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## **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

# TELEVISION ADVERTISING AND PROFILE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

# PUBLICIDADE TELEVISIVA E PERFIL DE CONSUMO DE BEBIDAS ALCOÓLICAS DE **UNIVERSITÁRIOS**

LA PUBLICIDAD TELEVISIVA Y EL PERFIL DE CONSUMO DE ALCOHOL POR ESTUDIANTES **UNIVERSITARIOS** 

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Objective: to describe the sociodemographic profile and consumption of alcoholic beverages by university students. Method: this is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study, at a government university. Data were collected from a structured form and analyzed by SPSS 21.0. Absolute and relative frequencies were calculated for categorical variables presented in the tables. *Results*: of 243 students, 77% were women, 68.8% were between 18 and 24 years and 69.1% were unmarried; 90% of participants are unaware of restriction policies relating to alcoholic beverages and 45% of those who know mentioned the Lei Seca. Regarding consumption, 43% claimed alcoholism, 41% reported parties as the main incentive for consumption, 61% consume beer, 68% drink socially and 23.6% reported entertainment as a product of satisfaction. *Conclusion*: the students' profile consists of women, young people, mothers, alcoholics socially, who are unaware of restriction policies for the consumption of alcoholic beverages and reported entertainment as a product of this consumption. Descriptors: Advertising as subject; Alcoholic Beverage Consumption; University; Risk behavior; Propaganda; Products Publicity Control.

Objetivo: descrever o perfil sociodemográfico e de consumo de bebidas alcoólicas por universitários. Método: trata-se de estudo quantitativo, descritivo, de corte transversal, em uma universidade pública. Coletaram-se os dados a partir de um formulário semiestruturado e os analisaram pelo SPSS 21.0. Calcularam-se frequências absoluta e relativa para as variáveis categóricas apresentadas em tabelas. Resultados: identificou-se que de 243 universitários, 77% eram mulheres, 68,8% tinham entre 18 e 24 anos e 69,1% eram solteiras. 90% das participantes desconhecem políticas de restrição relacionadas á bebidas alcoólicas e 45% dos que conhecem apontaram a lei seca. Quanto ao consumo, 43% alegaram etilismo, 41% relatam as festas como principal incentivo ao consumo, 61% consomem cerveja, 68% bebem socialmente e 23,6% referem diversão como produto de satisfação. Conclusão: compõe-se o perfil dos universitários por mulheres, jovens, solteiras, etilistas socialmente, que desconhecem políticas de restrição para o consumo de bebidas alcoólicas e relatam diversão como produto deste consumo. Descritores: Publicidade como assunto; Consumo de Bebidas Alcoólicas; Universidade; Comportamento de risco; Propaganda; Controle da Publicidade de Produtos.

### RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir el perfil sociodemográfico y consumo de bebidas alcohólicas por parte de los estudiantes universitarios. *Método*: se trata de un estudio cuantitativo, descriptivo de corte transversal, en una universidad pública. Los datos fueron recogidos de forma estructurada y analizados mediante el programa SPSS 21.0. Se calcularon frecuencias absolutas y relativas para las variables categóricas se presentan en las tablas. Resultados: se encontró que de, 243 estudiantes, el 77% eran mujeres, el 68,8% tenían entre 18 y 24 años y el 69,1% eran solteros. El 90% de los participantes no son conscientes de las restricciones políticas relativas a las bebidas alcohólicas y el 45% de aquellos que saben señaló la Ley Seca. En lo que respecta al consumo, el 43% afirmaba el alcoholismo, el 41% informó de las festividades como el principal incentivo para el consumo, el 61% de consumo de la cerveza, el 68% bebe socialmente y el 23,6% informó de entretenimiento como un producto de satisfacción. Conclusión: es el perfil de los estudiantes por las mujeres, los jóvenes, las madres, los alcohólicos socialmente, que no son conscientes de las políticas de restricción para el consumo de bebidas alcohólicas y informó de entretenimiento como un producto de este consumo. Descriptores: Publicidad como assunto; Consumo de Bebidas Alcohólicas; Universidad; Comportamiento de riesgo; Propaganda; Control de la Publicidad de Productos.

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**INTRODUCTION** 

The ingestion of alcoholic beverages throughout the world is significantly high, with consumption of 6.13 liters of pure

alcohol per person.<sup>1</sup> The Brazilian estimates, considering the general population, are the consumption of 8.7 liters, however, when considering only the alcohol drinkers, this average reaches 15.1 liters of pure alcohol consumed per person.<sup>2</sup>

In 2012, the abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages in the Brazilian capitals was prevalent in males (27.3%), aged 25-34 years (24.7%), followed by the age range 18-24 years (21.8%), which allows understanding that, in proportion, the young population has assumed pattern of consumption greater than all other age groups.<sup>3</sup>

The age range prevalent in the consumption of this product shows the need to look toward the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the university environment, once some findings reveal that more than 90% of the interviewees were alcoholics.<sup>4-5</sup>

The consumption of alcoholic drinks by academics correlates the reflection of certain values that govern the socialization and consequently the action of drinking. Furthermore, they experience a moment of freedom and autonomy to make decisions, without supervision or guidance of guardians, making them more susceptible to the consumption of these products.<sup>5</sup>

Among the beverages marketed, the beer has the greatest prevalence of consumption and mainly relates to male socialization by making reference to the possibility of fun, disinhibition, relaxation and enjoyment.<sup>4,5</sup> These idealizations are strongly evoked by media as propaganda strategies, thus, the advertisements for alcoholic drinks bring elements capable of producing in young people the need to obtain what is shown, so that, when they focus on the advertisements, they consume the product believing that the commercials reproduce a reality, from the similarity between the parties they go to and the ones shown in commercials, which justifies the annual growth of the advertising of beer conveyed in the media of mass communication. 6-7

The available restrictions for the advertising of alcoholic drinks are the National Council of Advertising Self-Regulation (CONAR - Conselho de Autorregulação Publicitária), which regulates the supervision of the content posted and exposure of people vulnerable to products and Law 9,294, of 15 July 1996 restricting the advertising of alcoholic drinks

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to the association with determinants of health and well-being, however, this restriction is valid only for beverages containing more than 13° Gay Lussac (GL), not contemplating the beer.<sup>6-7</sup>

In 2008, through the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA - Agência Nacional de Vigilância Sanitária), the Brazilian attempted to restrict beer government advertisements on television, however, brewing companies, together with the means of communication, reverted this proposal, thus, there is currently no time restriction to advertisements of that drink on TV, i.e., the alcohol industry holds a vehicle of mass influence in its favor. 6,8

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To describe the sociodemographic profile of the population and consumption of alcoholic beverages by university students;
- To describe the perception of students regarding the advertising of alcoholic beverages.

### **METHOD**

This is a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study, developed at a government university between July and September 2017 with students over 18 years of four graduate courses.

The sample was obtained from the sample calculation for finite population with a sampling error of 5%, confidence level of 95%, as well as adding 10% to the value obtained for a possible sample loss, considering a prevalence of 50%, thus, in a population of 741 students, a sample of 280 individuals were considered, who were stratified according to the courses: Administration, Physical Education, Nursing, and Pedagogy.

Then, the nominal survey of students for subsequent drawing, assuming a simple random sample, therefore, of the 280 selected participants, 37 refused to participate in the study, amounting 243 participants.

For data collection, a sociodemographic form containing questions about social characterization, consumption of alcoholic beverages and TV entertainment was applied. The data were analyzed by means of the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0, and the categorical variables presented by means of relative and absolute frequencies, in tables.

The Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Bahia approved the study under the opinion 1.969.845 and CAAE

65340017.7.0000.0057, which is in line with the Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council/ MS.

### **RESULTS**

Identificou-se que dos 243 participantes deste estudo, 77% (n=187) form do sexo feminino, 68,8% (n=167) possuem faixa etária entre 18 a 24 anos de idade e 69,1% (n=168) apresentam estado civil solteiro. Declaram-se conforme tabela 1 pelos participantes a renda

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familiar, religião e raça/cor, bem como se trabalhavam durante o período acadêmico foram avaliadas no presente estudo.

Of the 243 study participants, 77% (n=187) were women, 68.8% (n=167) were between 18 and 24 years old and 69.1% (n=168) were unmarried. Table 1 shows the participants' family income, religion and race/color, as well as if they worked during the academic period.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic profile of students from a government university of high productive backcountry of Bahia. Guanambi (BA), Brazil, 2017.

(BA), Brazil, 20	nigh productive ba	ckcountry of	Bania. Guanambi	
V	ariables	n	%	
Age group				
	18-24 years 25-32 years 33-40 years + 40 years NA	167 59 10 03 04	68.8 24.3 4.1 1.2 1.6	
Marital status				
	Unmarried Stable union Married Divorced/Separated NA	168 11 50 d 04 10	69.1 4.6 20.6 1.6 4.1	
Family income				
	< 1 wage 1 a 3 wages 3 a 6 wages 6 a 9 wages > 10 wages UK NA	78 111 13 02 04 12 23	32.1 45.7 5.3 0.8 1.6 5.0 9.5	
Religion				
	Catholic Non-Catholic NA UK	153 63 24 03	63.0 25.9 9.9 1.2	
Race/Color				
	Non Black Black NA UK	120 90 20 13	49.4 37.0 8.2 5.4	
Work				
	No Yes NA	125 84 34	51.4 34.6 14.0	
NA: Not answered; UK: Unknown.				

In relation to the prevalence in the group about perception of this advertisements for alcoholic drinks, most participants 46.1% (n=112) identified in advertisements connection between consumption of alcoholic drinks and fun, 21.8% (n=53) related it to the female image, 18.9% (n=46)were attracted by pseudohappiness, 13.6% (n=33) by friendship, 8.2% (n=20) reported no attraction by the

strategies used and lastly, 6.2% (n=15) were attracted by the product.

Regarding the TV entertainment, the study assessed the amount of hours spent watching TV, if they realized the television media as influencer of consumption, as well as if they were aware of the restrictions relating to advertising, marketing or consumption of alcoholic beverages. The information on these variables are available in table 2.

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Table 2. Perception of the students on the restriction policies related to consumption and advertising of alcoholic beverages. Guanambi (BA), Brazil, 2017.

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Variables		n	%
Media's influence on			
the consumption			
	Yes	219	90.1
	No	23	9.5
	NA	1	0.4
TV Hours			
	0 - 2 hours	154	63.4
	3 - 4 hours	31	12.8
	5 - 6 hours	3	1.2
	> 7 hours	4	1.6
	UK	13	5.3
	NA	38	15.7
Knowledge on			
restrictions			
	No	180	74.1
	Yes	53	21.8
	NA	10	4.1
Restrictions listed			
by those who know			
•	Lei seca	24	45.2
	Children	21	39.6
	Child advertising	3	5.7
	Consumption in	2	3.8
	advertisements	_	3.0
	Advertising time	1	1.9
	Consumption with medicines	1	1.9
	Naked women in	ı	1.7
	advertisements	1	1.9
	auvertiseinents	I	1.7

NA: Not answered; UK: Unknown.

In relation to the consumption of alcoholic beverages, 43.6% (n=106) were using the product. The identification of this group showed the perception of students regarding

the influence for consumption, the drinks consumed, as well as the frequency and satisfaction of consumption. Table 3 shows these data.

**Table 3.** Consumption profile of alcoholic beverages by alcoholic univertsity students from a government university of high productive backcountry. Guanambi (BA), Brazil, 2017.

Variables		N	%
Incentive			
	Parties	52	49.0
	Friends	37	35.0
	Others	11	10.4
	Family	4	3.8
	TV Media	1	0.9
	Religion	1	0.9
Alcoholic			
beverage	_	<u>,                                    </u>	
	Beer	65	61.3
	Wine	18	17.0
	Distilled drink	15	14.2
	NA	08	7.5
Consumption frequency			
	Socially	90	85.0
	Monthly	10	9.4
	NA	5	4.7
	UK	1	0.9
Satifaction while consuming			
	Fun	25	23.6
	Happiness	13	12.3
	Distraction	7	6.6
	Relaxation	4	3.8
	Pleasure	2	1.9
	Freedom	1	0.9

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Fullness	1	0.9
Friendship	1	0.9
Power	1	0.9
NA	51	48.1

NA: Not answered; UK: Unknown.

### **DISCUSSION**

In the area of health research, healthcare to the adult has significant importance in the search for the biopsycosocial well-being, since, in addition to being a wide field of study, the scope of this well-being suffers interference from various factors that are inherent to each population.<sup>9</sup>

From this perspective, it is important to discuss the behavior of the university population, since the academic period comprises a phase of changes in an individual's life, whether in social life, in routine activities or behaviors they can adopt regarding greater autonomy. 10-12

Identifying the students regarding sociodemographic characteristics showed that their profile presents similarities with other studies, in which there is a predominance of women, aged 18-24 years, and marital status unmarried. 10-13

The television media is a strong instrument for spreading ideas, influencing behaviors and consumption of its viewers, in this sense, the discussion about its influencing role for the consumption of alcoholic beverages transcends the popular reading for the field of bioethics of protection, a theme that is already being discussed in the world and, in Brazil, still characterizes as a native field.<sup>6</sup>

The investments directed to the production of advertising materials became the main ally in the acquisition of new consumers and the fidelity of the previous year, which corresponds to one trillion dollars.<sup>14</sup>

Such investments are held in order to expand business and profit, in addition, the marketing appeal is performed from the popular imagination, which aims at the resolution of their needs and, consequently, creates a pseudoreality when associated to its consumption. In this conception, some risk factors for the consumption from advertising are: age, gender, family and socioeconomic level, i.e., youngsters, women, individuals who have relatives that consume alcoholic drinks and people of low socioeconomic level, considered as vulnerable population groups. 16

The learning of the mediatic contents by the viewer comes not only from the presentation of the product itself, but also from the whole imaginary hypothesized in the surroundings of the product appreciated, which generates a series of expectations. In the present study, entertainment was the most raised word, because young people drink with the purpose of obtaining entertainment along with friends, which provides greater ease of social interaction, in addition to increasing the sense of self adequacy and reducing anxiety. 4,5,12,17-18

Corroborating, this study showed that most participants recognize the influencing role of media regarding the consumption of alcoholic drinks, affecting the choice of brand to be consumed, in addition, they reported having the habit of daily television entertainment, ensuring attendance in its consumption. 19-25

A risk factor for early consumption of alcoholic drinks is the time of exposure to mediatic contents, because there have already been identified an average of 1.24 visual references to alcohol per minute of transmission, in international schedules of several genera, being more frequent in times of greater audience, which includes a public between five and 29 years old, with greater number of children up to four years. 19-21

The countries that aim at reducing risks and damage caused by excessive consumption of alcohol seek, from the creation and implementation of policies, to restrict the population of this consumption, especially the groups with greater vulnerability. Since the publication of the first world status report on the alcohol in 1999, the countries that disregarded the marketing of alcohol began to adopt or formalize parliamentary actions on alcoholic drinks in their respective societies.

The restriction of advertisements for alcoholic drinks may be subject to the legislation of the country or self-regulation, which refers to the evaluation of the ethics of the company itself.<sup>15</sup> However, the self-regulation has presented bias in the definition of what would be considered alcoholic drink, since the Law 9,294 of 15 July 1996 considers alcoholic beverages all beverages with alcohol content exceeding 13° Gay Lussac (°GL), which excludes beer, whose mean alcoholic content is 4.5° GL.<sup>8</sup>

In Brazil, there is the National Council of Advertising Self-Regulation (CONAR), which is a non-governmental entity that acts on

advertisement self-regulation, focusing on the protection of children/youngsters, in order to prevent the induction to the abusive consumption of products, as well as the association to sexual images, healthy and sports performance, in addition, it demands respect to time restriction (21:30 and 06:00) and addition of warnings in advertisements with duration greater than or equal to 15 seconds. Nevertheless, there are discussions about the fragility of the protection of this council, considering the violations based on subjective interpretations of what this entity establishes.

This study mentions Law 11,705 of 19 June 2008 with greater frequency as another measure of control of consumption and exhibition of inappropriate content alcoholic drinks. The Lei Seca, as popularly known, amends law 9,503, 23 September 1997, establishing the Brazilian Traffic Code, and law 9,294, 15 July 1996 which regulates the restriction of advertising of alcohol consumption and other products harmful to health, thereby, it configures itself as a means of restriction to establish zero blood alcohol content in drivers, imposing severe penalties for those who drive drunk, as well as obliging traders to stamp in their commercial establishments warning about consumption of alcohol and driving.<sup>27</sup>

The consumption of alcoholic beverages presented in this study was lower than that presented in similar studies, 12,17,28-29 however, no less important when considering the repercussions caused by it when consumption is irresponsible. In this sense, based on the growth of consumption in this population group in recent considering the availability of drinks, the stimuli to consumption and the easy access, the group in question is configured as vulnerable to consumption and associated injuries.<sup>31</sup>

In health promotion, the knowledge and the identification of risk factors are essential early intervention, whether in the inclusion of discussions on curricular subjects, even the creation of projects intervention.<sup>12</sup> An alternative currently employed are brief interventions, which refer to programs that offer strategies behavioral modification of students involved with alcohol, highlighting the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS), the only brief intervention described in the literature, which showed a significant reduction in the frequency of students at risk consumption of alcoholic beverages, within one year. 11

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In this study, consumers of alcoholic beverages mentioned parties and friends as the main incentives for consumption, corroborating other findings, in which the party is presented as a pledge of consumption due to representing a place or time where there is greater ingestion of the product, in addition, the meeting bases on socialization, which leads to friendship, and these meetings usually have a wide variety of drinks, which favors the experimentation. <sup>5,6,12,28-29</sup>

As well as verified in this study, the beer is a drink with greater frequency of consumption among university students. <sup>5.29</sup> Furthermore, it is the most consumed in the world in terms of liters of pure alcohol, representing 36% of the total alcohol consumed as beer, and its consumption is predominantly greater in the American continent. <sup>1-2</sup>

Beer is the most publicized drink in television media.<sup>7,17,19</sup> In the United Kingdom, when assessing the frequency of visual references of alcoholic beverages in matches of EURO2012 broadcast on TV, there were visual references to beer in 98.7% of the transmissions among other drinks, evidencing popular drink<sup>(20)</sup>. the most beer as Corroborating, an analysis of programs and advertisements of five free TV channels in the same country also presented this drink as the most propagated and consumed.<sup>19</sup>

The predominance of this drink is explained by the fact of being a lawful drug consumed worldwide, with good popular acceptance and broad dissemination in the media, which, directed mainly to the young public, contains provocative messages to encourage its consumption.<sup>7</sup>

This study revealed higher frequency of drinking socially, which differs from other studies, in which consumption showed higher monthly frequency, however, when considering the consumption of alcohol as something normal and permissible, this act is inserted in all contexts, consequently, individuals tend to consume within less than 30 days, thus, this same explanation supports social consumption. 12,28

Fun was the most mentioned expected satisfaction in students after the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Other studies confirm this finding, in which fun was also highlighted as a product of consumption.<sup>5,17</sup>

The belief that alcohol generates fun refers to the fact that the consumption, when characterized as an instrument of socialization, involves friends, women, sex, in addition to consuming it in a collective environment and in a recreational way, which

allows acquiring positive connotation with pleasant moments.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the media also plays an important role in this belief, when stimulating the viewer's imagination regarding the fun presented in advertisements, thus, these consumers seek to reproduce or associate the content shown with reality.<sup>6</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The socioeconomic profile of the study population consisted mainly of: women, young, unmarried, Catholic, race/color non-black, and without remunerative activities. Regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages, they reported social habits of alcoholism, use of beer, parties and fun as the main product of consumption. In relation to the TV entertainment and perception, they watch TV approximately two hours a day, perceive television media as consumption influencer and are unaware of policies restricting the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

This study showed that university students comprise a group of great vulnerability for the adoption of health risk behaviors in relation to the consumption of alcoholic beverages, which results from the instability of new routines to which they are submitted, the formation of new social ties, as well as the need to change their practices in order to suit the new context of which they are part.

The television media can leverage this vulnerability, since it attracts this group to the consumption of alcoholic beverages from references to possible pleasant moments. Therefore, there has to be awareness of the importance of deploying programs for prevention of risks to health at universities, bringing discussions about the consumption of alcoholic beverages and their harm to society, in a way that allows these young people to become more critical and consequently assume healthy life habits.

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