

ANYWHERE, EVERYWHERE: ALCOHOL INDUSTRY PROMOTION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON YOUNG PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increase in alcohol marketing activities by the transnational alcohol corporations in Nigeria, little research has focused on their impact on young people's drinking behaviours. Using empirical data from in-depth interviews with 31, 19 to 23-year olds from a Nigerian university, this study explores students' awareness of promotional activities on and around campus and the extent to which sales promotion influences their alcohol consumption. The data were analysed to generate themes with the aid of NVivo software. Sales promotion is common on campus and around students' off-campus residential and leisure sites. Students' awareness of, and exposure to promotional activities were high, to the extent that they identified the sales promotion strategies that are particular to students' environments, the specific alcohol companies that use each strategy and the particular bars where promotions are held. Whilst sales promotions offering free alcohol and price discounts influenced men to buy and consume larger quantities of alcohol than they had intended, the actions of sales personnel also engendered impulse purchasing and the consumption of more potent brands. The women were also influenced by sales staff to consume more alcohol than originally planned, although their main motivation for participating in sales promotions was to win 'giveaways' such as cars, electronic gadgets and other branded paraphernalia. The findings indicate that while effective monitoring of alcohol promotions and related marketing strategies should be reinforced, the government may also give serious consideration to more evidence-based regulatory measures rather than relying on marketing self-regulations.

Key words: Alcohol Marketing, Nigeria, Policy, Sales Promotion, Students

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, research shows that students engage in heavy drinking rituals (Andrade et al., 2012; Kypri, Cronin, & Wright, 2005), and suffer diverse alcohol-related problems (Iwamoto, Cheng, Lee, Takamatsu, & Gordon, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2013). Growing evidence suggests that one of the reasons why alcohol consumption is high amongst students is due to the prevalence of marketing outlets, advertising, sales promotions and sponsorship of social events on campuses (Paek & Hove, 2012; Scribner et al., 2008; Stautz, Brown, King, Shemilt, & Marteau, 2016). Scholars (e.g. O'Brien et al., 2013; Ruddock, 2012) argue that these strategies facilitate the physical, economic and psychological availability of alcohol on campuses. Indeed, multinational alcohol corporations use sophisticated marketing tactics such as rebranding of glassware (Stead, Angus, Macdonald, & Bauld, 2014), price promotions (Babor et al., 2010; Gordon, Hastings, & Moodie, 2010; Hastings, Anderson, Cooke, & Gordon, 2005), giveaway alcohol-branded merchandise (Anderson, de Bruijn, Angus, Gordon, & Hastings, 2009; Hurtz, Henriksen, Wang, Feighery, & Fortmann, 2007), amongst others, to encourage young people (students and non-students) to initiate alcohol consumption or to use larger quantities if they already consume alcohol.

In Australia, scholars (e.g., Jones & Lynch, 2007; Jones, Barrie, Robinson, Allsop, & Chikritzhs, 2012; Pettigrew et al., 2015) revealed the ubiquity of point-of-sale promotions that offer free alcohol or price discounts and another where cash and other prizes are won. On the impact of sales promotion, evidence shows that those who participated in promotional

activities bought and consumed larger quantities of alcohol than those who did not participate (Jones, Barrie, Gregory, Allsop, & Chikritzhs, 2015). This is why Jones and Lynch (2007 p.478) argued that sales promotion engenders "a culture in which excessive alcohol consumption is seen as a norm".

In a comparative study of Australian, German and Welsh female university students' susceptibility to promotional activities, Sharma et al. (2013) noted that although sales promotions affected students from Australia and Germany, Welsh students were more likely to purchase alcohol during promotions, because of their intention to take advantage of price discounts. In the Philippines, Swahn et al. (2013) revealed that promotional activities offering free drinks to students encouraged drunkenness amongst them. Additionally, research in New Zealand showed that price reductions and branded paraphernalia are some of the marketing strategies companies employed to reach young people (McCreanor, Greenaway, Barnes, Borell, & Gregory, 2005), and similar findings and their impact on alcohol purchases have been reported in Scotland (Nakamura et al., 2014).

Amongst American college students, research shows that diverse sales promotion strategies such as price discounts, giveaways, coupons or tickets, used to attract students to alcohol outlets, pervade college campuses (Kuo, Wechsler, Greenberg, & Lee, 2003; Wechsler & Nelson, 2008). Evidence shows that these promotion strategies increase alcohol availability on campus and also exacerbate college students' level of intoxication (Thombs et al., 2009) and binge drinking (Kuo et al., 2003). Thombs et al. (2009) noted that as female students took advantage of 'drink

specials' to buy and consume alcohol, their male counterparts used more alcohol and drank for longer periods during promotions.

In the emerging markets of Africa, reviews (e.g. Babor, Robaina, & Jernigan, 2015; Jernigan & Babor, 2015) consistently show that the number of marketing activities of multinational alcohol companies is increasing in number, and this is exacerbating alcohol availability and its related problems. Empirical research conducted in Zambia found that alcohol marketing that promotes free drinks facilitated drunkenness amongst 11-16-year old students (Swahn, Ali, Palmier, Sikazwe, & Mayeya, 2011), and this corroborates Anderson et al.'s (2009, p.299) assertion that "alcohol...promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol". A related study (Swahn, Palmier, & Kasirye, 2013) amongst Ugandan youths found that marketers offer branded paraphernalia and free drinks. Additionally, Swahn et al. (2013 p.5) indicated that receiving free drinks resulted in "current alcohol use, problem drinking and drunkenness". One significant feature of the African continent is that alcohol marketing is largely unregulated due to a lack of alcohol control policies in many countries (World Health Organization- WHO, 2014). Although a few countries have alcohol policies, they are often lax or not enforced by the government (Ferreira-Borges et al., 2015; WHO, 2014) due to economic interests.

Alcohol Marketing in Nigeria

In Nigeria, there is a dearth of empirical research on sales promotions, but available studies revealed that alcohol

marketing activities targeting young men and women (Obot, 2013), especially students (Umoh, Obot, & Obot, 2012; Dumbili, 2015; 2016a) are increasing in number. In addition to being a part of the emerging markets, one other reason for the rise in marketing activities is that there is an increase in number of alcohol companies in Nigeria. For example, in addition to the multinational alcohol corporations such as the 'Nigerian Breweries/Heineken' and 'Guinness Nigeria' that were established in 1946 and 1962 respectively, other companies such as SABMiller and "Tradall SA" have fairly recently established their businesses in the country (Dumbili, 2015b; Obot, 2013).

Consequently, extreme competitions to gain and/or maintain brand loyalty amongst these companies have ensued, resulting in the burgeoning use of multi-platform strategies to sell their brands (de Bruijn, 2011; Dumbili, 2015a). Another reason is that Nigeria does not have written national alcohol control policies (WHO, 2014); thus, sales promotion is unregulated. Relatedly, alcohol advertising is not directly regulated by the government (Dumbili & Williams, 2017). Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON- an agency which registers practitioners, assesses advertising materials and recognizes self-regulations (APCON, 2014)) regulates advertising on behalf of the government (de Bruijn, Ferreira-Borges, Engels, & Bhavsar, 2014). Although the government recommended age at which alcohol can be purchased is 18 years, anybody can purchase alcohol in Nigeria because there is no effective means of proof of age (Dumbili, 2014). Due to this weak regulatory environment, alcohol companies have greater scope to engage in different promotional (Obot, 2013),

and other marketing activities (Dumbili & Williams, 2017; Dumbili, 2016b), many of which breach international standards (Farrell & Gordon, 2012).

To a large extent, this contributes to the easy accessibility (Obot, 2013) and the (mis)use of alcohol amongst Nigerian youths. According to WHO (2014), Nigeria ranks second in Africa for per capita consumption, and different patterns of, and motives for alcohol use amongst youths, especially students (Chikere & Mayowa, 2011; Dumbili, 2015c) and their consequences such as accidents and injuries to self and others are noticeable (Abayomi, Babalola, Olakulehin, & Ighoroje, 2016; Dumbili, 2015b). As indicated earlier, despite that a few studies on alcohol marketing exist, there is a paucity of empirical research on how sales promotion influences young people in Nigeria. This exploratory study attempts to fill this gap. The study explores two interrelated objectives. First, it examines the awareness of sales promotion amongst students aged 19-23 years in a Nigerian university. Second, it explores the extent to which sales promotion is perceived by the participants to facilitate students' alcohol consumption.

METHOD

Drawing on a large research exploring the interplay between young people's media consumption and alcohol use, the role of alcohol marketing in students' drinking behaviour and the gendering of alcohol, this paper focuses on the role alcohol marketing plays in students' drinking. The study was conducted on a university campus located in a city of Anambra State, south-eastern Nigeria. The Nigerian university and the Brunel University Lon-

don Ethics Board approved the study before the first author (DWE- a male, Nigerian) collected data between September and December 2013.

The participants were recruited from nine faculties on the university campus using word-of-mouth and snowballing methods. DWE used a word-of-mouth approach to recruit the majority of participants. A further five participants were recruited through friendship networks, which proved to be particularly successful methods of recruitment in relation to female participants. Alcohol consumption among young people is a sensitive topic in Nigeria. Young people, especially females are often reluctant to participate in such studies, and reaching them through any means that may expose their identity will hinder their participation. Indeed, this is related to the recruitment of only nine female participants. All participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Participants, interviews and data analysis

In-depth interviews lasting 33-90 minutes were conducted by DWE with 31 (22 males and 9 females) undergraduate students (aged 19-23 years), who are of legal drinking age (i.e. 18years and above). These 31 participants were current drinkers (defined as having consumed alcohol at least once in the last 30 days). The interviews were conducted in English, were recorded with a digital device with the permission of the participants. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following Silverman (2011), a preliminary analysis was initiated immediately after the first interview. The field notes and audio recordings were reviewed to check for accuracy and

to identify additional areas to explore further in subsequent interviews.

Tentative coding schemes were developed at an early stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with initial extracts categorised into broad themes and subthemes, providing an early grasp of the data (Morse, 2012). Some of these subthemes grouped manually became the parent nodes while others were condensed (Saldaña, 2012) into different child nodes that formed the 'thematic coding framework' when the data were imported into NVivo 10 software. When the 31 interviews were completed, the transcripts were read many times, and searches were made in order to identify patterns of meaning in the data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To enhance consistency and coherence, this process was repeated a number of times (Holloway & Todres, 2003) before coding was completed. Collaborative analysis between DWE, CW and another senior academic was also adopted to ensure analytical rigour (Cornish, Gillespie, & Zitoun, 2014). Here, DWE, CW and another academic met several times to discuss the coded data, the themes and subthemes that were identified. The key themes that were identified through these processes are presented in the section below.

RESULTS

Anywhere, everywhere, promotion is visible

The participants were asked to share their knowledge about alcohol marketing on this campus and in the city where the university is located. Although they mentioned seeing alcohol advertising on campus, the most discussed marketing strategy amongst all participants was sales

promotion. In their words: *promo is not scarce* and *anywhere you go you'll see promos*. Many argued that it was not only common on this campus, but that it was also prevalent in other drinking spaces around students' off-campus hostels:

Promotion is happening; it's not scarce. There's this bar called [name of a bar] at [a popular site]; they normally do it every week... Maybe 'Star' [beer] will do this week, and next week might be 'Gulder' [beer]... They do promos where you drink two bottles, and they give you a 'raffle ticket', and anything you win, they'll give it to you (Ejike, male).

They do promo often...; let me say every night, because when the students resume fully, there is one bar down school called [name of bar]. It depends on the brand, but 'Harp' and 'Star' beers always do it there every night (Buchii, male).

The fact that promotional activities are widespread on this campus and its surroundings permeated the data, to the extent that all the participants were able to mention at least one strategy of sales promotion they knew. Whilst a few participants spoke in generic terms, using words and phrases such as 'promos', 'promotion' or 'alcohol promotion' to indicate that sales promotion is popular, others specifically mentioned the strategies they considered the most common:

...I know that any bar you go to, you'll see alcohol promotion... I have friends who drink regularly and when they come back [from the bar], they will be like, 'I went to this bar, and

there was a promo of 'buy-two-get one-free', or 'what-you-see-is-what-you-win'... (Favour, male).

Alcohol promo is always going on here... Promotion is one major reason why people take alcohol, due to the 'buy-two-get-one-free' or 'buy-one-get-different-gifts' [prizes], which are rife... (Pretty, female)

Some of the male participants (whose female friends worked as 'beer promoters'- (see Dumbili, 2016b) revealed their perceptions of how sales promotion is planned and executed. For example, one of them stated that alcohol producers through their marketing representatives monitor sales, and if they discover that a particular brand is not receiving enough patronage, the producer will initiate a promotion to encourage buyers. Other male participants also added that they not only use the buy-two-get-one-free strategy, but they also combine it with price discounts. As such, students patronise them not only because the more you buy, the higher the numbers of free bottles you receive, but also due to the 'price specials'. Many participants also revealed that this type of promotion is rife mostly on campuses, especially when alcohol producers introduce new products to the market. They indicated that alcohol companies or outlet owners specifically initiate sales promotions that are not common outside student environments.

Whilst some of the participants noted that the aforementioned 'quantity deals' and 'drink specials' sales promotions are popular on campus, others highlighted the giveaway branded paraphernalia and other prizes that often accompany these strategies:

...Like in the last two months..., a bar where we guys normally go to drink had this promo where if you drink two bottles of Star beer you actually get a chance to have a 'lucky dip'. You dip into a container; a small container where you pick a paper, and when you open it, you actually win [what is written on the paper]. I mean you win something nice like umbrellas, T-shirts and free drinks... Almost every bar normally has this promo (Boniface, male).

...There is this stout that is doing it; if you buy a drink, you come and pick a paper. If you open the paper, they have gifts to give you like television sets, fridges, 'standing fans'... So the more you drink, the more chances you have to win... (Chimanda, female)

Indeed, another strategy of sales promotion was described by the participants, who noted that marketers employ the services of local artistes and DJs to play music for students to engage in dancing competitions:

...They come to do promotions here on campus; they will bring music for people to dance [dancing competition]. They do promos for students to dance and win phones, and sometimes you win drinks. They do it because it's something that will bring out [encourage] students [to drink] (Chisalum, female)

One of the most insightful dimensions of the data is that both male and female participants were aware that sales promotions, especially the ones that appear

to be sponsored by alcohol producers are publicised through television channels, and this appears to make them more popular and also increases their exposures and receptivity. In addition to the strategies noted above, they also identified another aspect of sales promotion, where 'secret codes' are concealed under 'crown corks'. For example:

...If you want to win something, you have to drink and open the crown cork. They want people to win, and that means that you have to drink more [bottles], and the thing [prize] encourages people to drink... (Chisalum, female)

The participants stated that in this type of promotion, more expensive prizes such as cars, money, shopping trips to Dubai or to European city to see a UEFA Champions League match can be won. Another insightful part of their accounts is that nearly all of the participants mentioned the names of the multinational alcohol companies that use this sales promotion strategy, suggesting that their awareness of promotional activities is high. To demonstrate the level of students' receptivity to promotions, one of the participants narrated how he had witnessed a fight during this type of promotion:

Promotion is very popular, and you see it all the time. It is what everybody knows because I noticed a lady and a guy... fighting over a crown cork just because of... gifts [prizes] they hope to win (Edulim, male).

Their accounts also reveal that whilst most of these promotions are held in bars and other drinking spaces such as

hotels and students' eateries, others are done through the use of companies' vans to drive around off-campus sites where students reside. That is, companies' sales representatives move around with sales personnel from one spot to another selling their brands and offering free drinks and other prizes such as branded T-shirts and caps to those who purchase their products. They also use this channel to invite students to the bars where promotions are held:

...When you're walking down the street to your lecture hall, you'll see a van. It is [promoting] either one brand of alcoholic drink or another, and they will be shouting on top of their voices, describing this promo or that promo, and telling people that they should come to this bar [where promotions are held]...(Favour, male).

Indeed, one of the participants who had revealed that sales promotions are popular on campus described how she had applied to work for an alcohol producer as a 'beer promoter'. Based on her experience, she noted that students' awareness of, and susceptibility to sales promotions are high, and when she was asked to explain why alcohol promotion is common on campus and why students like to participate, she said:

The main reason is because this is a student environment and a very good site for marketing such products. They go to other schools too. They see youths as their major target, so wherever they come around here people patronise them a lot, and being students as we are, we like free

things... So when you see someone marketing a product that is cheaper, and it might even get you a gift, you tend to patronise them even if you didn't originally intend to... (Pretty, female)

These accounts suggest that promotion is widespread on this campus, and both male and female students are aware of them. The participants also revealed that multiple sales outlets (e.g., bars) are located around student environments, and this appears to facilitate sales promotions and students' awareness of, and exposure to them.

Influence on alcohol use

The participants not only demonstrated that they were aware of the diverse sales promotion strategies around them, but many shared different experiences about how promotions had influenced them to consume alcohol:

...That was 'Life beer' when they did that 150 naira stuff [promo]. I actually entered the bar and requested Life [beer] and drank two [bottles], and they gave me one free bottle. On that day, the only brand on the tables was Life beer. You know students will always be students; any way they see to have the edge over someone, they'll do it. That's why we are students...(Boniface, male).

For many participants, sales promotion is perceived to have also influenced their change of brands. For example, one of the male participants drew on his recent experience to show how he and his friends changed brands after being persuaded by a saleslady:

...Last two months, one of my friends decided to take us out to drink. We were supposed actually to get Star and Hero [beer] but a lady approached us and was like, 'do you want to buy beer?' And we were like, 'we are already buying'. She said that she was from 'Legend stout' and that she was doing a promo of 'buy-two-get-one-free'. We were six guys, and the six of us had planned to have an average of two bottles each. So, everybody changed immediately. Everyone said, 'we'll have two bottles of Legend', and they gave us one more bottle each too. And then everyone actually drank three bottles instead of two (Chike, male).

In this study, we found that young people use the consumption of large quantities of alcohol to construct a range of gender identities in leisure spaces. The data revealed that what mattered most among men is the 'number of bottles' of an alcoholic beverage (mostly beer and stout) one consumes and not necessarily its potency. In this light, men strived to outdrink their peers in each drinking episode, to the extent that one of them had to change his brand from stout (that is more potent) to beer just to remain competitive (Dumbili, 2015c). Although the consumption of large quantities of alcohol permeated our data, the participants nonetheless demonstrated their awareness of the risks associated with heavy drinking. As the accounts above revealed, the integration of promotions into young people's leisure spaces and cultures which valorise free drinks as an integral part of daily life may exacerbate alcohol misuse among those who already use alcohol.

Additionally, many participants described the ways in which the combination of quantity deals and price discounts that were attached to a new product affected their drinking:

Actually, the drink that I had the opportunity of participating in their promotion was a new drink. I can't even remember the name because it's new. Just to give it a trial, [I decided to participate]. So if you buy two [bottles], they'll give you one free. Again, they sold it at 130 or 160 Naira [instead of 200 Naira] which was very cheap... We went there to catch fun..., so it made us buy more drinks that particular day (Jacob, male).

Our analysis shows the association between *taste* and *identity positioning*. Men, for instance, were found to use the reality of being the first among friendship networks to taste a new brand to construct superior masculine identity. In fact, tasting a new brand and afterward introducing it to one's friends during *masculinist banter* appeared to be embedded in men's drinking rituals on this campus (Dumbili & Williams, 2017). The prestige associated with this resonates in the fact that the person is seen as possessing *knowledge capital* (i.e. the ability to outsmart others). Because the number of the alcohol industry and their new brands are growing in Nigeria, this may contribute to the normalisation of drinking among young people on this campus.

More than half of the participants also revealed that quantity deal strategies had exacerbated their friends' alcohol use. For example, Ada drew on the experience of a friend to show how this strategy meant that he consumed more alcohol than he intended:

He went to the bar, took a bottle of Star [beer], and they told him that if he took more than two bottles, they would give him an extra bottle. That meant that he then started drinking so that they would give him extra bottles (Ada, female).

As indicated above, whilst some of the participants recalled that 'quantity deal' and 'drink specials' strategies meant that they or their friends drank more alcohol than originally planned, others described the reason why promotions offering free drinks were very influential:

...You know that we students like 'awu-ufu' [free things]... Maybe if you go to a 'beer parlour' [a bar], and they tell you that before you can get one free [bottle], you need to buy two bottles, instead of buying one, I can say, okay let me have two so that I can get one free... (Buchi, male)

One of the interesting common features in the data is that seven female participants also stated that the offer of free drinks was difficult to resist. For example:

...They will feel like, 'if I should buy two I will get one free', and they will definitely go to the place [bar] where they will buy two and get one free. And that extra one will make them drink another extra free bottle (Chioma, female).

The data indicate that these strategies influenced males' alcohol intake more than the females, and this may be because as they indicated, free alcohol is difficult to resist, and also because beer brands that are mainly consumed by males are

promoted more often to men. The participants stated that in the bars where sales promotions take place, alcohol producers or marketers add glamour by organising social events such as “show your talent”, concerts or parties. These events attract more students, especially those who originally had no intention of drinking, but who may consume alcohol on such occasions, because of the diverse sales promotions and the salespersons, who often encourage bar patrons to buy alcohol.

Changing brands to win prizes

Although quantity deals and price specials influenced participants to buy and use alcohol, some of them recalled how other sales promotion strategies including branded paraphernalia and expensive prizes such as cars and electronic gadgets also influenced their drinking. A culturally specific aspect of our data showed that whilst quantity deals influenced mainly men to purchase and consume more alcohol (as indicated above), the sales promotion strategy where branded merchandise could be won influenced women more, to the extent that some of them changed their brands and consumed beer. For example, a female participant who had identified ‘Smirnoff Ice’ (ready-to-drink alcoholic beverage) as her favourite brand, explained how she participated in the ‘open-and-win’ sales promotion in order to win giveaways:

The promo that has affected my drinking pattern is the one that you open a beer bottle, and you win anything [you see]. So most of the time, people just drink to open the cover [crown cork] so they might win... We students see it as an opportunity to win a car or something else... During

this promo, you’ll see people rushing to that brand of alcohol particularly just to win. So it makes you drink more of that particular alcohol... (Pretty, female)

Interviewer: Can you say a little more on why you changed your brand?

Everybody wants to be a winner...; I attended a function where there were varieties of alcoholic beverages but because that particular alcohol company was doing an open-and-win promo, I decided to go for the brand so that I could win something by chance (Pretty, female).

Another participant who had participated in this type of promotion described how her friend consumed more alcohol than planned because she wanted to win a prize:

...I went to see one of my friends, and she gave me a T-shirt. I now said, ‘where did you get it from?’ She said, ‘I was drinking, and a girl came to me and said, if you drink [more], you’ll have something to win’. So she was motivated to drink [more] because she wanted to get it [the prize]... And there are some chances to win big things. Some will promise you a fridge, and you will be like... ‘okay, let me keep drinking, I might be lucky today’. So... it is making people drink more... (Chimanda, female)

Together, these accounts shed light on sales promotion strategies, some of the motivations for young people’s participation and how they contribute to the use of alcohol amongst students.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the increasing commercialization of alcohol on this campus and throughout Nigeria may be encouraging alcohol consumption in some Nigerian students. The findings show that promotional activities are common on this campus and also on students' off-campus residential and leisure sites, and students are aware of, and exposed to diverse sales promotion strategies. That sales promotion is popular on this campus supports Thombs et al.'s (2009) and Kuo et al.'s (2003) assertions that promotional activities often pervade campuses. The experiences of these participants not only indicated that promotional activities are common, but it also showed that they were well aware of the various sales promotion strategies that alcohol companies employ to reach this market, a factor that can be attributed to the globalization of alcohol marketing by global alcohol companies (Babor et al., 2010; Jernigan, 2010). Another factor that revealed participants' sophisticated level awareness of sales promotions is that they were able to identify the specific alcohol companies that engage in promotional activities, how these companies plan and execute each sales promotion and the bars where promotions are held.

While Pettigrew et al. (2015) found no clear evidence on whether alcohol retailers intentionally target youths with the strategies they identified in their study, the results of this study suggest otherwise, because participants stated that alcohol companies and retailers deliberately target students with unique strategies that are uncommon outside student settings. Globally, research shows that alcohol companies target youths (students

and non-students) with diverse marketing strategies (O'Brien et al., 2014; Babor et al., 2010; Jernigan, 2010), and their deliberate focus on the Nigerian youths is arguably to encourage them to drink, because alcohol use amongst this group is widely taboo in Nigeria. In the traditional era (i.e., before alcohol industry was established in Nigeria in 1946 and marketing of alcohol to youths started to grow), alcohol consumption amongst youths was not popular (Odejide, Ohaeri, Adelekan, & Ikuesan, 1987) due to the socio-cultural beliefs that "alcohol consumption was a sign of being an elder" (Heap, 1998 p.29). Additionally, adult women were restrained from drinking in many communities (Umunna, 1967). These beliefs, to a large extent, are resilient in contemporary Nigeria, especially in rural areas where young people live with their parents or guardians (Dumbili, 2015a). However, upholding such beliefs amongst youths, who are studying in cities, and as such are under little or no parental control, is becoming difficult, especially in the face of aggressive marketing activities (Dumbili, 2016a; Obot, 2013).

Similarly, the findings indicated that one factor that appears to encourage the growth in promotional activities is the numerous bars and other outlets that are strategically located around the campus. Studies conducted in Western countries found that the proximity of alcohol outlets on campus increased easy accessibility of alcohol, students' heavy episodic drinking and alcohol-related harms (Kypril, Bell, Hay, & Baxter, 2008). Although cultural context of alcohol, drinking practices, the regulatory landscape, and the nature of university students vary widely among countries, it can be argued that these outlets are exacerbating the easy

accessibility of alcohol and its consumption amongst these Nigerian students.

The findings also indicated that students may be susceptible to sales promotion strategies which influence them in terms of consuming larger quantities of alcohol than originally planned. Additionally, in this study, the sales promotion strategies appeared to produce gendered effects. For example, amongst men, the results reveal that quantity deals (e.g., buy-two-get-one free) encouraged them to consume more bottles of beer than they planned. Similarly, price discounts also resulted in the consumption of large quantities of alcohol. As marketing scholars argue, promotional activities, especially on products that have hedonic values (i.e., products that mainly provoke sensual or bodily pleasure) encourage more purchases (Kacen, Hess, & Walker, 2012; Liao, Shen, & Chu, 2009). Similarly, substance research shows that quantity deals and price specials encouraged more alcohol purchases (Jones et al., 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2015), higher consumption (Jones & Lynch, 2007) and binge drinking (Kuo et al., 2003), although these studies were conducted in different contexts and did not focus on their gendered effects.

Again, the activities of sales personnel influenced the interviewees to make impulse purchases, a recognised marketing strategy (Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013; Muruganatham & Bhakat, 2013). Substance scholars also found that alcohol outlet staff can motivate impulse buying, which often increases the quantities of alcohol bought and consumed by youths (Pettigrew et al., 2015). In Nigeria, Dumbili (2016b) reported that alcohol companies and marketers are beginning to employ young and 'beautiful' women,

who they train to encourage men to buy and consume more alcohol.

Interestingly, the actions of the sales personnel in this study facilitated the consumption of more potent alcohol, in that the men changed their brands from beer to stout, which contains a higher alcohol percentage. Despite the fact that no definition of 'standard drinks' exists in Nigeria due to the lack of written alcohol policies (WHO, 2014), beer brands in the country contain between 5.1% and 5.5% alcohol by volume (ABV) while stouts contain 7.5% ABV (Dumbili, 2015c). Therefore, encouraging bar patrons to use more potent alcohol by promoting and upselling them a particular brand may be contributing to the heavy episodic drinking and alcohol-related problems that are increasing in Nigeria (Abayomi et al., 2016).

Amongst the females, an unexpected finding was that they were also influenced by sales promotion strategies and sales staff to consume alcohol, to the extent that they drank beer (which they would not ordinarily drink due to socio-cultural beliefs (Dumbili, 2015c)) in a bid to win branded merchandize. Although women's alcohol consumption is less stigmatised in contemporary Nigeria, consumption norms categorise beer as 'men's alcohol', and women who consume it can be labelled 'transgressors of femininity' (Dumbili, 2015c). Therefore, switching over to beer brands because of promotional prizes is unexpected, and can be theorised as contributing to a culturally specific understanding of the power of sales promotion and how it can produce gendered effects. Again, this suggests that alcohol marketing acquires specific meanings within particular contexts.

According to Casswell and Maxwell (2005 p.349), marketing "messages are

received and understood in the contexts of the recipients' lived experience". Pettigrew et al. (2015, p.116) also noted that the "primary function of sales promotion is to stimulate demand through the use of temporary sales tactics that include... gifts of related merchandise..." As the accounts of these women indicated, their participation in sales promotions was influenced primarily by expensive prizes such as cars, electric gadgets and money, in contrast to their male counterparts who were influenced mostly by free drinks. One undeniable fact is that the level of poverty is high in Nigeria, and women are more vulnerable due to gender inequalities (Fawole, 2008). As such, the unrealistic fantasies (cash and other expensive giveaways) that transnational alcohol industries propagate to sell their brands may be motivating their participation in promotional activities, and this may be contributing to women's intake of large quantities of alcohol that not only have health consequences but also social risks, especially in a patriarchal society like Nigeria. Indeed, the consequences of consuming large quantities of alcohol by adolescents or young adults have been well documented internationally. These include accidents, injuries, poor academic performance, sexual risk-taking (Danielsson, Wennberg, Hibell, & Romelsjö, 2012) and poor brain development (Ewing, Sakhardande, & Blakemore, 2014; Squeglia et al., 2015).

This study has a number of limitations. First, it did not elicit data from many females (due to the sensitive nature of the topic), and the study is further limited by its small sample. Quantitative studies should be conducted among the Nigerian student populations to identify the roles promotion plays in students' drinking.

Second, the study relied upon data elicited via self-reporting and did not observe how sales promotions were held in bars. Studies that directly observe sales promotions at drinking sites and the activities of sales personnel on campuses are needed.

Our findings support calls for effective monitoring of sales promotions that are specifically targeted at students. While our findings do not in themselves point to the recommendation of stringent measure in Nigeria (because of our limited sample), it is one option to be considered. As such, Nigerian government might consider formulating and implementing evidenced-based alcohol control policies, paying careful attention to alcohol marketing. Nakamura et al. (2014) noted that England, Scotland and Wales have banned price promotions. It can be suggested that the Nigerian government, which has never seriously attempted to regulate alcohol production or marketing via written and comprehensive policies (Ferreira-Borges et al., 2015) might also consider replacing self-regulation with strict policies on marketing activities that target young people and other vulnerable groups.

For comprehensive and evidence-based policies to be implemented, studies exploring whether the types of sales promotions that are initiated by alcohol companies produce different effects from that of outlet owners should be conducted. Studies should also be conducted in universities in other Nigerian regions, particularly as some of the strategies reported are executed nationally by alcohol companies. It is hoped that these findings will aid discussions around the effective monitoring and regulation of alcohol marketing that targets youth, instead of relying on the existing marketing self-regulations.

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