

# Alcohol policies and their perceived effectiveness in Botswana



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## Introduction

In Botswana, it seems that the country's alcohol consumption has reached very high proportions. In a study conducted by the National AIDS Coordinating agency, 64.4% of males in the study reported that they voluntarily engage in drinking as opposed to the 35.5% of females who reported voluntary drinking episodes (Pitso & Obot, 2011). Even so, alcohol consumption is still very prevalent in Botswana with 26.5% current drinkers, of which 21.9% and 15% are males and females respectively (MoTI, 2010). Of those who consume alcohol, 54% are binge drinkers who consume more than 5 drinks in one day. Therefore, it is very important to investigate the effectiveness of the policies on alcohol reduction and also to establish if certain policies are more or less effective than others.

Further research is needed if the people of Botswana are drinking in the same volumes and frequencies as they were prior to the introduction of these policies. The effect of higher prices could merely be a damaging effect on their financial position and not, in fact, a reduction of their alcohol consumption considering that in Botswana, on average, 20% of income is spent on alcohol.

## Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether the imposed alcohol policies in Botswana were effective in alcohol reduction and what are Botswana's perceptions of their effectiveness.

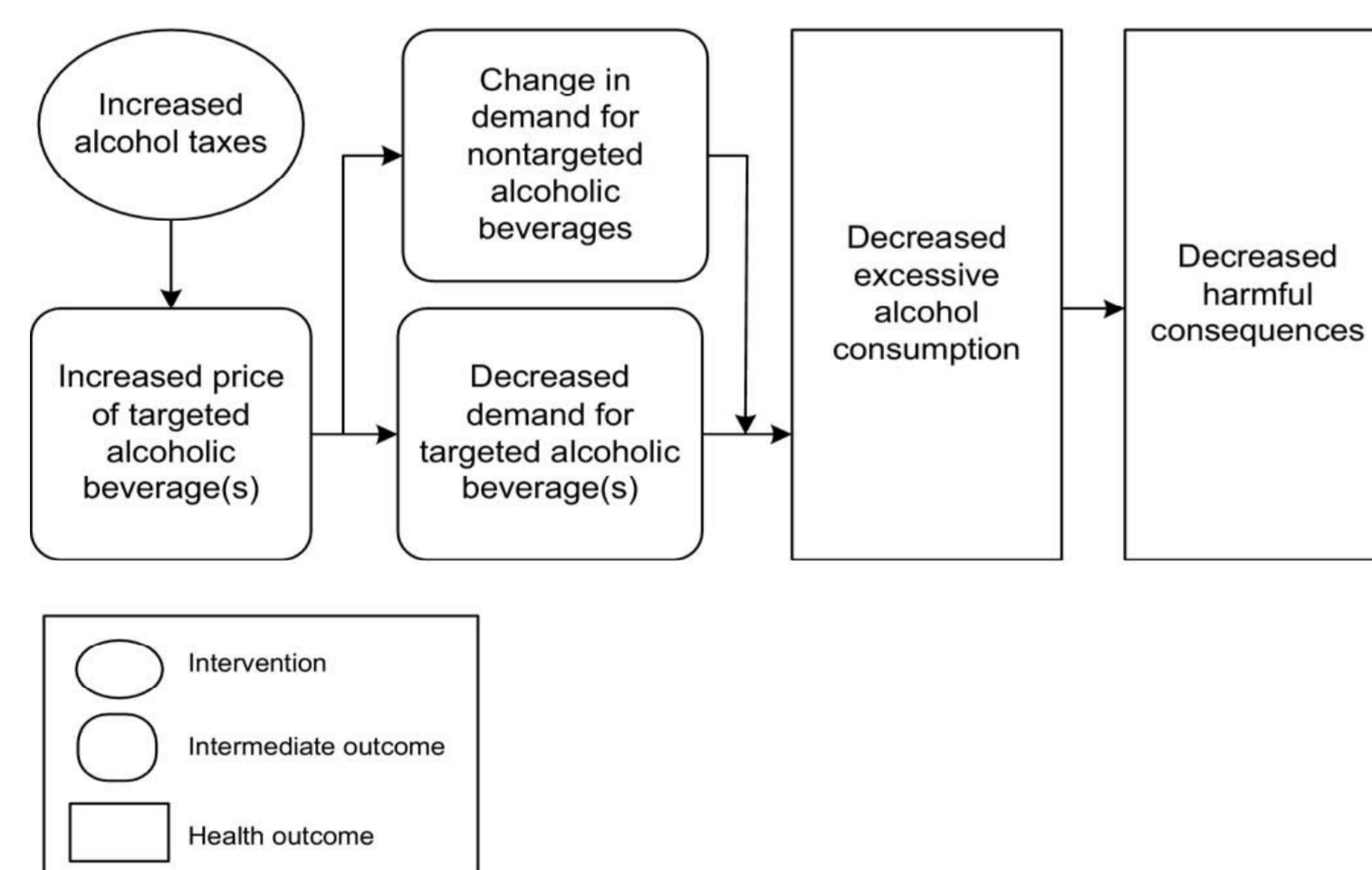


Figure 1. Conceptual model for the causal relationship between increased alcohol taxes and decreased excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

Figure 2. Burden of disease attributable to alcohol % DALYs in each subregion

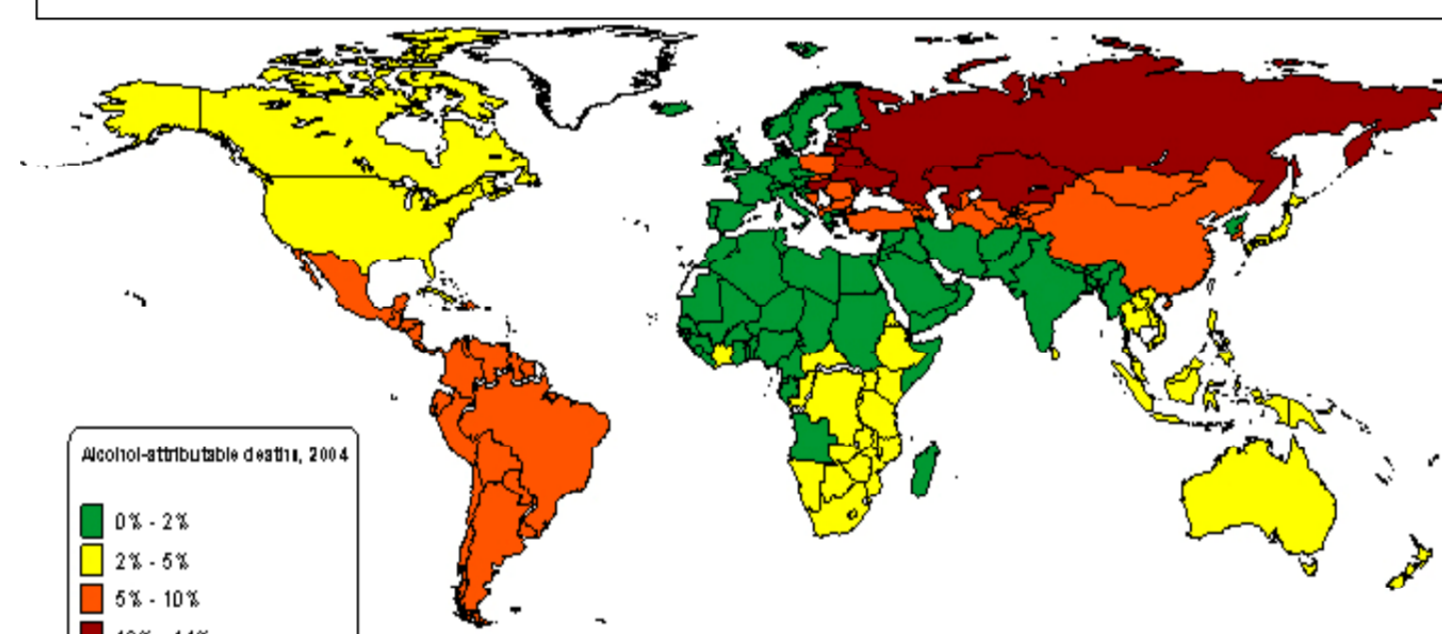


Figure 3 Number of assaults in hotel before and after extending working hours to 1 AM from 12 PM.

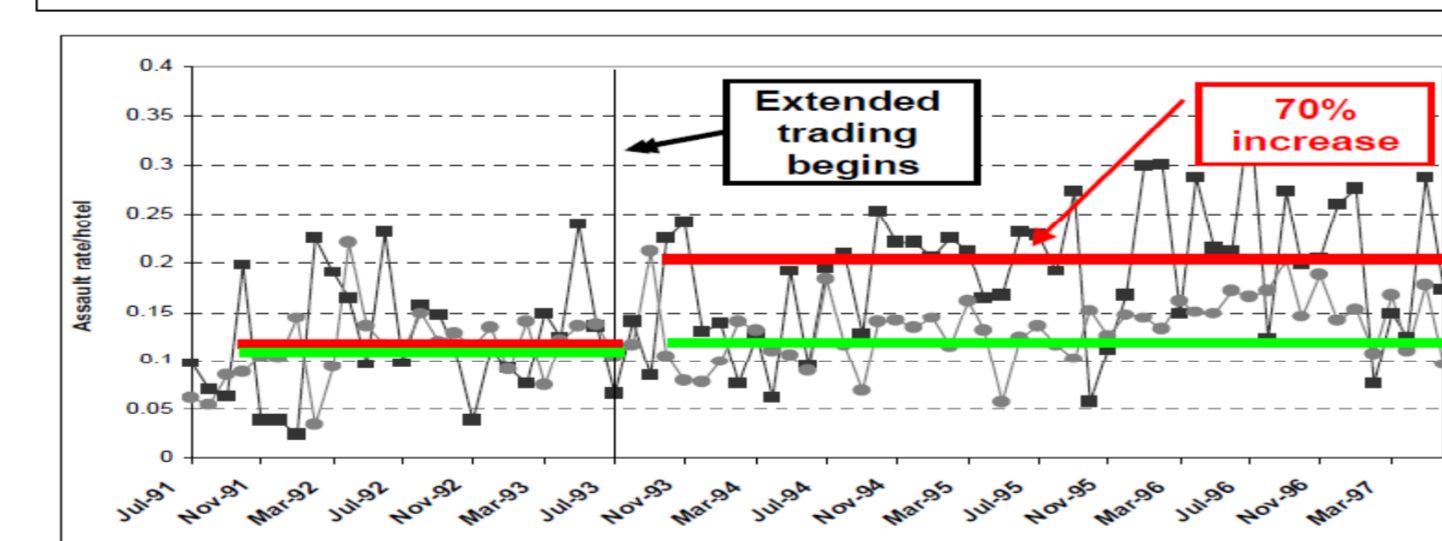
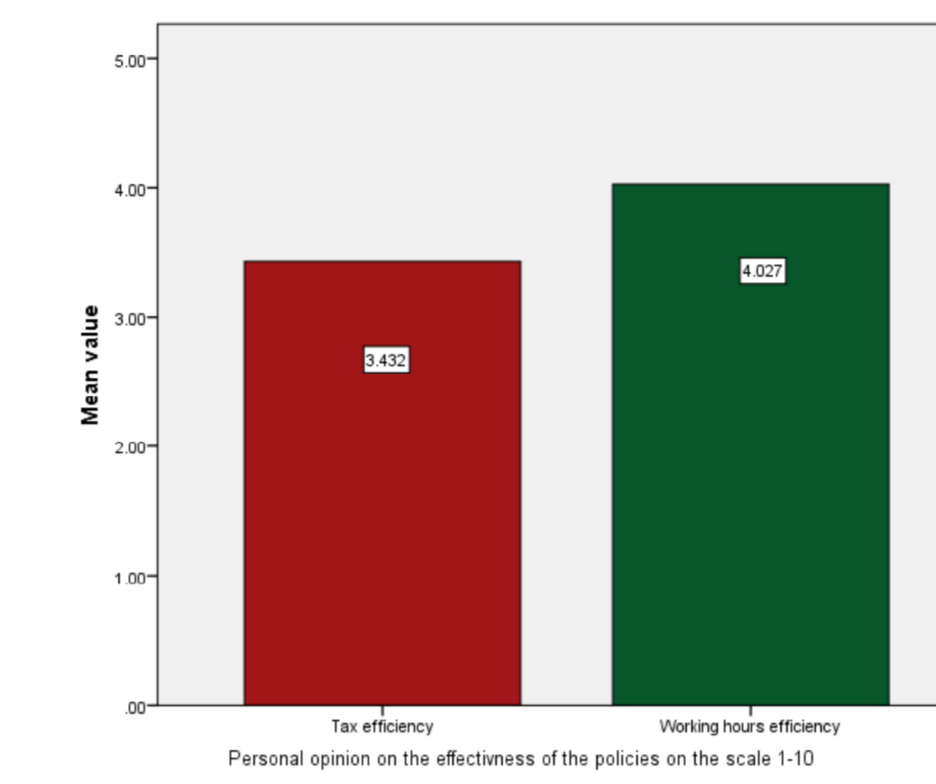


Figure 7.4 Assault rates for hotels that closed at 1 am [ ] and those that closed at midnight [ ] Perth, WA. Source: Chikritzis and Stockwell (2002).

## Methods (Arial: 32 Points, Bold)

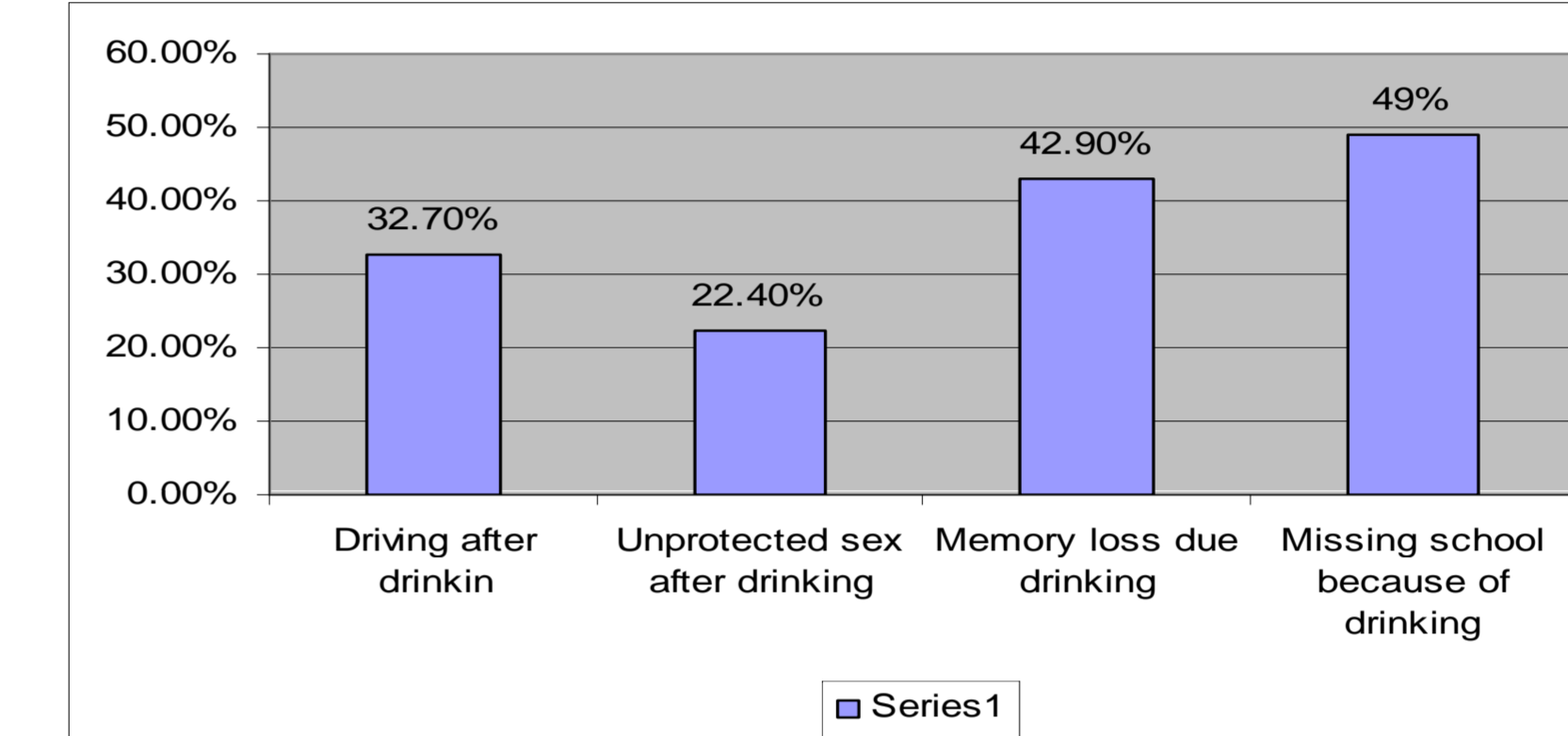
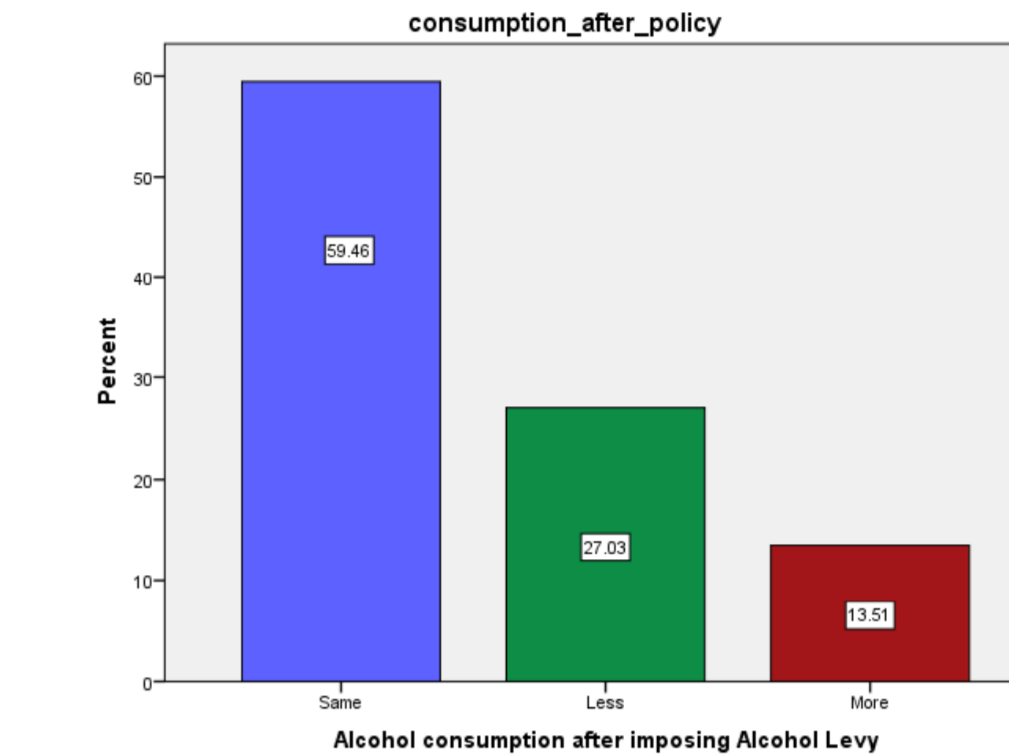
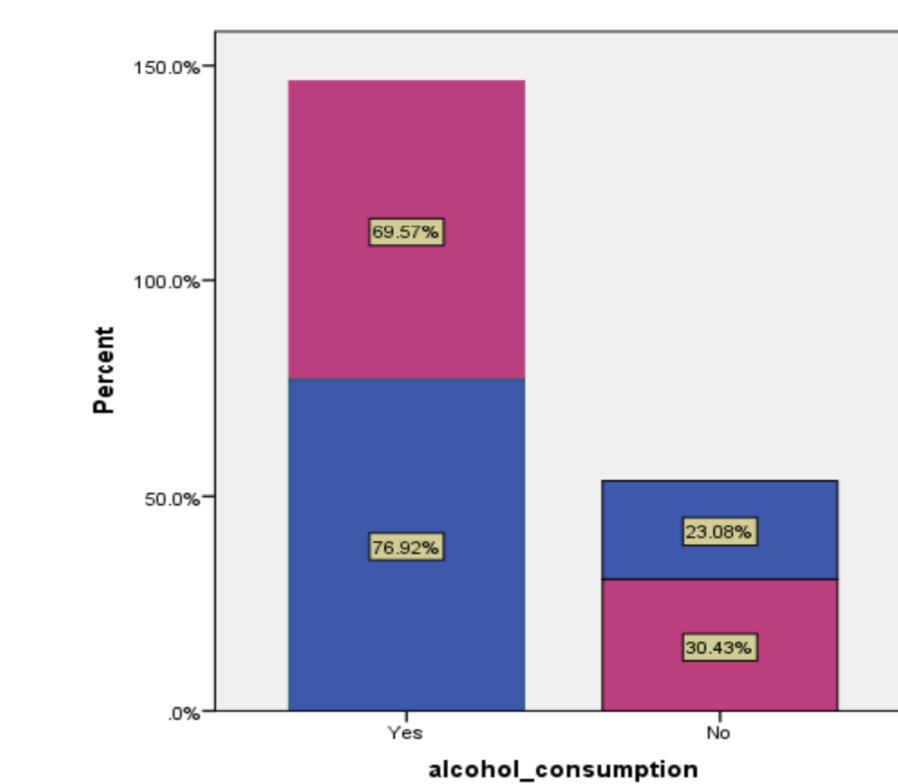
- over 6 weeks, 48 surveys and 2 interviews collected using convenience sampling
- quantitative data used investigate drinking habits of Botswana and if they changed after imposing tax on alcoholic beverages and decreasing working hours of the liquor stores.
- Survey consisted of 20 questions that addressed drinking habits and the participant's perception regarding the Alcohol Levy effectiveness in Botswana
- Semi-structured interviews conducted with bar owners and bartenders
- Participants were approached various UB locations, such as cafeteria, library and student center.
- There were no risks for the participants in the study; they were required to read and sign informed consent that reinforced them to withdraw from the study if they felt threatened



## Results

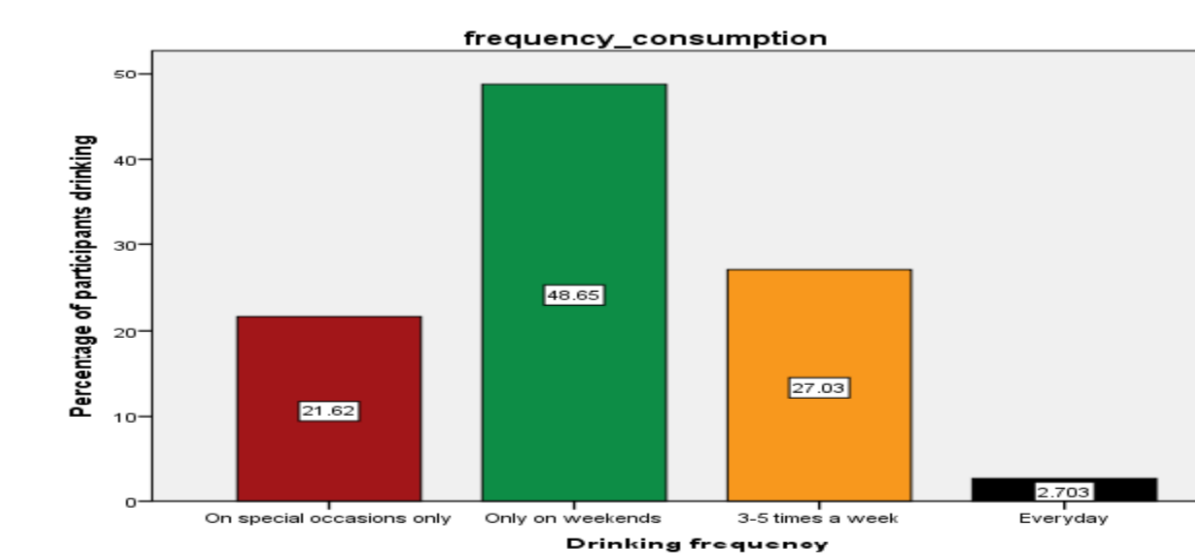
Out of all current drinkers 53.6% were males and 46.4% were females. 69.57% of females reported that they consume alcohol as opposed to 30.43% who are abstaining. 76.9% of males are consuming alcohol and 23.1% decided to abstain from it. Our study showed that 32.7% of participants have driven after drinking, 22.4% had unprotected sex, 42.9% had memory loss as a consequence of drinking while 49% missed school because of drinking. Most of the participants engaged in drinking only on weekend (48.65%) while significant percentage engaged in drinking 3-5 times a week in 27.03% of occurrences.

Almost 60% of participants reported they are drinking the same as they did before the tax was imposed as opposed to only 27% who reported they are drinking less than before due to the price increase. Both, price increase and decrease of working hours showed to be ineffective, while decrease of working hours policy was significantly more effective than increase in the price.



## Discussion

- Significantly more males consume alcohol
- Percentage of ones engaging in potentially harmful behavior explains Government's intention in reducing alcohol consumption through Alcohol Levy
- 59.46% of participants reported drinking in the same manner as before Alcohol Levy was imposed as opposed to 27.03% who reported drinking more and only 13.51% who reported drinking less. This suggests that Botswana tends to consume the same amount of alcohol regardless of the price and working hours of liquor stores
- Decrease in working hours of liquor stores showed to be inefficient in alcohol consumption, but significantly more efficient than increasing in price of alcohol through alcohol taxes,  $p < 0.05$ .
- Future studies should use longitudinal one-time series design that measures actual consumption before and after increase in tax for alcohol on participants that are randomly selected.



## Acknowledgments

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