption and alcohol marketing; second, it

provides an empirical review of the relationship between marketing and alcohol consumption.

2.1. Alcohol Consumption

In the literature, alcohol consumption can be defined in several ways, ranging from the quantities consumed to the effects on health. According to the WHO, the low-risk level of alcohol consumption is set at less than 20 g of ethanol per day, 5 days per week (i.e. 2 days of abstinence recommended), and 60 g on a single occasion, with the effect of alcohol varying according to weight and differences in metabolism, and depending on whether the consumer is male or female. Similarly, [Kim et al. \(2019\)](#) define light alcohol consumption as less than 12.5 g per day, moderate consumption as between 12.5 g and 37.5 g per day, and excessive consumption as more than 37.5 g per day. This categorisation provides a varied interpretation of the potential effects of alcohol on health, ranging from benefits such as insulin sensitivity observed with moderate consumption to accumulated risks such as liver cirrhosis, breast cancer and tuberculosis, not to mention trauma ([Liu et al., 2015](#); [Roerecke et al., 2019](#)). Alcohol consumption is often considered a legitimate and enjoyable activity. In this context, alcohol consumption is commonly seen as a social facilitator that also allows people to relax and temporarily reduce stress ([Gieski et al., 2015](#)). This dynamic allows alcohol consumption to be part of a social and cultural concept.

Furthermore, the issue of alcohol consumption becomes more complex when considering its assessment. According to [Tevik et al. \(2021\)](#) assessment methods, such as frequency and quantity (QF) questionnaires, can vary greatly in their ability to accurately capture consumption behaviours. In line with this perspective, researchers ([Kim et al., 2023](#); [Oh et al., 2023](#)) found inconsistencies in some studies that attempted to use standard definitions of alcohol consumption, complicating data analysis. This finding leads us to draw researchers' attention to the need for caution in interpreting data due to the divergence in accepted definitions.

In short, alcohol consumption can be understood as a multifaceted behaviour that requires a nuanced and methodical approach for an accurate and typical assessment of the associated risks.

2.2. Alcohol Marketing

Alcohol marketing can be defined as all promotional strategies developed by alcohol manufacturers (advertising, promotion, marketing of alcohol, etc.). The sale or marketing of alcohol is one of the main risk factors for alcohol consumption.

An extensive review of the literature indicates that the most critical aspect studied is the explicit or implicit targeting of young people. Research such as that conducted by ([Grenard et al., 2013](#); [McClure et al., 2013](#); [Koordeman et al., 2012](#); [Lin et al., 2012](#); [Anderson et al., 2009](#)); show that exposure to alcohol marketing is associated not only with alcohol consumption among young people, but also with problematic alcohol consumption and alcohol-related consequences. Beyond

mere exposure, which is difficult to measure accurately, it is increasingly clear that young people's response and engagement with alcohol marketing campaigns (marketing receptivity) is a risk factor for problematic alcohol transitions. Young people who are more exposed to alcohol marketing appear to be more likely to subsequently start drinking alcohol and engage in excessive and hazardous alcohol consumption (Jernigan et al., 2017). Similarly state that exposure to any form of alcohol marketing was positively associated with alcohol-related consequences (OR [95% CI] = 3.35 [1.19, 9.44] among young adults in the United States.

Finally, alcohol marketing is ubiquitous and relies on sophisticated, integrated strategies that aim to convey positive ideas about alcohol and its effects. Alcohol advertising messages are no longer conveyed solely through conventional media such as television and radio, print media, billboards and point-of-sale displays¹. Thus, the definition of alcohol marketing cannot be separated from social debates about its impact and the obligation to monitor and protect the health of the most vulnerable populations.

2.3. Research on the Effects of Marketing on Alcohol Consumption

The marketing techniques used by brewing companies, such as advertising and price reductions during promotional activities, may be a factor in motivating alcohol consumption.

Studies have highlighted the relationship between marketing techniques and alcohol consumption among young people. Authors such as (Koordeman et al., 2012; Grenard et al., 2013; Tanski et al., 2015; Jernigan et al., 2017; Jackson & Bartholow, 2020) conducted studies in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Lebanon and Colombia. The results of their study show that alcohol marketing techniques and practices have an impact on young people's alcohol consumption. Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing is associated not only with alcohol consumption among young people, but also with problematic alcohol consumption and the consequences of alcohol consumption.

However, analysis of the Congolese context shows that young people are exposed to alcohol marketing practices on a daily basis, particularly through television advertising, posters on the main avenues of the capital, during sporting events, fairs in public places, in bars and VIP areas. This exposure encourages young people to engage in excessive alcohol consumption.

3. Study Methodology

3.1. Study Framework and Population

This study was conducted in Brazzaville and used primary survey data. The sampling frame for the Republic of Congo's RGPH-5 from the National Institute of Statistics (INS) was used for this study, which was compiled during the national

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mapping operation. The National Institute of Statistics (INS) has an updated file of the RGPH-5 sampling frame for the Republic of Congo. The sampling frame consisted of a list of all ZDs in Brazzaville. The target population consisted of young people aged 15 to 35, targeting the nine districts of Brazzaville at the time of the survey. The choice of this age group corresponds to the definition of youth given by the African Youth Charter.

3.2. Sampling and Sample Size

A representative sample of 880 young people was selected using a two-stage stratified probability (random) method: in the first stage, primary units were drawn from the census areas (ZDs) of the city of Brazzaville; at the second level, households were drawn from these ZDs. Given that the probability of finding a young person aged 15 to 35 in a household is 50% (MICS5).

To determine the sample size in this study, the following mathematical formula was applied:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 * p * q}{\varepsilon^2},$$

where

- * n = the minimum sample size;
- * p = the proportion of individuals aged 15 - 35;
- * q = the complement to one (1) of the proportion p ;
- * ε = the margin of error (precision);
- * $Z_{\alpha/2}$ = the $100(1 - \alpha/2)$ quantile of the reduced centred normal distribution.

Given the lack of information on individuals aged 15 to 35 in the survey database, we only considered the proportion of this population in 2007, which was approximately 50% of the population of Congo. Therefore $p = q = 0.5$.

We therefore set a confidence level of 95% for an accuracy of $\varepsilon = 5\%^2$; the same applies to the cluster effect $\theta = 2$. As a result, each result from our survey can be extrapolated with a 5% risk of error of plus or minus 6%.

With regard to MICS5 in Congo, where the household non-response rate was $\beta = 3\%$, we have assumed a non-response rate of 10%.

Digital application:

Sample size:

$$Z_{\alpha/2} = 2 \quad \text{Since } \alpha = 5\% \text{ and } q = 0.5; \varepsilon = 5\%, \text{ the cluster effect } \theta = 2$$

$$n = \frac{2^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.05^2} = 400 \text{ individus}$$

Taking into account the non-response rate of 10%, corresponding to 40 individuals, we obtain $n = 400 + 40 = 440$ individus.

Taking into account the cluster effect, the minimum number of individuals to be surveyed would therefore be $n = 2 \times 440 = 880$ individus.

²Inspired by the MICS 5-Congo survey (2014-2015), which set a precision of 6%.

3.3. Method of Analysis

To achieve the objective set in this study, we will use the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) method. Given the abundance of variables involved in the analysis of the phenomenon under study, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) will be used to better characterise and identify the profile of young people according to their sensitivity to marketing. The choice of this method of analysis is justified by the qualitative nature of the variables selected. MACA is a method that allows us to study the associations that exist not only between the independent variables and the dependent variable, but also between the independent variables themselves. It also allows us to transform the explanatory variables into factorial dimensions. A factorial design will be used to refine the typology in order to identify the profile of young consumers according to their risk of exposure to alcohol consumption during marketing periods.

4. Presentation of Variables

4.1. Dependent Variable

The variation in alcohol consumption during marketing periods (promotions) is the dependent variable in this study. The question asked is how young people's alcohol consumption varies during promotional periods. There are two possible answers: *1—increased*, *2—did not increase*.

The data was recoded so that young people whose consumption increased during promotions were classified as having increased consumption, while those whose consumption remained unchanged were classified as having no increase. The choice of this variable is justified firstly by its relevance in capturing the impact of marketing strategies (it measures the promotional effect) and secondly by the vulnerability indicator in identifying young people who are sensitive to commercial incentives.

This variable was created by comparing “usual consumption” as non-promotional and consumption during promotional periods.

4.2. Independent Variables

4.2.1. Level of Education

Educational attainment contributes to increasing young people's knowledge of many aspects of life. It can influence young people's decisions about alcohol consumption. The more educated they are, the more likely they are to consume alcohol in moderation and control their consumption, as they are aware that alcohol abuse can have consequences for their lives and those around them. Four levels of education were taken into consideration: *1—primary/secondary 1st cycle*, *2—secondary 2nd cycle*, *3—higher education*.

4.2.2. Marital Status

This variable provides information on the level of responsibility of the young person. When a young person is married, it is assumed that they are responsible and

spend money on essential family items, unlike other types of individuals (single, widowed, divorced/separated). This variable takes into account the following categories: *1—single, 2—cohabiting, 3—married, 4—separated/divorced/widowed (W)*.

4.2.3. Household Size

The average size of Congolese households is approximately 4.3 people, with this average being slightly lower in rural areas (4.2) than in urban areas (4.4), according to the 2011-2012 EDSC-II. Nearly seven out of ten households comprise between 2 and 6 persons (69%). Large households (9 persons and above) are slightly more common in urban areas than in rural areas (7% versus 5%). For the purposes of this study, households with between 1 and 3 members are considered “small”, those with 4 and 5 members are considered “medium-sized”, and those with more than 5 members are considered “large”. The categories are as follows: *1—small; 2—medium-sized; 3—large*.

4.2.4. Monthly Income

The introduction of income as a socio-economic variable gives young people a certain status in society. This variable provides an overview of individuals’ economic power. Income is expressed here in monetary units (FCFA). It is a quantitative variable and will be categorised for the purposes of analysis. It corresponds to everything that young people can earn either through stable employment or through odd jobs (freelance work). The income available to young people allows them to purchase alcoholic beverages in order to achieve the desired effects. It includes: *1—No income, 2—Less than 50,000, 3—50,000 and above*.

4.2.5. Preferred Types of Drinks

This is a qualitative variable that corresponds to the quantity consumed by young people based on their preference for a particular brand of alcoholic beverage. Young people are free to choose different types of alcoholic beverages, whether they are brewed locally or imported. The categories taken into account are: *1—Beverages produced by BRASCO; 2—Imported beverages; 3—Traditional drinks*.

4.2.6. Influence of Marketing Techniques

Alcohol marketing refers to any marketing technique used by alcohol producers to influence young people’s choices. This includes advertising techniques across all communication media and sales promotions. This qualitative variable is binary and takes the value 1 if alcohol marketing practices influence young people’s motivation to consume alcohol and 0 if there is no influence.

4.2.7. Quantity of Favourite Drinks

Given that we are not all equal when it comes to alcohol, not all young people have problematic relationships with alcohol. This variable provides information on the different types of consumers that may exist. For example, following analysis, each consumer could be specifically categorised according to mitigation measures in

order to intervene appropriately in alcohol consumption problems.

Furthermore, people sometimes consume large quantities when they find their favourite brand of drink on the market. This variable has been standardised and comprises two categories: *1—low, 2—high*.

4.2.8. Frequency of Consumption

The question on frequency is used to assess the usual consumption of beverages among certain young people. The modalities included in this study consist of a category of consumption frequency (in number of times per day, per week, per month, per quarter). Young people are asked to tick the frequency that most closely matches their usual consumption. It includes the following categories: *1—every day, 2—once a week, 3—at least twice a week, 4—once a month, 5—once a quarter*.

4.2.9. Area of Residence

The area of residence indicates the neighbourhood or district of the city in relation to the environment in which the young person lives. This variable provides information on the alcohol consumption habits that a young person may adopt with their peers. For example, if there are many places to consume alcohol in the neighbourhood where the young person lives, this may influence them to consume alcohol. Similarly, the neighbourhood may be lively due to the fact that there are many young people in the district who consume alcohol.

This variable allows us to determine whether young people in a given neighbourhood consume more than young people in other neighbourhoods. For example, is the fact that there are many places to consume alcohol in a neighbourhood sufficient proof that young people consume more in these neighbourhoods? This variable has three categories: *1—city centre, 2—inner suburbs, 3—outer suburbs*.

4.2.10. Usual Place of Alcohol Consumption

This variable provides information on where young people socialise when consuming alcohol. Following analysis, the representative percentage of the place where young people usually consume alcohol can guide the adoption of certain measures to reduce alcohol consumption. Five methods were reported: *1—at friends' houses, 2—at home, 3—in bars, 4—in VIP areas, 5—in nightclubs*.

4.3. Presentation of Results and Interpretations

The AFCM has the advantage of summarising a large amount of information contained in several variables. This method also makes it possible to show the associations that exist between the variable modalities and to categorise them according to factorial axes. The first two factorial axes (1 and 2) were selected to identify the group of young people at risk of increased alcohol consumption during the marketing period in Brazzaville.

4.3.1. Categorisation of Factorial Axes

The multidimensional descriptive analysis of the data from the survey of alcohol

consumers revealed two factor axes that account for 23.82% and 5.83% respectively, or approximately 30% of the total inertia of the scatter plot (see **Figure 1**).

Axis 1: (axis of variation in consumption with 23.82% inertia)

Positive pole: young people increasing their consumption

- Socio-demographic profile:
 - Place of residence: Mougali, Poto-poto or Talamgaï
 - Level of education: higher
 - Marital status: cohabiting, separated, divorced or widowed
 - Monthly income: $\geq 50,000$ CFA francs
 - Household size: small
- Alcohol consumption behaviour
 - Preference: Brewery-produced beverages
 - Quantity: Large quantity
 - Frequency: Every day/at least once a week/only at weekends
 - Usual location: VIP
 - Accompaniment: with fellow drinkers
- Environmental context
 - Access to alcohol: Presence of numerous beverage outlets
- Marketing perception: no marketing influence
- Motivation for consumption

Do not drink for:

- Pleasure
- To forget problems,
- Strengthen social ties,
- Gaining acceptance,
- Lack of occupation

Negative aspect: Young people stabilising their consumption

- Socio-demographic profile:
 - Place of residence: Makélékélé, Bacongo, Mfilou, Madibou, Ouenzé or Djiri
 - Level of education: primary or lower/secondary 1st or 2nd cycle
 - Marital status: single
 - Monthly income: No income or $< 50,000$
 - Household size: large or medium
 - Alcohol consumption behaviour
 - Preference: Imported and/or traditional drinks/Whisky/Wine
 - Quantity: Low quantity
 - Frequency: Once a week/once a month/once a quarter
 - Usual location: At friends' houses/Bar/Home
 - Accompaniment: Alone without company
 - Environmental context:
 - Access to alcohol: sufficient or limited access
- Marketing perception:
- Marketing influence: influenced by marketing techniques

Motivations for consumption: these young people drink for:

- Pleasure,
- To forget their problems,
- To be accepted,
- Strengthen social ties,
- Lack of occupation

Axis 2: economic factors (5.83% inertia)

Positive aspect: economic privilege

Characteristics:

- Place of residence: Bacongo, Poto-Poto, Talangai, Mfilou, Madibou
- Marital status: cohabiting, separated, divorced or widowed
- Level of education: higher
- Financial situation: With income
- Alcohol preferences: Brewery or traditional beverages

Negative factor: fragile economy

Characteristics:

- Place of residence: Makélékélé, Mougali, Ouenzé, Djiri
- Marital status: Single
- Level of education: primary or less/secondary
- Financial situation: no income
- Alcohol preferences: Imported beverages/wine/whisky
- Household size: large

4.3.2. Identification of Groups

Figure 1 shows that the young consumers most exposed to increased alcohol consumption during marketing periods live in Mougali, Poto-poto or Talangai, consume alcohol every day or at least once a week or only at weekends, consume large quantities of alcohol and usually consume it in VIP establishments. These young people live in areas with a large number of drinking establishments, drink with peers who also consume alcohol, and almost never or never drink for pleasure, to forget their problems, to strengthen social ties, to be accepted by others, or out of boredom. In addition, these young people are not influenced by marketing techniques, are in a relationship, separated, divorced or widowed, have a monthly income of at least 50,000 CFA francs and live in small households. Broadly speaking, this profile illustrates several key elements such as socio-economic autonomy, ritualised consumption, a facilitating environment and unmotivated consumption, which indicates the fate of consumers at risk.

On the other hand, young consumers who maintain their consumption levels even during the marketing period live in Makélékélé, Bacongo, Mfilou, Madibou, Ouenzé or Djiri, have a primary education or less, secondary 1st or 2nd cycle, have a preference for imported and/or traditional drinks, whisky or wine, consume a small amount of alcohol once a week or once a month or even once a quarter, tend to consume alcohol at friends' houses, in bars or at home, and live in areas with sufficient or limited access to alcohol. These young people reported being influ-

enced by marketing techniques, being single, having no income or earning less than 50,000 CFA francs per month. They live in large or medium-sized households, drink alone without the company of others, for pleasure, to forget their problems, to strengthen social ties, to be accepted by others or because they have nothing else to do for part of the time.

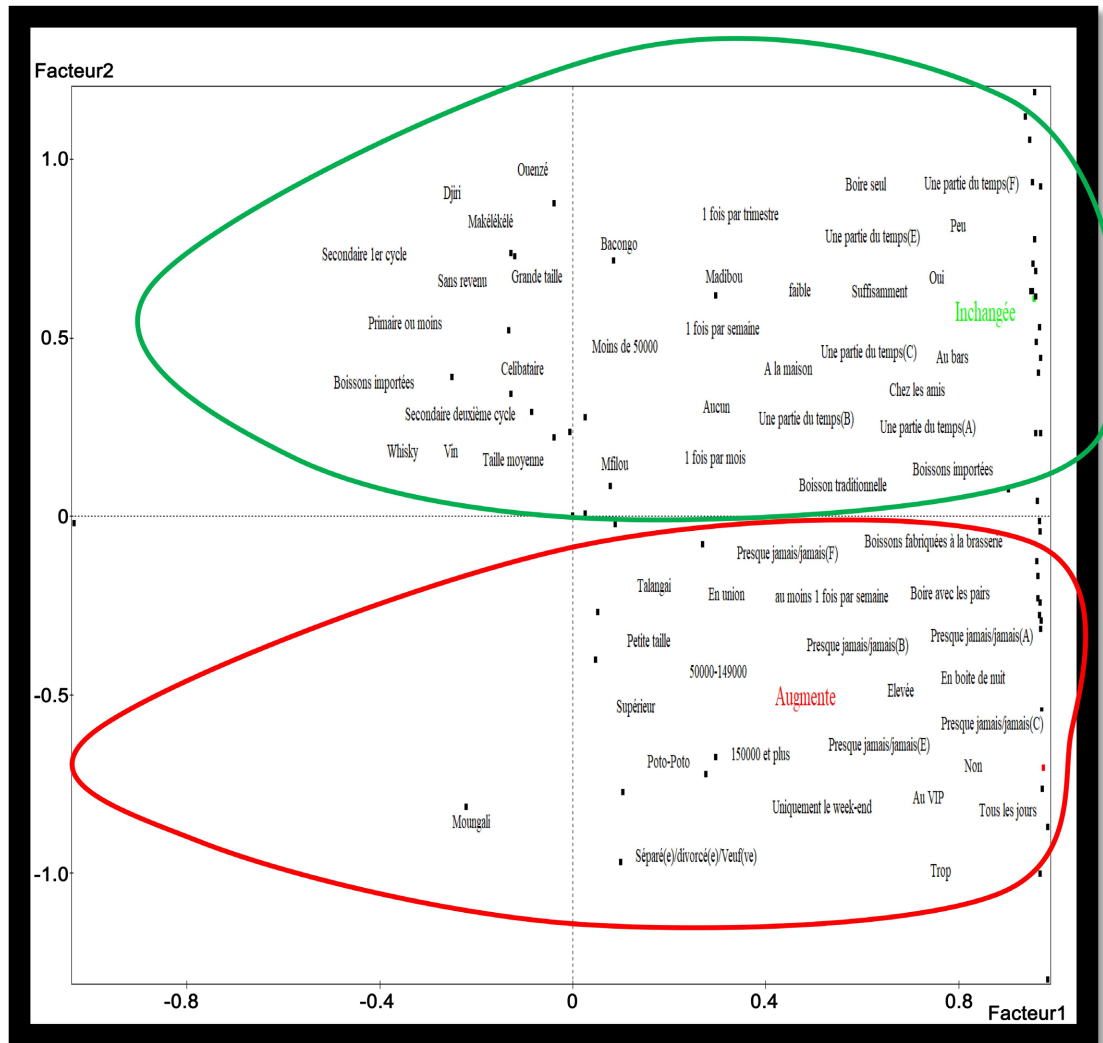


Figure 1. Characterisation of young people who vary their consumption during marketing. Source: authors (2025).

5. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to analyse the effects of marketing on alcohol consumption among young people in Brazzaville according to typical consumer profiles in the nine districts of Brazzaville. The variables used were socio-demographic, behavioural and environmental variables. Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) was used to map the associations between marketing variables and alcohol consumption and to identify typical profiles of young people according to their sensitivity to marketing in Brazzaville. The results of these analyses reveal two types of profiles of young people who react differently to marketing. Firstly, there is a

type that can be described as non-responsive or ritualised consumers, but who are aware. These are young people who live in Mounkali, Poto-poto and Talangaï. They have a higher level of education and an income greater than or equal to 50,000 CFA francs. Paradoxically, they claim not to be influenced by marketing, but they are the ones who increase their consumption the most. The only interpretation that can be made for this type of profile is that alcohol consumption may be so integrated into their lifestyle that they are unaware of the influence of marketing. Secondly, there is a type known as declared reactive young people or occasional consumers. These are young people who live in Makélékélé, Bacongo and Mfilou. They have a primary/secondary education and an income of less than 50,000 CFA francs. They are influenced by marketing, but stabilise their consumption because they have the ability to self-regulate.

Overall, this study shows that the effect of marketing is paradoxical. Young people who are supposed to be more influenced deny it, while young people who are influenced resist this influence.

Finally, we can say that marketing around alcoholic beverages in Brazzaville may lead young people to excessive consumption, but cannot be considered a determining factor in motivating alcohol consumption. This is because for some young people, their consumption will remain unchanged, meaning that whether there is marketing or not, they will drink the same amounts. For this type of young person, marketing has no influence on their consumption behaviour. They could be considered non-consumers. On the other hand, for other young people, discounted promotions are an opportunity to increase the amount of alcohol they purchase. They can therefore be considered consumers. This reinforces the idea that this variable influences the marketing practices of the alcohol industry.

In light of the conclusions of this study, we make the following recommendations:

- 1) Implement a social marketing strategy targeting actions in places where alcohol is commonly consumed.
- 2) Use peer testimonials from former heavy consumers to deter ritualised consumers;
- 3) Conduct educational workshops on marketing in schools;
- 4) Develop alcohol-free leisure activities to strengthen the psychosocial skills of occasional consumers.

As a regulatory intervention, prohibit promotional volume offers and propose increased taxation on the most commonly consumed beverages in the most frequented places of consumption.

6. Limitations and Future Prospects

Like all research, this study has certain limitations:

- 1) Methodological limitations: low total inertia of 30% of the explained scatter plot. The other uninterpreted axes may contain important information. The descriptive nature of the AFCM analysis method shows associations rather than

cause-and-effect relationships. Missing variables such as sales data to objectively measure exposure to marketing.

2) Data-related limitations: self-perception bias regarding the underestimation of marketing influence. The social taboo on underreporting alcohol consumption.

Future research prospects: to measure the relative weight of variables, AFCM could be supplemented by logistic regression. Conduct a longitudinal analysis to track changes in young people's profiles. The quantitative survey could be supplemented by qualitative interviews to understand the paradox of young people who are not influenced by marketing but who consume the most.

Finally, despite its descriptive limitations, the AFCM analysis used in this study is an essential first step and paves the way for future research in a mixed methodological framework on alcohol marketing in sub-Saharan Africa, integrating spatial, temporal and psychosocial dimensions. Other researchers may also be interested in behavioural economics studies, examining nudges as tools for persuading people to consume alcohol during marketing campaigns.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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