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ALCOHOL USE AMONG

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IN LAPLAND

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the situation of alcohol use among international students in Lapland. It was a comparative study on how their drinking habits were in their home country to how they are in Lapland. It looked at whether the wet drinking culture in Finland has influenced their drinking habits. It also looked at the causes of alcohol use among international students as well as its positive and negative effects.

The theoretical frameworks of this study are Frames for understanding causes and effects of alcohol use among international students and the kind of party and drinking culture that they have established. Under the frame of culture, the study also looks at the values, norms and habits of students as well as alcohol use along gender lines. The frame of understanding youths and alcohol use in the college setting looks at youth as an important phase of life that has several challenges which make them vulnerable to alcohol use.

The study is a qualitative research where data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data was presented using tables then analyzed qualitatively to show the situation of alcohol use among these students and to make comparisons in alcohol use back home and in Lapland. The data was collected from a survey on 30 international students. The questionnaire was sent to respondents through social media platforms like Facebook or via email addresses and they were answered anonymously.

This thesis the level of alcohol use control among international students and how the Finnish drinking culture has influenced their drinking habits as well as why some students chose to abstain from alcohol use. It shows the practices of alcohol use that are

present among international students, why they drink and how it affects them and their studies.

The central argument in this study is about how the wet Finnish culture affects alcohol use among international students. For some it has increased their alcohol use but others have managed to escape the influence. It is important for international students to have other avenues of socializing such as games and clubs because this seems to be the biggest cause of alcohol use among them. However, most international students are able to control their alcohol use such that their lives and studies do not suffer.

Key words: Culture of alcohol use, international students, party culture, Finnish drinking culture, Alcohol use control, causes and effects of alcohol use, qualitative method.

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1. Introduction

This study aims at understanding the situation of alcohol use among international students. International students come from various parts of the world to benefit from the Finnish education system which is not only free but according to Program for International Student Assessment (2009) it has also been rated as one of the world's best education systems. Sponsorship organizations such as the Erasmus Mundus exchange degree program have made it possible for students to acquire some funds for their upkeep while studying in Lapland. This gives them an opportunity to make their lives better by broadening their minds and learning how to live in a multi-cultural setting. It also presents to them different challenges such change of climate that help them to strengthen their problem solving skills, teaches them new ways of living, gives them a chance to borrow business ideas and enjoy a brand new experience.

However, the process of learning all those things can be challenging and in some cases international students do engage in alcohol use and other activities to help them cope with the demanding experience and also to have fun. However, as Rassool (2008, 27) argues, misuse of alcohol and other drugs comes about as a result of using them in a way that is harmful to functioning and health of a human being. For example first students start to engage in alcohol drinking once a month for fun then it becomes a weekly habit and eventually likelihood of addiction increases. Also most young people start with one legal drug like alcohol or cigarettes and slowly get involved in more dangerous or illegal substances.

Other reasons that attract students to per suing studies abroad are the 'push' and 'pull' factors. Push factors are those reasons in a student's home country that force him/her to look for studying opportunities in another country. They include high cost of education or low quality of education in the home country and the probability of getting a better job if qualifications are gotten from western countries. Pull factors include excellent quality of education offered in a certain country, quality of courses offered, having contacts with people who reside in that country, affordability of life and education, good reputation, favorable climate and ability to access the place geographically. While some students are motivated to study abroad by the possibility of broadening their horizons,

others are afraid of the challenges differences in culture will present (Gunawardena & Wilson 2012, 16).

Various organizations fund students who want to study abroad including host countries. They do this with the intention of promoting unity and understanding among people from different nations, helping developing nations to grow as well as to facilitate exchange of ideas. For the government sponsoring international students can bring development and it is part of maintaining good public international relations. Therefore, funding organizations put a lot of effort in marketing their sponsorship programs globally and they have internationally recognized slogans and logos that help them in this process. They also have websites that provide students with all the information they need on the courses they can chose, visa application process and any other necessary requirements (Carswell 2011, 10-11).It is important that this purposes are accomplished through international students and this study will explore whether alcohol use inhibits their achievement.

In Lapland, study sponsors and the University staff members work together to give orientations to those students. They prepare some maps, reading materials and brochures that students can use to understand the social, economic, geographical and technological areas of their new environment. Each student also gets a student tutor who is paid by the University to help new students adjust to social and academic life in Lapland. Several international students' guide books have been made available in the library with the aim of helping students to follow the right path while living abroad. One such book was written by Lowes, Turner & Peters (2004, 297) to equip students with an understanding of social life where they explain leisure activities available, part time work opportunities available and useful points on how to utilize their time.

From an international student's point of view, studying abroad is an exciting experience. They leave familiar surroundings because they are attracted to the unknown, new academic ambitions, meeting new people and a sense of adventure. As they struggle through the long application process they think they are prepared for the challenges though some of them end up leaving before they are ready for the challenge. When they arrive, their excitement is quickly replaced with confusion because procedures in the University may not be easy to understand, the cities are new or confusing and food labels are not easy to comprehend in a new language. They start to miss the comforts they never appreciated while back home after leaving them behind (Besamusca 2011, 10-11).

.Although they came hoping for a new life, it becomes difficult when they find that even opportunities to get a part time job and pre-occupy their minds in Lapland are very scarce. All this factors contribute to them using alcohol to make friends and overcome stress or culture shock.

A drug can be viewed as a substance that is psychoactive and when taken it changes the way our body and mind functions in terms of how we feel, think or behave as well as how we view ourselves and everything around us. It can come from natural or synthetic materials and it is taken for various reasons such as to prevent or cure diseases, for fun or as part of spirituality. From this definition, alcohol is a drug that has dangers such as dependence and intoxication (Babor et al. 2010, 14). Legal drugs are the ones which can be bought or sold freely in public though with some restrictions such as cigarettes, caffeine, alcohol and doctor's prescription. Illicit drugs are those which face some formal or informal restrictions in their use, sale or possession but are not illegal. For example cigarettes and alcohol are illicit because they can only be purchased by those over 18 years of age while Viagra can be bought legally after prescription or illicitly via online sources (Coomber 2013, 3-4).

Drugs are classified according to their psychoactive and physical effects into stimulants, deliriants, hallucinogens and depressants. Depressants such as heroine, tranquilizers and alcohol make central nervous system slow such that we become less aware of what is happening around us. Hallucinogens such as LSD, PCP and magic mushrooms affect our sense of perception and we start seeing things that do not exist. Deliriants dissociate the mind and body and they are present in anesthetics. Stimulants like cocaine, caffeine and nicotine hasten central nervous system making people to be awake for long and have less appetite. Some drugs fall into more than one category because alcohol and cannabis for instance, can change from depressants to stimulants when taken in huge amounts meaning they have little stimulant properties in them. Hard drugs are mostly those that are highly likely to cause addiction like cocaine while soft drugs are much less likely to cause addiction such as alcohol (Coomber et al. 2013, 5).

There are different types and categories of drug users; those who experiment with alcohol do it only once in a while due to curiosity and availability and this is common in teenagers and young adults. Those who are dependent drink regularly, others are binge drinkers but those who use many different types of drugs heavily are termed as chaotic users because they take drugs in an unpredictable and disorderly manner that is very

dangerous to their health (Rassool 2008, 30-31). Binge drinking is the consumption of excessive alcohol in a single drinking episode. It is dangerous because in most cases it becomes more and more frequent which leads to addiction. In a more accurate perspective, binge drinking is taking more alcohol than is recommended by doctors for example in UK taking more than 64 grams or 4 beer cans for a man and more than 48grams or three beer cans for a woman (See: Coomber et al. 2013, 47-48).

According to Gilvarry et al. (2007, 9) the American psychiatric association (1994) defines the term substance use as minimal use of a drug or substance without any intentions of getting in trouble or being dependent. Wormer & Thyer (2010,3) looked at drug abuse simply as using a drug in a way that leads to abuse for example taking alcohol to a level where it leads to hangovers and they pointed out that there is no clear line between use and abuse of alcohol but its' abusive effects are real. The term substance abuse refers to harmful use of drugs that can cause dependence. Substance use usually leads to abuse of drugs because the person becomes dependent gradually. Drug use refers to consumption of legal drugs in a socially acceptable manner, drug misuse is consumption of legal drugs in a way that is not socially acceptable for example in greater quantities, for the wrong reason or more frequently while drug abuse refers to consumption of drugs in a way that brings problems to users like addiction, dependency, psychosis or anxiety (Coomber et al. 2013, 42).

Many factors contribute to alcohol use in colleges and Universities such as cultural norms, expectations on benefits of drinking, parent's attitude towards drinking and affordability of alcohol. All these result to a culture of drinking that can be harmful to the students. Various researches have shown that drinking among youths is done excessively and this lowers their ability to make decisions, control their impulse, or drive a car and fades their memories. This results to many negative effects such as car accidents, physical injuries and sexual abuse. Alcohol use also affects their studies such that they do not attend class so they perform poorly (Correia, Murphy & Barnett 2012, 3-4).

When I came to Lapland from Africa to per sue a Master's degree I did not fully anticipate the challenges I would face once I got here. I realized that my mind had not fathomed what it would be like to be in a place whose climate for example is so different from what I was used to. Therefore I had made some assumptions and I came clinging to the hope that I would survive against all odds. I felt lonely at first, buying food was difficult because of language barrier, the climate was depressing and life was expensive

among other challenges. I felt a great need to make friends so that I could know how they are coping with the challenges.

Socializing was very difficult, so even though I had previously abstained from alcohol use for about two years; I started drinking again at student parties just to make friends. I found that alcohol gave me the confidence to forget how odd my accent was to those around me and speak to them anyway. It helped me to make some friends but the habit of drinking was too expensive for me to maintain hence I stopped after about three months. The stopping process was not easy due to the pressure I would get from my friends and the fact that I would miss their company a lot but since most of them were exchange students, when they went back home it was time for me to turn a new leaf.

I still wondered how many other students got into alcohol use while in Lapland for the same reasons that I did and if they were able to stop. I also wanted to know the various other reasons that push students into alcohol use and how it has affected them. I felt the need to carry out a research on this issue and find answers to these questions. I also hoped that going through the questionnaire as they responded would help these students to re-evaluate their life and see if their alcohol use is causing them more harm than good. When one of my friends told me that after responding to the questionnaire, he realized that he had been spending money on alcohol with the aim of making friends but he ended up not achieving his goal, I felt that the latter had been accomplished to some degree.

I did this research with the objective of bringing the situation of alcohol use among international students out in the open so that we can see how extensive it is. I hoped that this would help social workers, international relations department and other concerned parties to act on any alarming aspect of the situation. After understanding the situation, I also wanted to look into the ability of students to control their alcohol use and to capture the views of students who abstain from alcohol on the subject of alcohol use. Another objective was to find out more about the alcohol use culture of international students and how it has been influenced by the Finnish 'wet' drinking culture. The final objective was to find out the causes and effects of alcohol use among international students.

There has been several researches carried out in Finland on use of alcohol and other drugs such as the one carried out by Varjonen et al. (2013) that found use of alcohol to be quite rampant in Finnish Universities. Other studies carried out in other parts of the world such as ESPAD (2011) study in the European Union showed that alcohol use

among youths is on the rise and binge drinking is becoming more rampant and dangerous. The study by Weiss (2013) on party University exposed many negative effects brought by the party culture of students in Universities. There has been many suggested causes of alcohol use among youths written down by various researchers who tried to explain why students continue to engage in it despite the consequences. Such writers included Coomber et al. (2013), World health organization (2007) Gilvarry et al. (2001), Dooley (2003)and Rassool (2008). They talked about psychological, social and economic causes of alcohol use. However, the negative effects of alcohol use have also been tackled by these writers because they are a major concern.

In this research I was guided mostly by the work of Coomber et al. (2013) and Weiss (2013) that did an extensive research on alcohol use in colleges and universities. There were many useful and comprehensive texts in the book written by Coomber et al. that helped me to have a good understanding of college drinking. Weiss dwelt a lot on party culture in Universities and how it takes place among different students such as athletes, sororities or famous students. He observed that each group was known for throwing different kinds of parties where certain good and bad things were definitely expected to happen. He highlighted how these groups of students compete with each other and influence other students to join. He came up with the conclusion that student party can be a hub and breeding ground for many vices that are harmful to the students. The research methodology used by Weiss was a good guide for me to use in coming up with mine.

The study report has been written in eight parts. Background information is in chapter two which follows the present chapter and it includes a broad overview of information on alcohol use in Europe and other continents , history and culture of alcohol use in Finland as well as alcohol use among youths in Finland. Frames for understanding alcohol use among youths, the culture of parties and alcohol use along gender lines as well as causes and effects of alcohol use have been discussed under chapter three. Purpose of the study, research questions, data collection process, ethical considerations and data analysis are discussed in chapter four. Findings on patterns and changes of alcohol use among international students, their culture and its causes and effects are discussed in chapter five, six and seven respectively. Chapter eight contains conclusion and recommendations on the findings of this study.

2. Background information

2.1 Alcohol use among youths in Europe and other continents

Alcohol production, availability and advertisement are growing and worrying problems in every continent in the world. For example alcohol is one of the most widely advertised products in the world. Six alcoholic beverages producers are among the top 100 advertisers worldwide engaging in not only internet and media advertisement but also sponsoring music, fashion, carnivals and sporting events to make it attractive to youths because they are the most valued group of potential customers. However, globally less than half of the population consumes alcohol which makes a sum of around two billion people. For every liter of alcohol consumed in both rich and poor countries, the degree of harmful effects emanating from it is higher and more severe in poor countries than in rich ones. Across several regions in the world there are more drinkers in richer countries where purchasing power is high than in poor ones (WHO 2007, 11 - 18). Another explanation for this besides the purchasing power factor could be that in developing countries more people face informal control by society and family members than in developed countries. This happens because if majority of the population does not consume alcohol, those who do will face a lot of criticism even if it does not cause severe problems (Kirsimarja, 2008, 40-41).

According to WHO (2006, 1) the European region haS the highest rate of alcohol consumption and alcohol related disease problems. This has formed the highest risk factor especially for young people. Specific parts of the world with the highest percentage of alcohol consumption are central Asia and Eastern Europe. Other areas of Europe have a relatively high level of alcohol consumption followed by the United States of America. Most of Latin America and the Caribbean consume alcohol at a lower rate than America does because they have a very high number of abstainers in some areas upto around 98% of females and 81% of males. The African, American and European regions reached their highest level of alcohol consumption in the 1980s. Eastern Mediterranean regions have shown a low but steady trend in alcohol consumption while South East Asia and the Pacific regions have had a steady increase in the same (WHO 2007, 14-15). It is not possible to have a very accurate ranking of continents that will show alcohol consumption because in any continent such as America, there are countries that con-

sume very high amounts of alcohol while others do not which results to gross mis-representation. However, it is good to have a basic idea of the level of alcohol consumption in different continents.

Recorded amounts of alcohol consumption have been decreasing in developed nations since 1990s but they have been increasing in developing nations. Drinking per capita is high in Romania, Kenya, Belarus, Russia and South Africa. Although drinking per capita in India is very low, heavy drinking among those who drink is common there and in Mexico so a small percentage is responsible for the country's alcohol consumption. In all these countries males drink more than females but there has been an increase in alcohol consumption by females and youths (WHO 2005, 7). There are many social and cultural factors that determine level of alcohol consumption in any country including religion, rate of abstinence and how consumption is distributed within the population. A strong relationship exists between poverty and abstinence from alcohol for example some people may abstain because they cannot afford alcohol while others may drink to forget their financial problems. However, the same level of heavy drinking in both rich and poor people results to more harm for the poor person. The highest percentage of alcohol consumption in most regions is consumed by a small percentage of the population of around 10% who are heavy drinkers (WHO 2007, 16). However, the social and health problems affecting those around an alcoholic are as strong and important as those affecting the drinker (WHO 2006, 1).

According to Voon & Liberman (2014, 301) alcohol trading licenses used to regulate selling hours in the past but currently sale of alcohol in most countries has been given maximum hours. Since 1990s use of drugs has increased in European countries and as it became popular, popularity of night clubs increased concurrently. These places have become an easy target for illegal drug dealers to carry out their trade and sell ecstasy and others. Millions of youths all over the world are attracted to these places to a point where they have formed part and parcel of youth's culture. Since the 1950s youth culture has been characterized by certain ways of dressing, behaving and use of a certain drug. For example 'punks/hippies' emerged in 1970 and they would wear loosely fitting clothes with prints, had long hair, used Cannabis and LSD while listening to music that promoted peace because they were anti-war (Sanders, 2006, 1).

Raves were large illegal dance parties held mostly in abandoned buildings and when they were abolished in UK during 1990s, legal clubs replaced them as commercial en-

terprises. According to Goodman and Whalley (2002) an estimated four million people go to clubs every weekend in UK. Rassool (2008, 25) adds that 3 million people use drugs every year in UK and over half a million are using hard drugs. Whereas some groups of youths have a culture of violence during and after clubbing others are orderly and simply go home after clubbing. Class and race determines which clubs they go to because some can afford to pay high entrance fees while others have to attend raves and cheap clubs. Lankenau et al. (2005) carried out a research and noted that clubbing has become so normal and mainstream that not many youths dress in a club like manner when going out and older people are many in clubs (Sanders 2006, 2-4). For example in Kenya young people are forced to attend clubs after graduation in search of company owners, politicians and other affluent people who can give them jobs and so they dress quite decently.

As youths attend clubs and raves, they are more likely to engage in use of illegal drugs because of their availability. This has led to some drugs being commonly referred to as club drugs or dance drugs among youths and they are either hallucinogens or stimulants. Drugs in clubs and raves are seen as acceptable by youths because they enhance the atmosphere of music and lights therefore giving a more pleasant experience. The British crime survey noted that those who had gone to clubs within the last two months are twice as likely to have used illegal drugs within the last year compared to those who had not gone to clubs. Drug use is a culture that is definitive to clubbing and raving as the central activity that takes place there of which the leading legal drug in most European countries is alcohol (Sanders 2006, 5-8).

Many countries have made efforts to ensure illegal drugs are not sold in clubs by having regular police searches and recommending security guards to be hired who have the responsibility of preventing illegal drugs from entering the club. However, there are instances where this club security personnel are the ones selling illegal drugs and collaborating with other drug sellers. It has been noted that drugs being sold in clubs differ from one country to another and even in a given country, youths shift from use of one illegal drug to another and sometimes they mix several brands. Since 1990s fancy clubs that are marketed to youths have steadily gained popularity in Europe. It is common for youths to hold parties in their residents before going to clubs and for them to engage in drug use during such times. HIV infection among those who attend parties for gay males was twice as high among those who use drugs like ecstasy than among those who

do not. Although drug abuse does not have to happen in every party, some parties have become popular drug dens (Coomber et al. 2013, 48, 55).

Among Finland, Norway, Sweden and Ireland, alcohol consumption was found to be on a rising trend in Finland from 1990 to 2005. In the same period, there were Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Italy and France whose alcohol consumption had risen then started to fall while others like Germany and Denmark remained relatively stable. In Mediterranean countries cultural factors, urbanization, higher number of leisure activities and smaller families were some of the reasons behind reduction of alcohol consumption even in wine-producing countries. The fact that in these countries water has replaced alcohol as an accompaniment to meals has also contributed greatly to the reduction. Similar economic changes took place in Finland but they contributed to a rise in alcohol consumption. This could be due to Finnish culture which tolerates and accepts drinking for intoxication purposes and this is similar to Irish culture (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 7-8). Although increased drinking has led to loss of lives in the EU, Nordic countries are the most highly affected (Stahl 2006, 121).

While in other countries a rise in prices of consumption goods leads to reduction in alcohol consumption, in Finland alcohol consumption has been noted to remains same as before. However, during the period of economic depression in Finland in 1991 to 1994, alcohol consumption did reduce due to lack of affordability. Although alcohol consumption in Finland reduced by around 10% in Finland between 1991 to 1994, it increased by 10% after this period because time limits for buying alcohol at cheap rates from neighboring countries like Russia and Estonia were abolished. In 1996 this time limit and other policies were tightened which changed the situation of alcohol consumption imports through cruises. In Finland alcohol consumption has been observed to be a daily activity that is most common among youths followed by adults and finally the elderly (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 9-10).

According to WHO (2007, 35) alcohol policies should be made with a main goal of enhancing the social and health wellbeing of the public. The policies should control the market so that children are protected from being lured into alcohol consumption by marketers. They must also prevent those who consume alcohol from harming the innocent around them. Reducing harmful effects of alcohol on health is also an important factor to consider in policy making. According to WHO (2006, 1-2) although on one

hand scientific developments have helped to highlight that excessive alcohol consumption is a huge burden to our societies, on the other hand trade agreements, globalization and common markets continue making it difficult for strict and effective policies to be implemented at national level. Therefore it was recommended that strong regional policies should be put to place. The European region also came together to establish some regional and national and global policies that would reduce harm caused by alcohol consumption.

A study carried out on students aged 15-16years in 36 European countries by ESPAD showed that 70% of them had taken alcohol at least once in their life. Nordic countries had the least number of students engaging in alcohol consumption at 10%. More boys than girls reported having drunk alcohol in bars and discos during the research but it was vice versa in Ireland and Monaco. Beer was the most consumed alcoholic beverage. In most European countries more students bought and drunk the alcohol within the premise and few preferred to buy alcohol and drink it elsewhere but in Nordic countries there was a bigger tendency to buy alcohol and drink it elsewhere. There was a reduction in alcohol consumption among these students from 81% in 2007 to 78% in 2011. In Finland alcohol consumption was at around 40% in 2007 and it reduced by around 10% in 2011. Binge drinking also reduced during this period in most countries apart from a few such as Hungary (Björn et. al 2011,68-70, 124-132). Alcohol use per capita is quite high in Europe, Australia and USA though not likely to increase but in developing nations an increase is anticipated (Sher 2010, 5).

Alcoholism started being looked at as a disease in the 18th century in Britain during the period when use of Gin had created many social problems. After that theories on how to help habitual alcohol users were invented in Britain in 1770s which have developed into the present 'disease models' of alcoholism. Alcohol use affects social order, health and economic responsibility of individuals within any society (Holt 2006, 51). On one hand public health campaigners say there are high economic costs of alcohol but on the other the drinks industry register high economic benefits. For this reason policies on alcohol all over the world have been made based on which side has had a stronger influence in stating their case (Nicholls 2009, 59, 250). Bergin (2013, 27) argued that research also needs to be done before adopting alcohol regulation policies because some policies can work in certain countries but not in others.

2.2 The history and culture of alcohol use in Finland

The culture of alcohol consumption in Finland has been changing according to the change in public and political attitudes. The changes started in 1969 when the Finnish Alcohol Act was revised and it became less strict. Before there were no shops selling alcohol in rural areas but this changed and shops were permitted to sell medium beer. Cafes got permitted to sell beer and age limit for its consumption changed from 21 to 18years. According to Simpura and Partanen (1987) alcohol use in Finland is taken mainly for intoxication though it is not frequent because it happens mainly on weekends and public holidays but drunkenness is culturally accepted. According to Hein et al., (2002) a fourth of total alcohol consumed in Finland in 2002 was taken by women and although the percentage of females who abstain from alcohol has reduced in all age groups, the percentage of females aged 18 who consumed alcohol in that year was high-er than that of boys (Pitkainen 2006, 12-14).

EU policies influenced Finland to change its policies on alcohol use and this has in-creased alcohol consumption in the country since 2004. This is because before joining EU, Finnish government made physical availability of alcohol difficult, prevented mak-ing profit through alcohol by private investors and it put heavy taxes on alcohol which reduced the will to buy it for consumers. All this reduced alcohol consumption and its negative health effects among Finnish people. However, when Finland became part of the EU there was joint decision making so it had to make its policies on alcohol more flexible. Among EU members, Nordic countries especially Finland and Sweden are leading in advocating for restrictive and strict policies in the EU. For example Sweden and Finland funded an extensive research on alcohol consumption, its policies and its adverse effects from 1950 to 2000 so that its results could support restricting alcohol. Prime ministers from Nordic countries said in 2004 that they would like the EU to in-crease taxes on alcohol and restrictions be made on imports of alcohol to reduce its ad-verse effects (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 29-34).

When Estonia joined the EU in 2004, restrictions on importing alcohol from Estonia to Finland were abolished. Finland therefore made local alcohol cheaper to protect local markets by lessening tax and this increased alcohol consumption among youth (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 11). According to Stahl et.al. (2006, 113) this happened because the EU has a goal of hastening the economy through

the principle of free market economy therefore it enforces equal taxes on products such that what is in one country's market can be marketed in any other country. Changes in the Finnish alcohol policy have weakened the government's control on its consumption by decreasing taxes and prices of alcohol so consequently consumption of alcohol and its related harm has increased (Kirsimarja 2008, 18).

According to Mistral (2013,2) drug policy refers to the ways society and governments handle substances which people use for pleasure although they can harm them, their families and the society. In Finland there are many alcohol policies that were established in the 1997 alcohol advertising Act and in the 1994 Alcohol Act then reinforced by ministry of social affairs and health. The 1994 Alcohol Act set up National Product Control Agency to replace Alko in controlling, licensing, imports and wholesale of alcohol. In 1995 Finland adopted a national alcohol policy program that had been proposed by WHO which aimed at shifting alcohol control policies to local level from national level. It called upon the media, citizens, pressure groups, public sector and private organizations to work together in implementing and developing alcohol policies in Finland (Hoikkala 2005, 14).

In May 2000, the permanent Committee on Alcohol, Drugs and temperance issues was requested by   Finnish ministry of social affairs and health to update alcohol action plans so that they would be in line with those suggested by WHO. It came up with ten proposals including improving network among those carrying out preventive policies at all levels from national to local and keeping areas mainly used by children free from alcohol. It also proposed that more resources should be invested in preventing alcohol related problems for example by offering better health and social services, it promoted early detection of alcohol problems and strengthened role of civil organizations at local level (Osterberg & Karlsson, 2002, 147-149).

In Finland, the main sources of alcohol control can be divided into formal and informal. Formal methods include, prices policies, tax, laws governing sale of alcohol like the hours it can be sold, the system of alcohol monopoly in Finland and use of police in arresting drunkards. Informal control takes place mainly within the family but workmates and friends also contribute. It takes place verbally by talking to the person concerned about his/her drinking habits or through an action such as one that will prevent a person from buying alcohol and shift the attention to something else. They can either be less conscious actions such as interrupting the person at a party when their times to go

home reaches or strong punishments like violence or threats of divorce. Norms within a society also control drinking such as when a person is asked to leave a club because he/she is too drunk. Because the government has less formal control on alcohol as an EU member, informal control is very important (Kirsimarja 2008, 16-18).

Almost 90% of adults in Finland reported having consumed alcohol in 2008 hence it is a common practice that starts being practiced in mid-adolescence from 14- 16 years of age and the heaviest period of drinking for most Finns is between 18- 22 (Latavala, 2011, 29).According to Varjonen (2013, 45) alcohol is the biggest social problem among all substances consumed in Finland based on past research and alcohol use is notably common mostly among youths though the average age of users has risen over the past ten years. People in Finland agreed that alcohol related problems form one of the main threats in society. Sulkunen et al. (2000, 21) found that Finland's alcohol control policy has become consumer-friendly leading to availability of alcohol to consumers. The non-medical approach is used to deal with these problems whereby social workers, nurses and doctors take care of the consequences of heavy drinking instead of using the disease approach. It was also found that in Finland alcoholics are given patient treatment instead of being taken to prisons or rehabilitation camps (Hellman et al. 2012, 204).

According to Stahl et. al. (2006, 118) Nordic countries dominantly use alcohol for intoxication but not as an accompaniment to meals. In Finnish drinking culture alcohol is consumed for intoxication during weekends and public holidays. Intoxication is now increasingly more common among women, the elderly and youths since 1960s. Alcohol has become part of sports events, entertainment events and drinking in restaurant terraces is common during summer. A research carried out in Finland in 2004 found that a third of alcohol is consumed by women. Women have increasingly joined alcohol consumption to the same level and frequency of intoxication as men. The most affected age group in Finland when it comes to drinking for the purpose of intoxication is 20 to 29 years because it has affected around one fifth of them. 70% of the females in this age group get intoxicated by alcohol to a minimum of once a year. But 50% of men drink until they get intoxicated at least once a month. Among teenagers, girls get intoxicated by alcohol more than boys in Finland. Although international researches labeled Finland as a 'spirit-drinking' country, beers and spirits are consumed almost in equal measure. There have been an increasing number of bars and restaurants that are opened until four

in the morning which cater for the culture of drinking especially on weekends (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 12-18).

Attitudes towards liberalization of alcohol have gradually reduced since 1990s. In 2012, a research on people's attitude towards the present alcohol policies showed that 63% were in support of present restrictive alcohol policy measures. 25% said the measures could be made even stricter while 11% felt that measures should be made less strict. To buy strong alcoholic drinks in Finland, one has to be 20 years and above but beer or wine can be bought by those who are 18 years and above. This age restriction to buying alcohol was supported by 81% in the research done in 2012. In an opinion poll in February 2012, Finnish people were asked whether alcoholic drinks should be sold in shops or restricted to government owned Alko shops. 81% felt strong alcoholic beverages should only be sold in Alko, 68% felt the same for strong beer and 64% felt that even wine should not be sold in shops. In 2012, 59% said that the price of wine was good and cheap, 56% gave same opinion for beer and 65% for strong beverages while 30% felt that prices of alcohol are too high (Hamalainen & Varis 2012, 73, 83-84).

Alcohol policies in Finland have changed tremendously from 1932 when a person had to have a permit to buy alcohol for consumption and alcohol selling points were very few to the present situation where it's no longer necessary to have a permit and Alcohol selling points are many. Even with strict policies and high alcohol prices, the consumption will still be high if desire for it among the citizens is high. If people have alternative sources of alcohol for example going across the border, they will do so .Studies have shown that policies in Finland and other Nordic countries have become more liberal resulting to increased alcohol consumption and more alcohol related problems (Room, 2002, 20, 57-60).

2.3 Alcohol use among youths in Finland

In 2005, only 2% of 12 year old children reported to have experimented with alcohol but 78% of boys and 79% of girls aged 18 years said they drink alcohol at least once a month. In the same year, 18% of girls and 22%of boys aged 16 years reported drinking for intoxication once a month or more. (Use of tobacco products, alcohol use and exposure to drugs 2006, 42-43).

The school health promotion survey showed that the rate of drinking alcohol with the purpose of intoxication has increased among those aged 16 to 19 years. There are small groups of youths in Finland who are advocating for abstinence from alcohol consumption as the best option in order to influence youths drinking culture although their success has not yet been measured. In 2004 when tax on alcohol was lowered in Finland, there were many talks on how to protect youths from alcohol abuse through methods such as parental guidance which had very positive impacts in preventing alcohol prevalence among youths from a rapid increase. However, there is a gap on what needs to be done to assist in protecting youths from alcohol use once they started living on their own from 16 years of age and above. Government in Finland has come up with the health 2015 public health programme which aims at filling this gap. It has strategies on how to reduce health problems from alcohol and illegal drugs among youths but its success or failure have not yet been documented (use of tobacco products, alcohol use and exposure to drugs 2006, 52-56). Finland has implemented several programs to prevent and eradicate alcohol and drug abuse culture among youths. Among these are the environmental strategies that aims at ensuring schools are a safe and free environment from this risky behavior. Schools are involved in the network of substance abuse prevention and they use different methods to teach students about alcohol and drug abuse (Varjonen et al. 2013, 39).

According to Varjonen at al. (2013, 102) in Helsinki activities to reduce social exclusion and drug abuse among youths were organized and implemented in 2011. They included art activities among adolescents between the ages of 13 to 17 years whereby they were taught how to draw and create other forms of art by professionals. Such activities gave them a chance to socialize which would make them content and happy enough to avoid drug abuse. Alcohol and drug abuse among the youth seems to be controlled by parents before they turn 16 years of age. According to Varjonen et al. (2013, 102) Kivivuori et al. (2009) said that level of control exercised by parents also influences their children's behavior whereby if the control is weak they are likely to engage more in alcohol use.

3. Theoretical frameworks

3.1 Alcohol use among students

3.1.1Alcohol use among University students

When alcohol use among students was reviewed in 1986, it was found that the main reasons for student's drinking were social pressure and seeking new, sensational feelings. Heavy drinkers have been found to be impulsive, rebellious, neurotic and anxious. They are likely to be organized in social groups that take part in many social activities and to have parents and peers who also drink heavily. Heavy drinking often results to low academic performance but students with a high income are likely to drink more than those with a low income. Students drink in order to get stimulated more than for the purpose of reducing tension. Young people's drinking is less determined by what they belief alcohol will help them achieve but it is determined more by accidental circumstances such as an opportunity to drink, the size of drinking group and pressure from peers in the group. In a study carried out on University students in Finnish Universities, male and female students gave significantly different positive and negative effects of alcohol consumption. The conclusion was that female students experience more negative results from alcohol consumption than male ones (Nystrom 1993, 12-13, 53).

According to Varjonen (2013, 32-33) Kunttu & Pesonen 2013 reported that In the University Health Survey carried out in Finland in 2012, 19% of all University students had used pharmaceuticals or a combination of alcohol and pharmaceuticals in order to get intoxicated. Out of the 19% of University students, 17% were men while 24% were women and there was no significant difference in statistic's from one University to the other. The use of pharmaceuticals and alcohol can be explained by what was said in an interview with drug users who said that taking drugs brings exciting feelings at the beginning but hangovers are quite bad, they admitted taking different types of drugs to overcome hangovers and get more exciting feelings (Keene 2010, 20, 83-84).

In a study carried out at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, 389 college freshmen were involved.63.2% were male while 36.8% were female and the questionnaires were anonymous. It aimed at examining elements related to alcohol use such as gender, personal problems like depression or anxiety as well as social problems like unprotected

sex and drunk driving. Results showed that around a third of those respondents attributed at least one personal problem to alcohol use in the previous year, and a half had acquired at least one social problem. Trying to cope with negative emotions like stress was the dominant cause for drinking among these students (Wormer &Thyer 2010, 45-47).

According to Wormer &Thyer (2010, 46) Malley& Johnston 2002 found that several problems are related to youths using alcohol based on various researches. Those that are psychological include anxiety, suicide and depression; interpersonal ones include unprotected and unplanned sex or physical fights and finally community problems like drunk driving and vandalism. Not much of a change had been noted in student's drinking for a period of twenty years since the 90s although difference in number of female and male drinkers had narrowed down in the recent ten years. More than 67% of college students said they drink alcohol and 40% practiced binge drinking. Out of the 40% males were 50% while females were 34% although females are at a higher risk of facing negative consequences such as depression, anxiety and stigma. In colleges, freshmen have shown the highest risk of alcohol use in previous researches since they are prone to drinking heavily and experiencing associated problems such as drunk driving. Youths in colleges may drink either to deal with stress or just to have fun but in most case this leads to interpersonal and psychological problems like breaking the law through drunk driving or vandalism which brings conflicts with university administrators.

A study carried out in Party Universities in United States found that Universities located in the urban centers tend to have more cases of alcohol consumption and crime than those located in the rural areas. Residential Universities were found to be a hub for reckless drinking, drug use and careless behavior. However, there were those who abstained for personal reasons, commitment to religion and academics. Around 40 to 60% of the students were found to be heavy drinkers who drunk mainly for intoxication. Male students drunk more than female students and students in their first year practiced more binge drinking than advanced students due to their new freedom away from parents. Wechsler & Nelson (2008) found that Students from the United States were more likely to practice binge drinking than international students. The age factor did not seem to matter when it came to alcohol consumption and those who were under age could buy it through their friends. It was noted that students formed social groups within themselves whereby some drunk more than others for example Sorority group drunk more than Greek group. Through social learning, groups would influence each other into the drink-

ing habits for example Greek groups influenced athletics' group into the habit (Weiss 2013, 40-46).

A party subculture was present in most Universities whereby some groups of students were known for throwing certain kinds of parties. Rape and other unwanted sexual behaviors seemed to be very common at student parties according to those who were interviewed on the subject. Participating in the party sub-culture increased the likelihood of students engaging in criminal behavior like fighting, stealing, vandalizing and getting in trouble with police. This comes as a result of intoxication which increases reckless and impulsive behavior while lowering level of rational thinking or concern about the consequences. 28% of the students who were interviewed said they do drink and drive because they think they still drive well after taking 5 to 6 beers and it is not a big problem if caught by police. Those who have been caught by police admitted to having paid a fine of around 200 Euros and having to attend 6 Alcoholic Anonymous classes. The students tend to feel invisible while drunk; they lack empathy for others and lose their common sense as shown by some of the behaviors they practice such as throwing water balloons on moving vehicles from the top of a building (Weiss 2013, 120-122).

3.1.2 Youths and alcohol use

Youth is an important life phase in a human being, for statistical purposes, the United Nations (2000) defines youths as those aged between 15 to 24 years. During this time they are most vulnerable to being influenced by what is going on in their environment which is why most of them experiment with drugs. For example most youths have experimented with alcohol especially because there is support and tolerance of the drug by society. Seeking independence, understanding sexuality and sense of identity are the key issues youths struggle with and they can get very confused especially if they have nobody to turn to for advice. If youths engage in drug use to avoid stress and confusion it leads to risky behavior. In this phase, a lot of physical and psychological changes take place while undergoing social learning (Rassool 2008, 97).A survey carried out on young people showed that students do engage in unprotected sex as a result of excessive alcohol consumption which they regret. The European alcohol policy alliance reports say alcohol related harm among youths is extremely high because around 115 000 of them die yearly (Riley et.al 2012, 197).

In trying to understand alcohol use among youths, it is important to consider the acknowledgement by several writers that drug use is a learned behavior. Social cognitive models are important in understanding drinking among youths because they link motivation for drinking, effects expected from drinking, stress and social factors as reciprocal determinants of the drinking problem (Wormer & Thyer 2010, 46). There are several reasons that make youths vulnerable to drugs like alcohol and the leading one is curiosity which lures them into becoming experimental drug users. Those who change into drug abusers are mostly the ones who are away from home, homeless, crime doers or socially excluded. If they have emotional, social or health problems at home or school it pushes them further into drug use. Studies have shown that most drug users had developmental vulnerabilities in their youth that were not recognized or treated. This affects mostly boys for example if they failed at something in their youth like studies they get angry at themselves and their parents and become mistrustful and rebellious to their parents then eventually turn to drugs (Rassool 2008, 98-99).

 According to Ada (2012, 33) youths who are suffering from mental health problems find drugs to be an appealing solution that only worsens the situation and increases aggressiveness. Although drug use has been normalized whereby society and youths see it as normal to experiment with them, there are some youths who are more vulnerable than others. The vulnerable ones usually start experimenting with drugs at an earlier age than others for instance before 13 years of age and they have a higher likelihood to become chronic drug users. Chronic drug use in youths makes them alienated, unemployed, and unable to learn and compete socially. (Rassool 2008, 99). This is supported by a study carried out in Finland which showed that use of drugs such as antidepressants and hypnotics has continued to increase in the work place which leads to problems such as sleeping in the work place (Sinokki 2011, 78).

According to a research done by Bennet & Holloway (2005, 72) youths did drink alcohol to get enough courage to commit crime then spend money obtained from the crime on more alcohol and other drugs. Drug use is associated with poverty whereby the poorer classes of people have higher chances of engaging in drugs as a means of survival. Normalization refers to a situation where alcohol use is viewed as acceptable by those who use and those who do not within a given society. Normalization is a cultural and social concept that developed in the 1990s to explain why all youths engaged in drugs besides their differences in class and other areas but in 21st century it is widely used. Normalization is brought about by availability of drugs, prevalence of trying the

drug, present and future intentions of using the drug, availability of knowledge on drugs and cultural accommodation of this drugs (See: Coomber et al. 2013, 72-74). In Finland, students are among the poorest groups of people and this could be a contributing factor to alcohol use. There is also a lot of normalization in Finland whereby alcohol use has become an accepted culture to the extent that students get discounts in bars when buying alcohol.

According to WHO (2007, 17) research has shown that intoxication and heavy drinking is common among young adults and teenagers all over the world but there is a likelihood of an increase in hazardous drinking among youths in Europe based on the European school survey project on Alcohol and Drugs in 29 European countries. The process of socialization plays a huge role in determining whether youths will engage in alcohol use. Socialization is done through schools, society, family, advertising, and peers and so on and it creates negative or positive perceptions of drugs. Therefore young people are more likely to drink alcohol if their parents are less strict, if they have a close relative or friend who drinks, if the commodity is easily available in the home and if they expect positive results from drinking alcohol. The producers of alcohol have made a variety of drinks that are appealing to youths like some that are sweeter and others that are stronger (Mistral 2013, 45-46).

Among youth groups alcohol consumption has become a symbol of adulthood and identity for those who love to have fun and socialize with the hope of establishing friendship or relationships (Tinsley & Hendrickx 2008, 45). They view stories on how intoxication caused them to vomit, get hospitalized, be unconscious or lose memory as a great source of laughter and entertainment. Advertisers take advantage of this by showing alcohol as the start to wild adventures and exciting fun. In UK and other European countries alcohol in supermarkets is cheaper than clubs which makes it necessary for youths to drink in parties or at home first since their finances are limited. The drinking habits of older youths within the home are copied by those less than 18 years of age and this normalizes alcohol use (Mistral 2013, 46-47).

Different people give varying explanations for drug use but in most cases it starts with recreational or experimental reasons and ends up in problematic and dependent use. Taking drugs for recreation purpose is done with the intention of relaxing and having fun though in some cases it leads to intoxication for example in weddings (Mistral 2013, 41). According to Sanders (2006, 108) youths find clubbing to be a prominent activity

and initially they go there with good intentions such as socializing with old friends, dancing, making new friends or just to look cool and use legal drugs but many may end up using illegal ones as well. For some it is peer pressure that makes them engage in illegal drugs but others are tricked into it. For example in Kenya drug dealers are known to trick youths who are drunk on alcohol that they should eat some glucose to feel more energetic but the glucose offered is mixed with cocaine or crack so they get addicted eventually and they have to pay a lot of money to satisfy this addiction.

Causes of alcohol use among youths are more or less the same in different countries. The reasons vary based on their social and personal situations but the most common reasons are to avoid boredom, to be different, to enjoy the nice taste of alcohol and the belief that alcohol makes one feel more confident, social and better. Most young people cannot point to only one reason for alcohol consumption which means they are influenced into it by many things. They drink in social events such as sports, celebrations and music events simply because everybody drinks. Those who drink for the purpose of intoxication have a higher chance of using hard drugs than those who drink moderately. Reasons for drinking or abstaining among youths change as they approach adulthood but they range from seeking pleasure, previous experience with alcohol, gender, being motivated to drink or abstain, personal preference, religion, boredom, parental influence, mass media influence, availability of money and societal norms (Kellie 1995, 9-10).

3.2 Culture of alcohol use among students

3.2.1 Culture and norms of alcohol use

Norms of alcohol consumption refer to what is normally expected and it varies from one culture to another. Cultures also vary since they have differing acceptance of intoxication, gender, social status and age components among other differences. For instance in some societies joining the drinking group is a sign of power, maturity or privilege while in others it forms part of a marginalized group. It is the norm that alcohol forms part of a meal in some societies while in others drinking is done as a separate activity during given periods of time. Norms contribute to social control of drinking, defining alcohol related problems and deciding on how to handle them. A person's individual norms

about alcohol use are determined and shaped by those of the society at large. A common method of describing the norms related to drinking and its level of control in a certain culture is categorizing them as either 'wet' or 'dry'. As opposed to 'wet' cultures, 'dry' cultures have a higher number of death due to alcohol poisoning than deaths due to alcohol related diseases, a high percentage of abstainers, heavy drinking that is not very frequent is the dominant pattern and they exhibit a long tradition of abstaining from alcohol use (Kirsimarja 2008, 24-25 according to Room & Makela 2001).

Currently, in most cultures alcohol is viewed as an ordinary commodity that can be consumed at any time which is why it is served with meals, used to enhance socialization when people are enjoying themselves, it is a show of hospitality, quenches thirst and in some cases to intoxicate . This general view ignores the many harmful effects of alcohol to our health, society and economy. They include intoxication, dependence and toxic effects on important body organs among other consequences such as road accidents (Wilson 2005, 26). A few centuries back, alcohol was utilized for its medicinal value for example to heal a wound. The types of alcohol made in those days was not as lethal to our health as some brands are today and in some cases alcoholic beverages were chosen as an alternative to polluted water. However, in recent times the only good example of alcohol benefiting our health is when it is taken to prevent heart attacks. Therefore when we look at history of alcohol we find that it has served varying purposes (Babor et al. 2010,11).

In most traditional settings, alcohol and other drugs were used in a meaningful and structured way for medication, religion and creativity within certain groups and rituals and this brought unity among the people (Benette & Holloway 2005, 15). In traditional days there were many rules and regulations on drug use for example in a Brazillian church called santoDaime, hallucinogens were offered in very small and controlled dosage to help members to communicate with God. However, in contemporary society drug use is done for meaningless fun and restrictions are more flexible. For example although the law does not allow intoxication and drunk driving, many people still break it. Opium was used to heal diseases in traditional settings but it is now found in illegal drugs like heroine. Studies carried out in different cultural settings show that alcohol consumption only results to violence and aggressiveness in some cultures but not in others. Therefore with the right kind of amounts, restrictions and control, drug use could be used to bring people together in harmony instead of causing destructions (Coomber 2013, 62-66). In

the Kenyan traditional culture young people were restricted to taking very small amounts of alcohol because alcohol was mostly for those aged forty and above.

Culturally, alcohol plays an important role in weddings, baptism, birth and other public and private events. In religion for example in catholic churches, taking some alcohol is part of celebrations such as the Holy Communion but only minimal levels of drinking are encouraged. In African and Brazillian traditional religions alcohol is used to prepare people for rituals and dances. There are communities where alcohol is mandatory in celebration of events because it is an important social lubricant as well as a sign of power and opulence for the person able to provide enough alcohol (Babor et al. 2010, 11). Also in Kenya a wedding should not take place if the groom has not brought alcohol to the bride's home since it is an important part of the celebration.

At different stages in life, alcohol consumption has different meanings for example for adults it is just for relaxation and socialization but for youths it can be a form of rebellion and a way of having fun. It has been observed that in most cases as people grow up their alcohol consumption can become less although this depends on cultural and demographic factors but societies all over the world are concerned about the youth. Even in countries where alcohol consumption has been normalized, they do not allow youths who are under 18years to buy it. This is because in the process of having fun and being rebellious they get involved in car accidents, fights and other dangers (Babor et al.2010, 12).

Geography dictates where a society is located and certain materials such as barley, cocaine, opium and so on grow well in some regions. This is the reason drug use is deeply rooted in some local level economies and culture. To eradicate a certain drug in a given society is a threat to the sustainability of its culture but globalization and modernization has continued to change perception, usage, production and trade of drugs whereby in most instances they have become more dangerous. This has brought a need for religious institutions, Governments and activists to intervene and regulate use of drugs especially among youths. This is a challenge because there are many youths who do not see the need to refrain from a culturally accepted practice like alcohol use (Steinberg et al, 2004, 11-13).

3.2.3 Gender Differences in alcohol use

Several theoretical perspectives on differences on use of alcohol between men and women have been suggested. They aim at explaining why men drink alcohol more than women and one of them is difference in gender roles. Since women have a role of nurturing and bringing up children, alcohol consumption would oppose this role. But recently men are more involved in raising children as women go to work so the gap in alcohol use between the sexes is becoming narrower. Another theory is that stress levels between genders are different. Men have the role of providing for their families, when the economy is bad it stresses them so they drink more as a way of dealing with the situation. Theory of machismo also contributes to these disparities where men get intoxicated as a show of domination and sexual prowess unaware of how it harms their health and wellbeing (Pyne et al. 2002, 22-24).

Studies carried out on men's drinking in contemporary society have shown that men drink alcohol to feel powerful. For example when running away from a quarrel with their wives, they will engage in drinking competitions to feel strong, important and powerful when they win the competition and dominate others. Although drinking gives men a sense of identity and solidarity, the feeling of domination and power generated by alcohol lurks violence. It causes assertive, violent and aggressive behavior which is why making fun of those who are not part of the groups they identify with becomes a fun activity. When the person being picked on feels his sense of pride and power has been violated, he retaliates violently and his social group joins in his defense. In traditional Europe, women who drank alcohol became more aggressive which helped them to escape subordination and challenge patriarchal power (Martin 2001, 96).

Cultural expectations for men and women are different when it comes to alcohol consumption. In many cultures like in India, alcohol is exclusively for men but in other cultures, at least a third of total alcohol consumption goes to women. Adult women are found to abstain from alcohol in most cases even in Europe maybe because they focus more on raising children. In the later stages of life both women and men avoid alcohol because of weak health and also cultural expectations that the elderly should not be intoxicated. As life expectancy increases, it is expected that more elderly people will engage in alcohol consumption which will change these societal perceptions. Alcohol is used in many events in the life cycle of human beings and in most cultures; it is looked

at in a very positive way (Babor et al. 2010, 12). However, alcohol creates different types of urges in human beings and it has been known to contribute to violence between spouses (McCrady & Epstein 2008, 69).

Drinking patterns are different for men and women because men associate drinking with masculinity so they do not have to control themselves as much as women regardless of whether their drinking causes problems such as violence. However an assumption that women drink less heavily is dangerous because it could lead to their problems being overlooked by health practitioners. When abuse of alcohol increases among women the social reaction is likely to be outrageous leading to heavy punishment for these women. Women are said to have an internal mechanism of alcohol control which could be a result of fearing what society might think and how it will react. A study conducted on working class men found that men see self-control in drinking as a limit to their freedom but they often have to chose between exercising their freedom and settling down with a woman (Kirsimarja 2008, 25- 26). Studies in various societies have shown that as compared to women, men abstain from alcohol much less but instead drink larger quantities and more frequently which leads to more alcohol related harm (WHO 2007, 16).

According to Borovoy (2005, 44) it is a common theme that women endure many problems if their spouses develop alcoholic dependence before the problem is addressed amicably. Alcohol affects women and men differently whereby it brings significantly more severe problems to women over a short period of time even if they consume less alcohol. Although women drink less alcohol in most parts of the world, they face most of the social consequences. The reason men drink more alcohol can be said to be due to social and cultural environment, size of body and rate of metabolism. For example women have to spend most of their time raising children as part of our culture so men have more time to drink alcohol after work. Recently more females are engaging in alcohol consumption and around 10% have been found to drink even when they are pregnant which is of course very dangerous to health of upcoming generations (Wormer & Thyer 2010, 135).

Women engage less in alcohol use because they are generally more vulnerable especially under the influence. Feminists associate regulation of alcohol use by women with how women are controlled by society and only viewed as domestic child bearers and spouses. In an attempt to access equality, women are stopping to depend on men for access to drugs or for protection from vulnerability especially since it is becoming safer

than before to attend night clubs (Room 2002, 91-92). According to the social affairs and health ministry in Finland (2006, 21) a survey carried out in Helsinki showed that out of the 43% of cases where children are taken into custody because parents were drug users, 67% took place because the mothers were also using drugs which indicates an increase in women's engagement .In Finland the years around 1969 showed increased consumption of alcohol for men more than women but currently it has been increasing at the same pace for both men and women.

According to WHO (2007, 17) one of the main social concerns in recent years is that alcohol consumption rates among women are increasing and especially among young women. Number of female drinkers is increasing faster than that of male for a number of reasons. For instance besides alcohol becoming cheaper since 1950s more women have been able to join the workforce. They have enough income to drink as much as men in a society where women are no longer discriminated when they go to bars. Advertisement and increased level of stress are other suspected causes. Drinking among women could be a way of coping with behaviors which are not well tolerated by society such as hopelessness, anger, resentment or rebellion (Stewart 1990, 96-101).Under the influence of alcohol although men are more physically aggressive than women, studies have shown that women are slightly more likely to start a fight than men. The result is that physical harm caused by men will be much more than that caused by women. In physical and verbal types of aggression, females are more likely to avoid a confrontation while males are less patient and likely to act on impulse (Bettina 2002, 12).

 Advertisement plays a big role in shaping the minds of young adults. Young beautiful women are used to advertise legal drugs like alcohol and they are portrayed to be a boost to confidence, liberty and defiance from the norm. According to Mistral (2013,46) alcohol adverts are targeted towards young people on the media, internet, posters, music videos, movies and promotional t-shirts and it has increased their consumption. This eventually leads to many health complications for women and in 1980s it was associated with an increase in death among females in Spain, Italy and Portugal. (Coomber et al. 2013,68). According to Stewart (1990, 1) the Royal College of Psychiatrists (1986) observed that alcohol is also highly advertised in the programs we see on television where it is associated with, power, status, achievement and attractiveness.

There are many young ladies in UK and Holland who drink heavily over the weekends and this has increased the rate of STI transmissions. They also get involved in accidents,

sexual assaults and unwanted pregnancies. A study carried out in London by Institute of alcohol studies (2009) showed that the number of girls aged 11-15 years admitted for alcohol related problems was twice as high as that of boys in same age bracket. The media has captured many cases of ladies who are too drunk to control themselves in an attempt to highlight this problem and the public in UK has responded by having campaigns against alcohol abuse which are gender specific. Those that target women highlight the regret and shame that follows alcohol intoxication (Mistral 2013, 59-62). This shows the double standards that apply to women in UK whereby they are expected to maintain a certain level of self-control when drunk but men can drink freely (Jayne, Holloway & Valentine 2011, 61).

Technology is a factor that encourages drinking among women because it is used to make clubbing plans and to upload pictures afterwards. The pictures and stories from drinking sessions create entertainment and friendship among them of which the main topics are sex, alcohol and fun which prevents chances of regretting alcohol abuse. A study carried out on women aged 19-29 explored their drinking practices and showed that Facebook is a major marketing tool for clubs and a good planning tool for clubbers. These women went to clubs in groups so that they could act as each other's security by keeping an eye on each other. They would use phones to know if someone is safe or if they need to be rescued from any unpleasant situation. They admitted that this safety measures were not very effective when one got intoxicated and could not pick their phone under the loud music and huge crowds (Mistral 2013, 59-64).

The women did use memory loss due to intoxication as an excuse to not be responsible for previous inappropriate behavior while looking forward excitedly to unexpected behavior in the next session of intoxication. Some did avoid extreme intoxication because it made them feel vulnerable but hangovers were told as funny stories while they enjoyed self-torture and got empathy from friends on Facebook. Women who abuse hard drugs are socially excluded in most societies because they are seen as having failed to raise families (Mistral 2013, 71-75). According to Rassool (2008, 29) social exclusion is a reason as to why people continue to abuse drugs since they have nowhere or no one to turn to.

According to O'Malley (2007, 69) women have to avoid alcohol because of the adverse effect it has on the unborn child once they get pregnant. In Latin America and the Caribbean, societal norms favor drinking among men but not among women especially if

they are not married. Therefore while men can drink in public, women have to drink privately. In some special public celebration events women can drink in public but they have to be very careful about their behavior during this time because it is under scrutiny. Men take advantage of sporting events in addition to public holidays where they make more time to drink. Women who get intoxicated are frowned upon but they are expected to understand that intoxication among men is normal and withstand it as undesirable but acceptable. Drunk men are expected to showcase their sexual strength and virility but drunk women are only seen as promiscuous and sexually available (Pyne et al. 2002, 21-22).

3.3 causes and effects of alcohol use

3.3.1Causes of alcohol use

According to Rassool (2008, 25) although alcohol continues to increase risk of mortality and diseases people still consume it to reduce anxiety and tension when socializing and for self-medication. There are many reasons as to why people engage in drug use which can be categorized into environmental, biological and psychological. Research has shown that there are biological reasons for taking drugs such as genetics and hereditary factors. However, they only influence likelihood of drug use and are then supported by economic and social circumstances so whereas biological factors may be the reason someone started using drugs, they cannot be the reason for sustaining this habit (Coomber et al. 2013, 13-14). Stressful life events such as bereavement, failure and so on can lead to drinking too much as a maladaptive behavior that seemingly eases the stress or helps one to forget it (Dooley 2003, 112).

There are two broad categories of reasons why people drink alcohol which are either to gain something from it or to avoid something through it. Gains are for example having fun, socializing and attaining a certain image. Things that can be avoided using alcohol are stress, people, loneliness and responsibilities among others. The only good reason for having a drink is to enjoy it but when someone feels that he/she badly needs to drink alcohol, this is a sign that there is an underlying problem. If that person feels like alcohol is easing the problem he/she continues to drink with the aim of meeting this need and is likely to become dependent. Taking alcohol causes many intense reactions within

the body and brain which is why the same person will behave differently after drinking wine than when drunk from spirits. This is because the brain and body associate present surroundings and emotions to the drinking experience, chemical make-up, flavor and alcohol content of the drink. Therefore when any of these things are different the reaction is likely to be different (Bryant-Jefferies 2001, 29). In the process, alcohol causes structural harm to the part of brain know as hippocampus that is responsible for learning especially in young people whose brains are still developing (WHO 2007, 8).

Psychological problems are a cause of drug use in that certain mental illnesses like bipolar disorder lead to seeking psychological fulfillment from drugs. If this is the case, while some may take drugs like alcohol to relax others may take them to make self-destruction like suicide easier. Psychological disparities in men and women can be used to explain their drug use patterns. For example women take tranquilizers from doctors to cope with mental stress while men take alcohol for the same because they feel this is more masculine. This difference is narrowing down as our way of thinking and culture changes to a situation where drug use among the sexes is now more similar. According to Gilvarry et al. (2001, 10) substance use originates from globalization as well as other environmental, individual and family factors. Environmental factors contributing to drug use are many for example if one's parents and culture is made up of drug users or she went through a rough childhood of abuse and neglect and also as a result of feeling like a failure in life economically or socially. Social exclusion and poverty are other environmental factors that correlate to dependent drug use but they cannot be proven as the main cause.

According to sociological theorists, drug use became prevalent after the post-war era among capitalists due to anomie. When the pressure to get a good education, well-paying job and raise a family in a good neighborhood becomes excessive, some people become alienated and look for a different cultural status away from society and in a drug lifestyle. The rest of society sees them as rebellious and labels them as deviant and this pushes them deeper into drug dependence in an attempt to survive the stigma. This is the breaking down of values, norms and morals in a society leading to personal alienation (Comber et al. 2013, 16). For example when a person goes from developing to developed nations to study, there is anomie because the values, norms and morals in this new country are new and his/her own are no longer present and this can lead to drug use. In addition to this, globalization has been found to be the fuel behind use of sub-

stances among youths who learn modern ways of using it through the media (Puuronen & Hakamies 2001, 86).

For the same reasons that people start taking legal drugs, with time they get attracted to illicit and illegal drugs. This reasons include to have a good time, feel even more confident, to join a subculture away from the norm, to break the rules, to utilize their availability, to experience better effects, losing weight, peer pressure, to improve work or study performance, to escape stress or boredom, to relieve pain, counter withdrawal symptoms, satisfy cravings or to avoid negative feelings of medication. A person's perception of a certain drug influences his/her decision to use or abuse it for example most people would easily take soft drugs like cannabis but avoid hard drugs like cocaine because the latter is perceived to be more harmful (Rassool 2008, 29-30). From my observation, alcohol use in western countries like Finland has become more socially acceptable than in developing nations such as Kenya.

Alcohol use has several sources such as culture, peer pressure, family background or individual preferences. For example urban areas shape the opinion and attitude of young people on drugs in a different way from rural areas whereby it's more acceptable in urban areas. Reasons behind the disparity in drug use habits between urban and rural areas can also be explained by other factors such as family breakup and differences in income. In most cases patterns of alcohol use transcend across nations and territories and now they have become part of globalization (Sher 2010 xii – 4). In my opinion, countries with good welfare systems like Finland are able to avoid income disparities and respond to stressful situations better so they do not experience huge geographical disparities in drug use. According to alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU (2006, 36) when rate of unemployment is high, it is more difficult to control alcohol use and its consequences. This shows that for alcohol use to be eradicated, social problems must be addressed.

Reference group theory by sociologists' states that drug use comes from groups that one associates with. If one has a group of friends who take drugs they teach her how to enjoy their effects. Normalization theory refers to a situation where within certain societies or groups controlled use of a certain drug is viewed as normal and expected for example cannabis among youths in UK and ecstasy among dance groups since 1990s. These sociological explanations show that we cannot ignore the social, historical and cultural contexts in which people use drugs if we want to understand why they do so.

For example to understand drug use among youths in Finland we must know the Finnish culture, history and social set up (See: Coomber et al. 2013, 16).

3.3.2 Positive and negative effects of alcohol use

Alcohol is a legal drug that has some benefits such as mental relaxation, stress reduction, memory inhibition for those who have gone through trauma, muscle relaxation, lessening pain and as a social lubricant it encourages interaction and creativity. Therefore it has been used to calm down, soothe babies who are teething, dull pain or enhance the effect of other drugs and for religious rituals. However, it brings harm to more body organs than any other drug including heart, liver, stomach, pancreas and digestive tract (Denning, Little & Glickman 2004, 67, 146- 147). When taken in moderate amounts, wine has some health benefits such as being an antioxidant which prevents cardiovascular diseases, coronary heart diseases, inflammation and mutagenesis. This is because for example red wine is made from grapes, yeast and wood which are rich in phenolic (Mazzei et al. 2009, 7-8). Alcohol is also a stimulant that can be useful for medicinal purposes such as maintaining good mental health and improving blood circulation (Smith 2012, 53).

Primarily, alcohol is a depressant that slows down rate of activity in the central nervous system which produces a feeling of relaxation. After drinking a person is relaxed, has more confidence and starts to enjoy the social environment (Martin & Moira 1992, 13). Although alcohol consumption brings pleasure and fun to many people, consuming it excessively brings many harmful effects. Excessive consumption of alcohol refers to both the amounts and patterns of alcohol consumed. For example taking 10 units of alcohol, each 8-14 Grams per week is good and moderate drinking that could not lead to personal or health problems. However if those 10 units are consumed in one day instead of being distributed over the week, it is likely to cause personal and health problems. Therefore alcohol consumption is not bad but its daily intake should be done moderately in order to get only the positive effects of alcohol use (Lassiter 2009, 3-4).

The positive effects of alcohol consumption are very few compared to its harmful ones. It is important to understand the harmful effects of alcohol by looking into them in details so that they can stop being overlooked. The pattern and volume of alcohol con-

sumption leads to different problems. For example heavy drinking for a long period of time the toxic effect of alcohol on the brain and other body organs (Sher & Merrick 2009, 236). Sustained heavy drinking that is common in countries whose culture is wine drinking can lead to dependence and tissue damage. Drinking some alcohol every day or occasionally but over a long period of time will result to liver cirrhosis due to cumulative effect of alcohol on liver. Taking a lot of alcohol only on occasions can cause social and medical problems like injuries, accidents, tissue damage, violence and aggressiveness towards friends, family or spouses. Sustained drinking may lead to dependence and at this level the amount of alcohol consumed increases leading to a different pattern of drinking for example daily basis. Dependence on alcohol is a major source of either acute or chronic social problems as well as medical complications (Babor et al. 2010, 15).

Social harm caused by alcohol is quantified by calculating the 'cost of illnesses'. They include the cost of: productivity lost when a person dies due to alcohol, unemployment, absenteeism, healthcare provided, damage from traffic crashes and crime, criminal justice, health provision and social services offered. Alcohol causes many social problems such as within the family it leads to divorce and trauma for young children. It can lead to problems in the workplace such not completing the work on time, being late and eventually losing the job. Interpersonal problems with friends and relatives are common among drinkers whose habits affect those around them. Social marginalization can take place due to for example homelessness and crime which normally results to being jailed. Drinking may also have a wider effect on social groups for instance in cases of poor performance in the work place, an entire company is affected. Drunken assaults and rowdiness from youths puts a society in fear of insecurity. Social and religious events that unite a society may be adversely affected by alcohol consumption resulting to anomie and lack of harmony (WHO 2007, 21).

Alcohol is said to be toxic because it harms body organs and systems either directly or indirectly. According to Mistral (2013, 43) World Health Organization (2012) gave a report that alcohol causes 60 types of injuries and diseases and contributes indirectly to 200 of them. In people who drink alcohol occasionally, some medical problems are likely to occur such as alcohol poisoning, acute cardiac arrhythmias and acute pancreatitis. It also causes chronic illnesses to people who have consumed high levels of alcohol over a long period of time such as cirrhosis and cancer of the mouth, colon and esophagus. Cancer comes about as a result of combining cigarette smoking with alcohol con-

sumption and there is growing evidence on role of alcohol in increasing likelihood of breast cancer. When alcohol damages tissues it causes disease on heart muscle, hypertension which increases risk of stroke, it wastes the limb muscle, brings peripheral neuritis and can cause different type of brain damage. When pregnant women drink heavily a child develops fetal alcohol syndromes (FAS) whose symptoms are retarded growth, disabilities like hearing impairment, abnormalities on the face and heart disorders. However, there is no known measure as to how much alcohol causes FAS and mild alcohol consumption in pregnant women can result to mild child disorders that are recoverable (Babor et al. 2010, 15-16).

Alcohol causes intoxication which affects psychological and psychomotor performances by making them less functional. When psychomotor performances are les functional, movement and balance becomes difficult which increases risk of accidents. This is made worse by the fact that the length of time it takes for a person to react is also lengthened. Another effect of intoxication is impairing a judgment which leads to taking dangerous risks like over speeding while driving (Babor et al. 2010, 16). According to Mistral (2013, 44) Raccioppi & Bertollini (2007) found that drivers with under 21 years of age are the most likely to cause accidents when drunk and male drivers aged 21 to 24 years are twice as likely to cause an accident as those aged 35 to 49 years although they have same alcohol concentration in their blood. In 2004, Finland's number of case caught by police due to drunk driving was 27, 000 and this had increased by 10% since 2003. Cases of accidents caused by drunk driving have been on the rise and they increased by 6% in 2004 from the previous year. Nevertheless, the number of people detained due to intoxication has increased from 83,000 in 1997 to above 100 000 in 2005 which is around 11% of all drinkers (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU 2006, 18-19).

According to social affairs and health ministry in Finland (2006, 20), 70% of those with cases of suspected assault were under influence of alcohol in 2004. The same report shows that from 1990 to 2004 when alcohol consumption increased in Finland, the number of cases of assault also increased. According to Babor et al. (2010, 16) intoxication can lead to changes in emotions and lack of regard towards social expectations such as violence towards others, harming oneself intentionally, depression and suicide. Signs of intoxication that are easy to recognize are like slurred speech but inability to drive may not be easy to detect. Social harms including being drunk in public, absenteeism and other work related problems, drunk driving and family problems like divorce have

an effect on society as whole. The high cost of alcohol contributes to many economic problems within families because as Carey (2012, 71) argued it becomes like *a sponge soaking up all the money.*

Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU (2006, 21) has reported cases of homicides to be coming mainly from alcoholic men who are socially excluded and in 2005, homicides in Finland were 114 while attempted homicides were 355. The same report also shows that up to 50% of cases where children are taken into government's custody are due to parent's abusing alcohol and other drugs. These social harms are determined by society's reaction to drunkenness for example in 'wet' cultures one might not lose a job for being drunk as easily as in 'dry' cultures. There is need to pre-vent social harms using physical measures such as making drinking environments safer or regulating drinking time so that it is separate from working periods. Other methods are for individuals to avoid drinking until they get intoxicated and for government to come up with suitable prevention policies (Babor et al. 2010, 17- 18).

Teater & Barbra (2010, 131) discuss about how a certain man started drinking alcohol while still a teenager but has continued to increase his alcohol intake in order to reach the same level of satisfaction even though it has brought many problems into his life and this is a good example of tolerance. Tolerance means how the body behaves and adapts to a drug when it is used several times. At first the body needs just a small amount to give a certain reaction, behavior or feeling but with time it requires more and more amounts to give the same. For tolerance to take place, a drug must be taken many times and in the correct amounts but hard drugs like cocaine cause tolerance faster than soft ones like alcohol. Tolerance goes hand in hand with psychological and physical dependence. Psychological dependence results to craving for more of the drug so as to be stimulated and relieve anxiety. Physical dependence results to taking a drug to avoid withdrawal symptoms and other physical problems. For example physical dependence on alcohol can cause shaking of hands or body when the person is sober. The reasons people start to use drugs are different from why they continue to do so, they may start out of curiosity but continue due to dependence, social exclusion, mental health prob-lems, environmental factors or fear of withdrawal syndrome (Rassool 2008, 29).

Alcohol dependence syndrome is a big problem which results from positive or negative reinforcements. The reinforcement takes place when a stimulus for example feeling more energetic and sociable increases the probability of a given response in this case the

response is to take more alcohol and sustain that feeling. Alcohol also has psychoactive properties which affect the brain's opioid endogenous system leading to addiction and dependence (Martin 2008, 1). A person who is dependent on alcohol has withdrawal symptoms when sober, always needs more and more alcohol to achieve desired effect, continues to use alcohol even though it harms him like when the doctor has warned against it, uses most of his time in activities that will generate more alcohol like gambling and has such a strong desire to consume alcohol that he loses control and does not know when to stop and attend to other more important things. It is therefore important for alcohol to be looked at as not just an ordinary consumption product but as one that has ability to cause dependence (Babor et al.2010, 18-21).

Alcohol use has been found to contribute to around 50% of all suicides and it also brings with it health complications, economic problems or in some cases social dysfunction. In most cases where a person was under the influence of either alcohol or drugs, the methods and results of suicide are more brutal. It also brings too many risky behaviors such as those of a sexual nature or criminal behavior like aggressiveness. For example in cases where a student has become dependent on alcohol it can affect studies or result to theft in search of money to buy it (Sher 2010, xii-4). Alcohol has had a major impact on the whole world by causing social problems, health complications and increased mortality. Although there is no existing scientific proof of social problems caused by alcohol because it is difficult to evaluate and measure this, comparison between nations and reliable measurements show that they exists. It can be felt through problems such as vandalism, public disorder, interpersonal problems, financial problems, problems at the work place, educational difficulties, social costs of rehabilitation, death, violence, and family problems like divorce and child abuse. These social problems affect mainly the children in a home who get psychologically affected by violence between their parents. They suffer even more when this violence leads to either death or divorce (Babor et al. 2010, 43-44).

The total number of deaths due to alcohol is an estimated 3000 people per year. Of these, 700 deaths are due to accidents and violence, 1000 are due to intoxication and 1,400 people have died of alcohol related disease. From a global outlook of alcohol's effect on health, we find that it contributes to too many diseases and deaths. For example binge drinking is known to Cause coronary heart disease and it is common in countries such as Russia. According to Leon ae al. (1997) deaths from circulatory disease including coronary heart disease dropped by 9% in males and 6% in females when total alcohol

consumption dropped by around 25% in Russia from 1995 to 1998. According to Rossow (2000), alcohol and suicide are prevalent among those who drink heavily. The strength in this relationship might vary between cultures and suicide levels are highest in countries whose drinking patterns can be said to be explosive or where intoxication is an acceptable characteristic (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU 2006, 22).

According to WHO (2009, 1) injuries caused by alcohol cause around 5.2 Million deaths every year. The global burden of disease studies showed that in 1990 alcohol-related death and disability were at 4% .The biggest contributor to this percentage were neuropsychiatric diseases at 36.%.Followed by injuries at 35.9%, liver cirrhosis and cardiovascular diseases at 10% each and cancerous malignant neoplasms at 9%. Males are more affected by alcohol related diseases than females in a ratio of around 1:5.5. Among countries with the highest populations, the burden of alcohol related diseases is highest in Russia for males at 28 %, followed by Brazil at 17.7%, China at 12.9% and Germany at 13%. In the globe, youths between 15 to 29 years are the most highly affected by diseases caused by alcohol at 34%, followed by adults aged 30 to 44 years at 31% and lastly people aged 45-59 years take up 22% (Babor et al. 2010, 57-60).According to WHO (2009) costs attributed to alcohol are due to problems such as crime, health care, work absenteeism, premature mortality and unemployment (Riley et al. 2012, 196).

Alcohol is psychoactive and therefore it leads to dependence in animals and human beings, its' effect on the brain causes hallucination, depression, change of mood and behavior. Because of the effects chronic use of alcohol has on the brain, quitting can cause withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, hyper-excitability or even seizures (Abraha & Cusi 2012, 40). Besides damaging the brain, chronic use of alcohol also weakens the immune system leaving the user vulnerable to infectious diseases. Although minimal drinking can reduce heart attacks especially in those aged 45 years and above, excessive drinking can lead to heart attacks. In conclusion, alcohol causes a wide range of harmful effects including worsening physical and mental ailments, its toxic effects can damage almost any part of the body and when it interacts with other prescribed or illicit drugs in the body it can lead to intentional or unintentional harm (WHO 2007, 7-9). The most affected age-groups by problems related to alcohol use are those aged 15-29 years followed by those aged 30 to 44 years. This is a threat to the development of society because of for example prenatal damages (Mcgrady 2011, 16).

4. Methodology

4.1 Purpose of the study

The study aims at exploring the situation of alcohol use among international students in Lapland. The main points are to study their drinking culture, its' causes, effects and find out how the 'wet' drinking culture in Finland has affected them since they came to Lapland. Therefore the study shall focus on international students in Lapland and their drinking and partying culture. The objectives of this study are to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the situation of alcohol use among international students and how has it changed since they came to Lapland?
2. How is the culture of alcohol use among international students and how do they view Finnish drinking culture?
3. What are the causes and effects of alcohol use among international students in Lapland?

The study will explore i) if there are any changes in alcohol use among students since they come to Lapland (changes in patterns of alcohol use, moral values, norms or culture). ii) The study will find out how international students who do not use alcohol interact with those who do, their reasons for not using alcohol and their views on alcohol use.

The other point of focus iii) will be on understanding culture of alcohol use among international students. This shall include understanding student's party culture, habits, norms and values while studying in Lapland. iv) The study shall aim at finding out if students have taken part in Finnish drinking culture, how it has influenced them and what opinion they have of it. v) The study shall explore alcohol use among international students along gender lines and compare drinking among male and female students.

Another point of focus vi) shall be finding out the causes of alcohol use among international students in Lapland. vii) The study shall explore the negative and positive effects of alcohol use among international students in Lapland.

The research also pays attention to where alcohol use takes place, the brands of alcohol consumed and how often and how much alcohol they use as well as how well the students are able to control their alcohol use. The research is conducted by making questionnaires that can be answered online and sending them to international students. The international students are randomly selected and the questionnaire's link is sent to them through their emails or on Facebook. The Facebook groups for international students are targeted and the questionnaires are anonymously answered.

4.2 Data collection

It is common for students to take alcohol at student parties as they have fun and collecting data on the topic might be viewed either positively or negatively by the students. The topic of alcohol use among international students came to my mind when I arrived in Lapland and witnessed the wet drinking culture myself. I felt that I would like to carry out a study that would open the depth of its impact on our lives as students. I also feel that international students are more vulnerable to alcohol use because of the changes they go through when they relocate to Finland. Some of these changes affect them emotionally and psychologically because they are far from their culture, parents and friends so they feel a little bit depressed. Financial changes and being in different climatic conditions can be difficult and alcohol might seem like a solace. Yet these students have academic goals that need to be achieved and this research will establish if they are able to strike a balance and control their alcohol use.

Data collection is a process of getting information from a targeted group of people. It requires a well-structured tool to get the right kind of information. There are several data collection methods including surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observation and focus group discussions. A survey is one type of questionnaire which is used in situations where only beliefs, attitudes and opinions are captured while questionnaires are much more flexible because they capture a wide range of data including these and many more (Philips 2008, 2-10). It was confusing for me to decide which method was best suited to my study at first because all of them seemed appropriate but in the end I settled for a survey. Due to the sensitive nature of my topic, it I wanted to collect anonymous data because it is said to be more objective and in some cases has a better flow than that provided in a face to face interview. In selecting the medium of delivering these ques-

tionnaires, I opted to use e-mail and social media platforms because they are the ones most commonly used by my target group. I also tried to make the questions precise and to have a reasonable number of questions.

Survey design was through a web based survey programmer which is easy for students to use as they can navigate through the questions comfortably. The questionnaire was encrypted so that one person could only give a response once and after submitting the answers it would not be possible to go back to the submitted feedback. I felt this was necessary to ensure that one student does not give several responses that are not authentic. It was not possible for respondents to see the responses of other students either although it is possible for them to contact me through email if they want to know the final results of this study. Answering the questionnaire did not have a time limit so that respondents would have enough time to think and give the best responses. However it showed progress in percentage so that respondents could see how near they are to completing the questionnaire and not be anxious since the questionnaire was reasonably long. It was easy for respondents who do not use alcohol to skip those questions that were irrelevant to them because there were instructions saying that they should answer only the first and last part of the questionnaire.

At the beginning of the study I wanted to focus on students in only one student apartment but since students are changing apartments all the time I had to change this to all other apartments. This also had the merit of preventing bias and avoiding a situation where only one student apartment is targeted hence homogeneous data. I came up with around fifty questions at the beginning and eventually I narrowed them down to a reasonable number. This is because it was so hard for me to identify the exact kind of information I needed from my clients and everything seemed relevant but as I thought more about it, I was able to distinguish what was more relevant. Coming up with research tasks was also very helpful in determining the relevant questions in answering targeted research questions. Guest (2012, 31) argues that thematic analysis must be well planned at the research design stage and this is done through answering question such as how analysis is connected to research questions and what is the analytical purpose. Research tasks made connection of analysis to questions very clear to me and I established that my analytical purpose was to compare, explore and explain certain aspects in my topic.

 At first I wanted to research on use of alcohol and other drugs among international students but I found that there are very many types of drugs and it is not possible to find out about all of them in one study. The fact that other drugs are illegal would also make data collection very difficult so I narrowed down to alcohol use because it is the most commonly used legal drug. Guest (2012, 22) suggests that in cases where a lot of knowledge exists on the topic of research but the topic has a new context, the questionnaire should be pilot tested to be sure that the process of recruitment, words used in the questions and ability to expose new dimensions are fit for the new context. Therefore i carried out a pilot test of my questionnaire on five students at first using a questionnaire that was similar to the one I developed in the end. He further suggests that if the topic has a new context, data analysis should be on-going even before data collection is complete but I opted to analyze data after data collection is complete.

The pilot test was done through face to face interview on 6 respondents and some respondents had difficulties expressing themselves in spoken English but they used the internet every now and then to find the right words. When comparing how much alcohol they took in their home country and how much they are taking in Finland, one respondent answered all the questions while looking at the ground then told me that she felt deeply embarrassed by having to say to me how much her alcohol intake has increased. It was also not very easy for me to ask my friends or classmates these questions without feeling like I am invading their right to privacy. This made me think that it is a better idea to send the questionnaire online and in this way students can feel free to talk about the negative impacts of alcohol on their lives. During face to face interviews I had to give them the questionnaire to fill in the correct option on personal information and comparing their alcohol consumption at home and in Finland which is much easier and faster online. Warren & Karner (2010, 2) argues that qualitative interviewing is ideally done mainly through face to face communication by telephone or through the internet. However, they agree that there are instances such as costs, distance or in my case sensitivity of the topic to respondents that make it necessary to administer the questionnaire online.

Initially I had intended to use snowball sampling technique but when the method of administering questionnaire changed I opted for random sampling. The questionnaire was sent on Facebook by placing the link in the Lapland university international student's group which has 334 members. I also sent the link to my friends, acquaintances and classmates through either email or Facebook. Some of my friends asked me if they

could tell their friends to answer as well and I agreed. I got insight from Guest (2012, 22-27) where he explains ways in which we can ensure that we collect good quality data and illustrates on how to apply data collection techniques. To ensure that I got good quality data, I came up with a good introduction to my questionnaire which talked about the objectives of this study in brief. I also included my email address incase respondents needed clarification on any question and stated that if anyone prefers a face to face interview I can be available. I was hoping to get a random sample that would be representative of the students shown by the table below:

Table 1: Number of international students enrolled into Lapland University

YEAR	International degree students	Incoming exchange students	total
2010	50	216	266
2011	70	199	269
2012	80	235	315
2013	93	268	361

When sending the questionnaire to my friends I also added a short, friendly introduction of the questionnaire and its objectives in a language I felt they could understand. The online questionnaire was encrypted such that identity of the students cannot be traced back to the sender and their email addresses are hidden. The time limit within which they were expected to answer the questions was also included. Data collection took place in this way in the month of March and since I had given my email on the questionnaire, I got some feedback for example some complained that the questionnaire is too long. ESPAD (2011, 30) experienced a challenge whereby some of the questionnaires collected from students showed answers that were obviously not true and they had to be given a different code then set aside. This is a challenge I anticipated to encounter because my method of data collection and target population is similar to that of ESPAD.

Multiple methods of collecting data such as combining observation with interviewing may be a good idea especially if you are not interested in theoretical base of a research design. These methods may seem to bring more data to the table that researchers think will improve reliability of one method. However, different methods may bring different ways of viewing the same social reality and influence a researcher to look at interview

data from his/her own perception instead of that of respondents. Hammerseley & Atkinson (1983) point out that we should not assume data from different methods can be combined into one complete picture without bringing any problems. Besides complicating the research design, using multiple methods can lead to a lot of data that ends up being under- analyzed for example if a researcher moves to another dataset when the first one becomes difficult to analyze (Silverman 2000, 98-99). I had to consider these arguments when deciding whether I should use both observation and interview to collect data. Because I am an international student myself, I can easily observe my fellow students at parties and analyze this kind of data. However, this would then bring complications when analyzing the data I have collected from the same students especially if what I saw them doing is different from what they reported.

The total number of respondents who took the survey in the month of March was 30. Female respondents' were53% while male respondents were 47% but there was equal representation of exchange and full time students. The highest numbers of respondents were from the European continent and most of them have been in Lapland for a period of roughly one year. The biggest percentage of students who responded is between the ages of 23 to 26 followed by those aged 27 to 30. Details of the respondents are represented in the tables below:

Table 2: Age group of respondents

Age group	15-18	19-22	23-26	27-30	30 and above	Total
%	3	27	40	20	10	100

Table 3: Respondents' continent of origin

Continent	Europe	Africa	Asia	North America	South America	Antarctica and Australia	Total
%	40	33	21	3	3	0	100

Table 4: The period that respondents have lived in Finland

Period	Less than 6 months	1 year	2 years	More than two years	Total
%	33	33	17	17	100

There were some challenges in the data collected because some students who use alcohol gave answers to the last part of the questionnaire that was reserved for those who do not use alcohol. The research instrument is partly to blame for this because the instructions were probably not as clear as they should have been, on my part I should have done more to make respondents aware of this structure. Also there were some data that was unclearly expressed, too precise to be understood or answering a different question but this was solved during coding.

4.3 Ethical considerations

As a researcher I am charged with ethical responsibilities to respondents, academic fraternity, society and fellow researchers that I intend to adhere to. For instance I will uphold the value of transparency when collecting and recording data. I will apply honesty while seeking informed consent from respondents and when reporting findings. When presenting results I will try to apply accuracy and clarity to the best of my ability. I also intend to be honest about the failures or successes of the research. I will observe my ethical responsibility to carry out research that can improve the society around me by publishing the research in a Gradu thesis which students can read whenever they want. I will be hoping that the results of this study can improve society by reminding students the effects of indulging in alcohol consumption. When asking my friends to respond to the questionnaire I made, I was glad that I could send it online and they can chose if they want to participate or not instead of forcing themselves to answer just because we are friends. Anonymity ensures I will never know who responded and who did not, so I cannot feel hurt by those friends who are unwilling to contribute. Oliver (2010, 26) advises that it is ethical to give respondents enough time to choose whether or not they want to participate in the research.

Ethics in research helps us to behave in a way that protects the rights of individuals, environments and communities. If we fail to observe ethics, we contribute to long term harm on respondents which will affect future researchers negatively. Ethical behavior helps to build trust between researchers and their respondents. This happens when respondents find that the researcher is honest and honorable and so they are comfortable in exposing even the most sensitive issues and contribute fully and openly to the research. Research done without ethical caution or sensitivity to culture can cause withdrawal of research funding, community support and respondents. Lack of ethics raises suspicion and causes fear between sponsors, respondents and researchers so it must be avoided. There are chances of acting without being watched so researchers can be tempted to for example fabricate data or obtain data under false pretense but acting ethically brings integrity in research (Israel & Hay 2006, 1-5).

Ethical considerations should be done from the earliest stage of a research. The term respondent means that their contribution to the research process and findings is valued and appreciated (Oliver 2010, 10). The moral justification of my research is that it will provide knowledge on use of alcohol among international students and how they view the Finnish drinking culture. As a matter of ethical concern I chose to refer to those I collected data from as respondents but not subjects or interviewees. There are some areas of my research that I have struggled to justify ethically for example if it turns out that international students have many negative behaviors due to alcohol, how will exposing this facts help the situation given that I am one of them. However, all knowledge produced through research is good because it has many uses such as planning the future. When analyzing data I shall have no ill intentions of misrepresenting the respondents but I shall just tell the truth.

In Finland there are ethics committees such as National advisory board on ethics and research for humanities, social and behavioral science which review and outline ethical expectations. The committees expect that any research carried out in Finland must abide by guidelines written in the good scientific practice and procedures of handling fraud and misconduct in science (2012) document. Within this document, ethical guidelines are divided into three categories which are respecting autonomy of respondents, avoiding harm and data or privacy protection. Research organizations and Universities in Finland have agreed to conform to these ethical considerations so they form their own committees that concentrate on ethical issues in within (National advisory board on re-

search ethics, 2009, 1-5). When deciding which ethical considerations are important in my research, I will abide by these ethical considerations aimed at researchers in Finland.

Oliver (2010, 82-84) argues that promising confidentiality to respondents is not enough because they should be told which people will have access to this data and what the purpose of collecting it is. For example if media personnel will have access to that data but respondents are not informed there is breach of confidentiality. The people who will access this data once it is published should be made unambiguously clear to respondents before they answer questions. The procedures that will be followed to protect their identity should also be stated. In this research study, I mentioned in the questionnaire that data is collected as part of a master in Comparative social work degree. This means that lecturers, professors, students and the University fraternity at large will have access to this data once it is analyzed. The promise of confidentiality that I made to respondents is something I will treat with seriousness from a moral point of view. I will refrain from discussing anything funny or extra ordinary about my data with friends.

Respecting autonomy of respondents involves ensuring participation is voluntary and it's based on informed consent (National advisory board on research ethics, 2009, 5). I did not give rewards or promise rewards beforehand for respondents to participate. They voluntarily agreed to answer the questions either orally or in written form. Informed consent refers to the fact that respondents should have adequate information on what the research is about so I did not hide anything from them including my identity and email. I also gave them information on what I hoped their responses shall contribute to which is to substantiate any stereotypes on international students' alcohol use. I gave them the time limit within which they were to respond to the questionnaire. I included the anonymous nature of my questionnaire by stating that respondents were not expected to give any information about their identity.

In social science researches the kind of harm that can be caused is not physical but mostly psychological, causing discomfort, invasion of privacy or infringement of rights and it must be avoided or minimized. This research chose to collect data through survey to reduce invasion of privacy which causes psychological discomfort. When avoiding harm in research it is argued that researchers should aim at doing 'good' instead. This is done by acting in ways that others can benefit from and trying to help as many people as we can. In social science when we build a certain body of knowledge it benefits the whole society in the long run (Israel & Hay 2006, 96-103). For instance this research

will create awareness on some of the issues international students go through that make them see alcohol as an easy temporary solution. If this catches the eye of policy makers something can be done about it and any other significant issues. Researchers must be active in combating social problems by finding out more about them and giving recommendations.

Confidentiality in handling data is something I have considered by having anonymous questionnaires. However, social and financial harm can result if data is not interpreted in the most honest and accurate way possible without judgment, disrespect or prejudice (National advisory board on research ethics 2009, 9). I will avoid producing a negative image in any theme by sticking to systematic and honest analysis of data and giving properly balanced arguments. In my research I have had ethical considerations in mind especially with regard to the fact that my topic is a bit sensitive since it touches on issues such as sexual behavior and alcohol control among my fellow international students. What I have struggled most with is cultural sensitivity because student culture in alcohol use is one of my themes and I felt that I have to apply ethics so that respondents do not feel like I am against the culture and refrain from answering the questions.

Everyone has right to privacy in Finland so in research it is ethical to observe protection of privacy and data. Personal data Act (523/1999) in the Finnish constitution has provisions on how personal data should be processed and it defines personal data as any information about individuals' personal circumstances, characteristics or any other identifiable information on an individual and his/her household. Therefore personal data can only be collected with informed consent and if there is no need for identifiers they should not be used. Direct identifiers such as names and indirect identifiers such as school should be hidden before data is stored for use as secondary data. Raw data must be destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. To ensure confidentiality, data cannot be shared with other researchers or the media. If some of the information reveals a crime, it is unethical for the researcher to report this to authorities unless it can prevent a crime from taking place (National advisory board on research ethics 2009, 10-12). In accordance with these rules, in this research there are no identifiers but I shall ensure that data is destroyed as soon as analysis is over, I shall not share it with other researchers or reveal anything to authorities.

Anonymity in research has an advantage to my research because respondents can express themselves more freely and objectively without fear of being judged. They are

able to express their true feelings in the formal or informal language that they feel comfortable using. A researcher is justified to give anonymity when dealing with a topic as sensitive as this one. I felt that I was being considerate and ethical when choosing to let my respondents remain anonymous as they discuss their drinking habits, causes and its effects. Anonymity can be risky if respondents take advantage of it to give information that can harm the image of others by using insulting language for example saying false things about Finish culture. In this research there is nothing I could do to prevent this apart from hoping that respondents will be objective. If I get responses that are obviously not objective, I will have to code them as 'unclear data' then exclude it and include this in the report. However, Oliver (2010, 81) arguers that it is a matter of ethical debate as to whether some data should be omitted give that if respondents were randomly sampled, their responses should be equally valued.

In this research most of the respondents were reached through social media because my target population is youths and this is where they spend a lot of their free time. Oliver (2010, 133) argues that respondents acquired through the internet are human beings so all ethical considerations must be implemented. Therefore I made an effort to seek for respondent's informed consent, ensure their privacy and respect their autonomy. When collecting data through the internet there are some ethical issues to consider such as how to communicate with respondents we cannot see and how to be sure of their identity. I encrypted my questionnaire to one response per person to prevent multiple responses from one person. However there are issues I could not prevent such as preventing one questionnaire from being answered by a person and three of his/her best friends. I tried to make sure the questions are clear enough to be understood by respondents without the help of an interviewer by having pilot studies and using simple language. On social media language used is informal and so respondents are likely to use the same in answering questions but this would be an expected and welcome challenge.

Possible harm in research can result from how data is stored, how it is collected and consequences of publishing it. The subjects determine privacy limits after giving informed consent by determining what they can or cannot reveal. If a research is done through observation, participants should be informed that they are being observed, researcher must report in a way that respects their human dignity and if the research causes respondents visible discomfort such as anger, it should be stopped immediately (National advisory board on research ethics, 2009, 9). Since respondents in this research were asked to write down their answers, they had a good chance to regulate what they

find to be damaging or harmful to their culture and reputation. The same topic brings out different types of emotions in various respondents such as anger, embarrassment or pride and though a researcher cannot prevent this, ethics helps to reduce its impact.

Data collected and stored using information technology can easily fall into the wrong hands so I will handle it with a lot of care to prevent this. For instance I shall not share the password to my computer with anyone and I shall store backup copies in highly confidential places. In cases where I might get tempted to analyze the data for other things that the respondents were not aware of, I will keep in mind that this is a breach of the principle of informed consent. Using internet to collect information has the disadvantage of collecting information that is too brief or whose language is too informal to be understood. I tried to encourage those I gave my questionnaire to that they should give comprehensible answers. Oliver (2010, 51-52) advises that it is unethical to interrupt with the social nature or ethnography of respondents. Since most of the questionnaires were given through my Facebook page, I tried to get respondents who are as random as possible. To achieve this I avoided approaching only those who are my friends on Facebook because friends tend to have similar characteristics and this produces homogenous data. Therefore I also approached some strangers from Facebook groups and requested them to answer the questionnaire.

Loue (2000, 175) defines scientific misconduct as that which includes falsification, fabrication and plagiarism of information or any other errors that go against common practices during any stage of the research. It does not include any mistakes or omissions made through honest mistakes. Plagiarism refers to not only copying an authors' work directly or without giving due credit to him/her but also reporting that the author said things that he/she did not actually say. Scientific misconduct is also an issue of ethical concern that I shall consider in this research by including citations and references where necessary according to rules of scientific writing. The research shall include only what respondents said without any falsification or fabrication of information. According to MIsrael & Hay (2006, 113) every researcher has an obligation to be honest during research, accurate in reporting, fair when making reviews and cooperative in sharing information with other researchers. These obligations bide researchers to avoid scientific misconduct so that research can grow with integrity. Fabrication is writing false data while falsification is manipulating the data obtained.

When the researcher is of a different cultural background from respondents, there are some ethical factors to consider. The researcher should not give the impression that his/her culture is the superior one to that of a respondent because this will bring conflicts. When analyzing data I will keep in mind that I am from a different culture and report objectively without favoring my culture or bringing unfair comparisons. Individuals tend to view certain issues based on their own cultural background and this research will have respondents from diverse cultures. Where respondents talked about Finnish culture in a way that makes theirs seem more superior for instance, I will ignore the comparison and just focus on their views of Finnish drinking culture. However, when looking at the drinking culture of students, I will appreciate differences brought in by their cultural differences and analyze this based on continents. Oliver (2010, 109) warns that there is the issue of which methodology should be used to place respondents into their respective cultural categories should be addressed but I hope it shall not be a big issue for me because respondents stated which continents they come from.   When looking at alcohol use along gender lines I will also keep in mind that I should be neutral instead of taking sides with my gender.

4.4 Data analysis

Qualitative research requires an interactive relationship between data collection and data analysis. There should be good data management that provides a system of data collection, storage and easy retrieval. Data acquired in qualitative research is often big in size, it can be in varying forms such as documents or text and it has mixed up information. The researcher has to go through the data and find themes that are emerging from that data since analysis is topic oriented. Therefore, it should be easy for an analyzer to go back and forth on the data both chronologically and topic wise. Since data collection and analysis are intertwined in qualitative research, decisions on how to handle data have analytic consequences that are long-term. Using software's to collect and store data has an advantage because digital storage is more convenient than paper storage, it also provides procedures of data storage such as spreadsheets and an ability to safely maintain the records for as long as they are needed (Hardy & Bryman 2004, 533-534).

At the beginning of data analysis process, one must have an idea on what information he/she wants to end up with in final analysis. These ideas are learnt from reading other

people's analysis to see the structure of summarized analysis. The questions we should strive to answer from qualitative data are what, how and why (Warren & Karner 2010, 216-217). In this research I shall analyze data to understand what kind of alcohol students are drinking, what is the drinking culture they have established in Lapland and what are the alcohol related issues along gender lines. I shall analyze how students are using alcohol in terms of venue and amount, how is the party culture, how is alcohol use along gender lines, how are their drinking patterns and how has it changed since they came to Lapland. I shall then analyze why international students use alcohol, why they have changed their alcohol use since they came to Lapland, why they attend student parties and why there are differences or similarities in alcohol use along gender lines. As I read through my data I expect to come up with several themes and sub-themes after applying organizational skills and creativity.

In research there are matters that are qualitative in nature such as happiness and culture and there are those that are quantitative in nature such as measuring the extent of something or analyzing patterns of alcohol consumption. Quantitative studies show important relationships statistically such as relationship between gender and alcohol consumption while socially constructed meaning such as how students feel during student parties can only be captured qualitatively. Quantitative studies also use numerical patterns to show how a social life is like for example how the alcohol consumption patterns of students are like (Warren & Karner 2010, 1-5). When analyzing student's alcohol consumption patterns I shall use tables generated quantitatively. I shall identify themes recurring in the data and come up with conclusive analysis report on them by mentioning what has emerged to be the opinion of most respondents on these themes.

Shaw & Gould (2002, 27) argue that quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to complement each other whereby quantitative would be used to show linkage, precision and control while qualitative would show how systems work, hidden phenomena, contextual factors and provide descriptions. The theme of culture is of a social nature so comparing student's alcohol consumption patterns can be done both qualitatively and quantitatively. The logic used to refer to qualitative research information is social constructionism. This logic states that the sociologists and other researchers' knowledge of social life come from understanding what certain interactions mean to participants. The logic has two assumptions which are that a research should look into the micro levels of social interaction instead of macro and it also assumes positivism. In positivism it is assumed that any researcher who understands the research design and methods used in

research should be able to produce objective information of the society being studied (Warren & Karner 2010, 6-7).

According to Guest, (2012, 5) if a study does not involve numerical values then it qualifies to be a qualitative research. However, the data to be collected in this research shall be both quantitative and qualitative in nature but I shall analyze it qualitatively. Mixing data collection methods and data types has been practiced for many centuries in social sciences. Mixed method research can be defined as one where there is a combination of qualitative and quantitative components. This combination can provide a clearer understanding of the research problem than that provided by either method alone. Crewell and Plano (2007) pointed out several advantages of mixed method research including the fact that they supplement and reduce each other's weaknesses. Therefore they provide more comprehensive data or evidence and can answer questions that one method cannot. They bring a multiple view of a problem as well as make use of multiple techniques or approaches in research (Guest 2012, 187-188).

In research analysis, there is generalizability in that although the respondents were for example 15, the results are a representation of around 300 international students in Lapland. It is possible for generalizability to take place because of random sampling methods which are able to pick a representative from every corner of the represented sample. In qualitative research analyzed results are a representation of reality but they are inevitably inter- subjective because they represent both the lives of respondents as well as researcher's choices and interpretations of reality. Despite this fact qualitative researchers ensure validity by being as close and systematic as possible. Besides writing the results accurately and being very attentive to respondents, it is important to observe validity and reliability (Warren & Karner 2010, 9-11). Silverman (2000, 175) looks at validity as synonymous to truth and it shows the extent to which results accurately represent the social phenomena it represents while reliability is the degree of consistency that the results would have if carried out by different researchers using the same research methods and design.

There are many types and methods of carrying out mixed method research data analysis. I shall use the method Guest termed as conversion. In this method, one type of data can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Data sets will be analyzed separately for instance and presented in form of text for qualitative data and tables for quantitative data then integrated in the results and discussion section. Some challenges are expected

in this method such as qualitative data may produce different results from quantitative data at some point. If this occurs I shall chose to use either the qualitative or quantitative data. There is no method in particular that is termed as 'right' when dealing with mixed data which is why flexibility is allowed and encouraged. Guest advices that a researcher should think about how each data will be analyzed and then linked to other data sets. Therefore a scheme of themes to be analyzed should be drawn that shows how each component is related to the others (Guest 2012, 192, 208, 211).

Thematic analysis focuses on describing the explicit and implicit ideas in the data and these ideas are commonly referred to as themes. Codes are formed to represent the identified themes then applied to raw data as a marker and summarizer to be used during analysis. Analysis includes for example comparing frequency of codes or identifying how many times it occurs. Thematic analysis is very useful in analyzing textual data but reliability is important when coding the texts. (Guest 2012, 10-11). These themes are to be linked with concepts obtained from literature written by other researchers during analysis. In data analysis we aim to conceptualize descriptions that make connections within it, interpret and validate it. (Warren & Karner 2010, 237-238). Reliability shall be keenly observed when interpreting the data so that I am as accurate as possible in my inferences. I shall also interpret the data during analysis in a way that validates it and shows connections within it.

Explanatory analysis is an analytic approach that combines deductive and inductive methods in data analysis. It requires that a researcher must observe validity and avoid interpretations that are centered his/her own subjective interpretations that are unchallenged. Morse & Mitcham (2002) argue that in this type of analysis certain things referred to as '*conceptual tunnel vision*' should be considered which include over categorizing data, assigning to one category more data than what belongs there, and justifying most things as related to or examples of the concept being investigated. Tunnel vision could also lead to unwarranted exclusion of some relevant findings and blocking out of data which challenges certain themes or concepts. They further argued that process of conceptual research should follow certain steps such as deconstructing those concepts that will be explored from existing literature and not defining the limits of data collection sharply (Guest 2012, 37-38). For validity to increase in conceptual analysis I will note when a particular code is linked to the data and when it is not with utmost honesty.

Comparative analysis should have a clear plan on how the comparison will be done. A basic comparative approach involves noting coded themes present in a text from the groups to be compared and assessing which ones are similar and which ones are different. This will also show differences or similarities in the overall pattern. If the number of respondents is large enough, these patterns can be shown statistically by using graphs to represent the different groups (Guest 2012, 39-40). I shall be comparing the same concept of alcohol use patterns in the same group before and after coming to Lapland. The aim is to find out if there are any changes in alcohol use among international students since they come to Lapland. To achieve this I included similar question on alcohol use in Lapland and in their home country in the questionnaire. Furthermore this will assist in finding out how the Finnish drinking culture has impacted their culture, norms and values. Another instance of comparison in the research is in alcohol use patterns and culture between female and male students.

To complete an analysis, a researcher should show how the themes are linked to analytic descriptions, give interpretations and validate the analysis. When connecting themes to analytic descriptions, the themes are linked together and visual diagrams can be used to show how they fit together. Interpretations are made by connecting analytic themes with examples from the data. After that a researcher must write his/her own thoughts, assumptions and understanding about the data. Finally a researcher should look into the validity of data analysis by assessing relationship between data, setting, documents, people and conclusions. This is because validity of analysis will depend on how well a researcher studied interactions, settings and individuals. This helps to prevent researchers from discovering only that which they want to see from the data. There are a few things that can be done to ensure data is valid, verifiable and its' interpretations can be supported by data. The first one is to look at how appropriate your data is in answering research questions, the second is searching to see if there are themes that oppose those you have appointed and finding explanations for them but for quantitative analysis 'null hypothesis' performs the same function. Seeking external validation from colleagues and supervisors and comparing your findings to what newspapers and other articles say about the topic are also ways of validating analysis (Warren & Karner 2010, 237-244).

It is important to develop an analysis plan before reading the collected data so that one is able to handle the huge amount of texts that are expected. A good analysis plan is arrived at by considering the objectives of analysis, nature of data set and who will be the judge of that analysis. Good analysis objectives come as result of matching views

you would like to generate, quality of data collected and resources available. A basic analytic approach is identified and the specific data to be used in analysis is identified with reasons. The method of coding is then identified based on programs available and specific coding formats to be used and developed (Guest 2012, 34-35). The specific things I looked at in my analysis plan are how quantitative data will be integrated, how many separate analysis I will carry out, how they will be coded and the primary purpose for analysis.

Coding involves marking then labelling each occurrence of a theme or subtheme followed by gathering all those with similar labels together electronically or manually (Warren & Karner 2010, 218). According to my plan coding starts by combining answers from each question into one sheet of paper and printing them out. This shall help me to do some open coding which is done by understanding the 'big picture' portrayed by my data. During open coding I keep my mind open to knowing the patterns and themes that are in my data. When I feel familiar with the data after reading it and thinking about it, I shall start focusing on specific themes and sub-themes portrayed in the data. I shall pay attention to the most surprising and compelling elements of the data as i go through a series of coding.

Themes can be defined as the sentence or phrase that says what a set of data means or what it is all about. It can also be looked at as what links ideas and expressions in the textual data as well as images, objects or sounds. Some themes are broad so they link many concepts and expressions while others are narrow and more specific. Themes should fit in with the objectives of a research and this determines which themes should be concentrated on in the process of defining, tagging and coding. There are several tips suggested by Ryan & Benard (2003) that help researchers to detect themes within a text. They include repetition, indigenous categories, metaphors, transitions, comparisons, linguistic connectors and silence or missing data (Guest 2012, 65-66).

Repetition is the most common way of detecting a theme because if respondents repeated something severally it must be a theme but the numbers of repetitions that form a theme are up to the researcher. Indigenous categories are cases where respondents use local terms in the data to describe something and they reveal interesting insights. Transitions that occur naturally when respondents digress from one topic to another bring a new topic that becomes a theme. Comparing parts of the text brings out comparative themes that show similarities and differences. Linguistic connectors such as 'if' or 'be-

cause' show causal relation themes and reveal participants' logic. Missing data or silence must always be included in a report because when respondents say nothing it represents a lot (Guest 2012, 66).

The analysis process should match a person's skills, resources and comfort level. It is advised that an original copy of the data is maintained at all times which shall not be altered so that one can go back to it if something unexpected happens. During analysis data is first categorized based on type and chronological order from the first ones to be received to the last ones. It is also possible to arrange data according to subject of interview and chronology and this is what I will choose to do. It is important to decide on how to save the work as you progress with analysis to avoid inconvenience in case of malfunction of a hard drive or flash disk. The master copy's safety should be observed by for example keeping it in a fire proof box. After organizing data a researcher should consider which method to apply in coding data between using colored pens and applying various computer programs that will locate all the data that a researcher has been identifying. One should be careful in selecting a computer program because different programs have different purposes (Warren & Karner 2010, 221-222).

In my data analysis, I shall apply the method of colored pencils when coding data. After printing my raw data and reading through all of it, I shall embark on using pencils of different colors to highlight various themes. The following example of coding is based on data collected during pilot testing:

The main Theme: Causes and effects of alcohol use on students (Red) and Sub-themes are:

Most students are shy but after drinking alcohol they ———————— Causes of alcohol use (Green)

are courageous to speak and establish romantic relationships

It has helped me to make new friends here and————————→ Positive effects (Yellow)

I have learnt and shared many things with them.

Alcohol use has made me have less time for personal studies————→ Negative effects (Blue)

Table 5: order of themes and sub-themes in the study

MAIN THEME	SUB-THEMES
Situation patterns and changes of alcohol use among international students	1. Changes in Alcohol use practices 2. Alcohol use control 3. Situation of international students who are Non-alcohol users
Culture of alcohol use among international students	1. International student's alcohol use and party culture 2. Alcohol use along gender lines 3. Finnish drinking culture
Causes and effects of alcohol use among international students	1. Causes of alcohol use 2. positive effects of alcohol use 3. Negative effects of alcohol use

I shall use the letter 'F' to represent female respondents and 'M' to represent male respondents from my data. When noting information from a certain respondents, I shall include this code at the end of the sentence for example if it came from the fourth female respondent the code shall be 'F4' and if it came from the 9th male respondent the code shall be M9. In cases where the respondent wrote something that is not clear, as is expected in a study on alcohol use, I will code that as 'unclear data'. However, if after reading more about client's response I find that I understand what the person might have been driving at in the data that was unclear, then I shall change the code. According to Guest (2012, 63) labeling poor data is important in assessing quality of data received, and if it is repetitive this is a clear indication that there was a problem with the phrasing, order or delivering the questions.

5. Patterns and changes of alcohol use

The main question to be answered in this chapter is what is the situation of alcohol use among international students and how has it changed since they came to Lapland. This research objective shall be achieved by analyzing data to find out what types of alcohol

are commonly consumed, the quantity, frequency and preferred venue of alcohol use. Notable changes in level and type of alcohol used shall be analyzed and included. The ability of students to control their alcohol use and balance this with studies forms an important part of this analysis. The views and opinions of those students who do not consume alcohol are also taken into consideration. The tables included in this and subsequent chapters include the number of students who did not respond to that question either because they do not use alcohol or for personal reasons.

5.1 Changes in alcohol use practices

Table 6: Types of alcohol used by International students

Type of alcohol consumed	Beer	Cider	Wine	Spirits	Homemade alcohol	Long-drink	No response	Total
Home country (%)	50	7	20	10	0	0	13	100
Lapland (%)	47	10	13	13	3	3	11	100

Some changes in alcohol use among the students were noted when the respondents were asked to compare their situation of alcohol use in Lapland to that of their home country. From the table above, it is clear that there is no big change in the type of alcohol used because most international students use beer and spirits both in Lapland and back home but there is a slightly higher consumption of spirits in Lapland. However, there is a notable change in use of wine because students who use wine at home are almost twice those who use it here which could be attributed to the high cost of wine in Lapland. There is a notable likelihood to use homemade alcohol in Lapland and it is surprising that none of the students used long drink back home which could mean it is only sold in Finland. Mistral (2013, 45-46) pointed out that alcohol producers have made a variety of drinks to attract youths for example some have been made stronger and others sweeter. Long drinks possess both qualities because it has an alcohol content of around 8% and it is sweet so producers in Finland are applying this tactic.

When results of this research are compared to the report made by ESPAD in 2011 there are some interesting similarities. For instance beer was the most highly consumed type of alcohol in both studies and that most students preferred to buy alcohol and drink it elsewhere instead of drinking it within the premise of purchase. These results support the findings that said that although international researchers label Finland as a 'spirit drinking' country, beers and spirits are consumed almost in equal measure (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 12-18). It is also interesting to note that 47% which is the biggest percentage of international students use beer while only a small percentage of 13% use spirits.

Table 7: Frequency of alcohol use among international students

Frequency	Daily	3-4 Times a week	3-4 times a month	3-4 times in the past one year	No re-sponse	Total
Home country (%)	7	23	17	37	16	100
Lapland (%)	0	20	40	23	17	100

In terms of frequency, around 7% of international students seem to have been drinking daily more often while back home but they do not do this anymore while in Lapland. According to Babor et al. (2010, 11) in most cultures alcohol is viewed as an ordinary commodity that can be consumed at any time which is why it is served with meals, used to enhance socialization when people are enjoying themselves, it is a show of hospitality, quenches thirst and in some cases to intoxicate. Stahl et al. (2006, 118) clearly pointed out that Nordic countries dominantly use alcohol for intoxication but not as an accompaniment to meals and they are spirit drinking countries.

Therefore this shows a change in culture because in many cultures people take alcohol daily as a food accompaniment but in Finland alcohol is taken mostly for intoxication. The fact that most students take beer whether at home or in Finland shows similarities in cultures. There is an increase in the percentage of students who take alcohol either monthly or weekly in Lapland as compared to back in their home country. However more students consume alcohol yearly while at home than when in Lapland which

shows that students who are not frequent drinkers at home increased their frequency in Lapland. There is an insignificant change in alcohol consumption per week probably because those who drink weekly come from wet cultures.

Table 8: Venues used by international students for alcohol use

Venue	Pub or beer café	Restaurant	Student party	Home Environment	Sauna	No response	Total
Home country (%)	63	0	10	17	0	10	100
Lapland (%)	20	0	43	27	0	10	100

There is a change in the venue of alcohol use among students because while back home, the highest percentage of them go to pubs or beer cafes but here the highest percentage uses alcohol in student parties or within the home environment. This is similar to what Weiss (2013, 40-46) found out when he carried out a study on alcohol use in Universities within United states and concluded that Residential Universities were found to be a hub for reckless drinking, drug use and careless behavior. Furthermore, just like in Lapland, his study found that there were those students who abstained for personal reasons, commitment to religion and academics but around 40 to 60% of the students were found to be heavy drinkers who drunk mainly for intoxication. Coomber et al. (2013, 55) noted that it is common for youths to hold parties in their residents before going to clubs and expressed concern that this increases their likelihood to engage in drugs.

5.2 Alcohol use control

Different people give varying explanations for drug use but in most cases it starts with recreational or experimental reasons and ends up in problematic and dependent use. Taking drugs for recreation purpose is done with the intention of relaxing and having fun though in some cases it leads to intoxication for example in weddings (Sanders, 2006,108). In this sub-chapter we shall look at whether students are able to control their

alcohol use or whether they are at risk of dependent or problematic alcohol use as explained by Sanders.

Table 9: Frequency of alcohol use control among international students

Not able to control drinking	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	No response	Total
Home country	60	0	3	27	3	7	100
Lapland	70	0	7	13	3	7	100

A person who is dependent on alcohol has withdrawal symptoms when sober, always needs more and more alcohol to achieve desired effect, continues to use alcohol even though it harms him like when the doctor has warned against it, uses most of his time in activities that will generate more alcohol like gambling and has such a strong desire to consume alcohol that he loses control and does not know when to stop and attend to other more important things (Babor et al. 2010, 18-21). This research has shown that most international students are in control of their alcohol use of since only around 23% have not been able to do so while in Lapland.

Table 10: Frequency of binge drinking among international students

Binge drinking	Never	Weekly	Monthly	Daily	No response	Total
Home country (%)	40	23	30	0	7	100
Lapland (%)	43	17	33	0	7	100

According to WHO (2007, 17) research has shown that intoxication and heavy drinking is common among young adults and teenagers all over the world but there is a likeli-

hood of an increase in hazardous drinking among youths in Europe based on the European school survey project on Alcohol and Drugs in 29 European countries. The situation of alcohol use among international students in Lapland supports the findings of this research that was previously done by WHO. This is because almost half of the respondents have engaged in binge drinking. However, it is good to note that the other half of international students in this research were able to avoid binge drinking.

Binge drinking, lacking ability to stop drinking then ending up with some regrets are very real effects of alcohol use and they relates to how Wormer &Thyer (2010, 3) argued when they said that drug abuse is simply using a drug in a way that leads to abuse for example taking alcohol to a level where it leads to hangovers and then pointed out that there is no clear line between use and abuse of alcohol but its' abusive effects are real. Binge drinking is the consumption of excessive alcohol in a single drinking episode. It is dangerous because in most cases it becomes more and more frequent which leads to addiction. In a more accurate perspective, binge drinking is taking more alcohol than is recommended by doctors for example in UK taking more than 64 grams or 4 beer cans for a man and more than 48grams or three beer cans for a woman (Coomber et al. 2013, 47-48).

Table 11: Frequency of international students having feelings of guilt or regret after alcohol use

Guilt or regret	Never	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	No response	Total
Home country (%)	37	7	3	20	27	6	100
Lapland	50	7	7	13	17	6	100

Based on the table above, the fact that the almost half of the respondents agreed that they have done some things they regret while under the influence of alcohol is an example of poor alcohol use control leading to irresponsible behavior.it is highly likely that the same students got intoxicated through binge drinking because as Babor et al. (2010, 16) argues, intoxication can lead to changes in emotions and lack of regard towards social expectations such as violence towards others, harming oneself intentionally, depression and suicide.

In conclusion, it seems that almost half of the respondents have practiced binge drinking either at home or in Lapland. Cases of not being able to stop drinking once they started are around around 30% of the students which is minimal and there are no significant changes in this behaviors while at home or in Lapland. However, almost half of these respondents reported having felt guilt or regret after drinking regardless of whether they felt it daily or more frequently.

5.3 Situation of international students who are non-alcohol users

Reasons for drinking or abstaining among youths change as they approach adulthood but they range from seeking pleasure, previous experience with alcohol, gender, being motivated to drink or abstain, personal preference, religion, boredom, parental influence, mass media influence, availability of money and societal norms (Kellie 1995, 9-10). In this research, the number of respondents who said they do not use alcohol were 6, of those only 3 said they do not use alcohol at all while 3 said they use it very rarely. Most of them said they abstain from using alcohol because they do not see its usefulness while some said it was for religious reasons such as *'having a relationship with God,F20'*. In response to why they do not use alcohol, two respondents wrote:

'Often when I smoke 'weed' or 'hash' I prefer to stay home watching moviesM13' and another one wrote *'I do not use alcohol but I only drink for the taste with a good meal. It's quite rare for me to drink in Lapland or at home and I do not have any particular reason except that alcohol is not useful for me…F17.'*

The first response above was a unique one because no one else had similar views but it shows that there are other drugs that students opt for instead of alcohol. The second response represented the views of a majority who do not find alcohol useful at all. In the second response probably the respondent comes from a country whose culture is to take a little alcohol as an accompaniment to meals. While most of them do not attend student parties, others said the parties help them to socialize although they are uncomfortable to be in. they reported that when they tell their fellow students that they do not drink they get responses such as:

'You will be drunk someday….F24.'

However, they still interact with students who use alcohol and some hope that they can influence them to see the dangers of using alcohol and stop the habit. However, one respondent wrote that *'I think here people are okay even if you do not drink alcohol and even your friends do not pressure you to drink but in my country they try their best to involve you in drinking alcohol,M15'*. This shows that although Finland has a 'wet' culture, the individualistic nature of its people whereby they do mind their own business favors those who do not use alcohol.

They reported that their opinion of Finnish drinking culture is that *'They drink a lot from a young age, F20'*. Majority of respondents said Finns are able to drink whenever they like even when there is no particular reason. They do drink a lot because their aim is to actually get drunk. Interesting responses were:

'They seem to be both restrictive and alcoholic,M13' while another respondent wrote that *'I think the values are highly influenced by the degree of religiosity that a person has. One should not generalize drinking habits among the Finns-some drink moderately, others drink heavily while others are religious and they do not drink at all,M15'*.

These responses were interesting because they show an element of balance in Finnish drinking culture. For example the fact that they seem to be restrictive and alcoholic means that on one hand they can restrict themselves from use of alcohol and on the other they can allow them to get intoxicated. The second response shows the heterogeneous nature of Finns whereby they are not all the same so they cannot be stereotyped based on what is commonly said about their culture. There was also a unique response that read:

'That is their way of dealing with depression and it is the best way to spend their weekends. They also spend a lot of money on alcohol; I can share a six pack of alcohol with my friends but one Finn can drink all that and more, F4'

In the above response besides highlighting excessive use of alcohol among Finns, it seems that this is seen as a form of coping mechanism for Finnish people if they are going through a tough time. When asked to write about differences and similarities in alcohol consumption between Finland and their home country, most of them said that alcohol is much more expensive in Finland. Some said that alcohol consumption is more in their home country than in Finland and vice versa while others said that it was the same. The sharpest contrast I noticed came from the respondent who wrote that:

'In my country the alcohol is always cheaper so people drink different kinds of it more often……similarities are that people drink a lot in both countries, F6.'

Room (2002, 57-60) argued that even with strict policies and high alcohol prices, the consumption will still be high if desire for it among citizens is high. His argument is supported by the respondent who made the statement above because even though alcohol is cheaper in his/her country, frequency of alcohol consumption is similar to Finland. This made me question efficiency of using pricing to control alcohol use. I concluded that although it is helpful to some extent, more needs to be done to deal with social problems that increase demand for alcohol among people. This research agrees with Osterberg & Karlsson (2002,149) who suggested that the best solutions to alcohol use problems is to solve social problems early, invest more resources in providing a better life and high quality services to citizens as well as strengthen the role of civil organizations at local level.

Although they do not consume alcohol, they unanimously wrote that most international students tend to drink more once they come to Lapland than when they were back home. They said this was attributed to by different reasons such as being homesick, being influenced by friends, parties or environment and coping with loneliness or boredom. One respondent gave two sides of the coin when she wrote that:

'Some start drinking less because of the prices while some start drinking more because of the student community, F6.'

Muys (2009, 165-167) came up with similar results after carrying out a study on substance use among Iranians living in Belgium. He found that since Iranians were already using substances such as alcohol in their home country, it could not be said that their use of these substances while in Belgium was an influence of the western culture. However, certain elements in the western culture such as poverty and social exclusion influenced them to either increase or decrease their use of substances. This is similar to international students in Lapland because most of them had already been using alcohol in their home country. When they join the Wet culture in Finland, the decision to increase or decrease alcohol use is influenced by factors such as affordability, availability and peer pressure among others.

6 .Culture of alcohol use among international students

6.2 International student's alcohol use and party culture

The norms, habits and values that the students observed back home but they do not observe them in Lapland included *'I used to go to church regularly but I do not do that here,F27'* hence they practice their religious beliefs less here. Some said back home they drank less alcohol than they do here. This shows cultural influence since in Finland alcohol consumption has been observed to be an activity that is most common among youths followed by adults and finally the elderly (Alcohol issues in Finland after accession to the EU report 2006, 10). It is therefore not surprising that the students do not spend their time in religious activities anymore once they get used to the culture of drinking on most weekends.

When asked to describe how their culture has changed since they came to Lapland, the number of students who wrote that their alcohol use has decreased was equal to the number who wrote that their alcohol use has increased. Those whose alcohol use has increased wrote that this is due to factors such as coping with social stress, alcohol being more socially acceptable and the fact that there are more parties in Erasmus. It was interesting that one respondent said *'Alcohol is more relevant for me here; to cope with social stress,M13.'* this shows that the type of stress he is coping with is 'social' in nature which could mean lack of friends or sense of belonging. They also wrote that they had to change the type of alcohol they use for example from wine to beer because it is the cheapest option. One such response is as follows:

'Back home we drunk wine. We drink beer and spirits here because in Erasmus there are more parties, the time we have is short and everyone offers drink. I have changed to drinking beer because it is cheaper and my alcohol consumption has increased because there are parties everywhere, F28'

These research result concurs with the findings of Babor et al. (2010, 12) who argued that alcohol use has different meanings to different age groups whereby for adults it is mainly for relaxation but for youths it is mainly to have fun. He further noted that with time alcohol use levels among youths can decrease which has been the case with half of the respondents in this study. Rassol (2008, 97) argued that most youths experiment

with alcohol because it is supported and tolerated in society and he highlighted seeking a sense of identity as part of the reasons for alcohol use among youths. His arguments are similar to the findings of this research because they are living in Finland where alcohol use is *'less taboo'* as one respondent chose to put it in this response *'less taboo about alcohol here than home, M9'*. Also from previous responses, they drink to make friends who will give them a sense of identity.

Respondents had different reasons for a reduction in their level of alcohol use such as *'In Finland I drink less because the transport system doesn't work well and taxi is quite expensive..,F6'*, the rural nature of Rovaniemi is more suitable to a healthy life style, alcohol in Lapland is lesser quality than back home and also religious reasons. There was a unique reason attributed to cultural change by a respondent who wrote that in US people talk over beer but in Finland *'You discuss over coffee and get wasted on beer,M26'* so he takes coffee when he wants to socialize instead of having to cope with drunk people. However, most said the reason behind this was the high cost of alcohol. Some respondents expressed this in the following way:

'Rare alcohol drinking, alcohol prices are 4-5 times bigger than in my home country,M12'

Kirsimarja (2008, 16) pointed out that formal methods of alcohol control in Finland include policies, tax, governing selling hours and prices of alcohol, alcohol monopoly system and use of police in arresting drunkards. Alcohol pricing has been most effective in controlling alcohol use among international students. Room (2002, 60) argues that even with high alcohol prices its use will still be high if desire for it is high. This research results are in contrast to his opinion because as one respondent expressed that *'I have less money here so I use it for foodF27',* it is clear that rational beings would not prioritize the desire for alcohol over the desire for basic needs. WHO (2006, 1) noted that a strong relationship exists between poverty and abstinence from alcohol for example some people may abstain because they cannot afford alcohol while others may drink to forget their financial problems. Therefore this is a controversial and highly debatable issue.

Wormer & Thyer (2010, 46) argued that in trying to understand alcohol use among youths, it is important to consider the acknowledgement by several writers that drug use is a learned behavior. Therefore this research tried to find out what elements of alcohol use international students have learnt from each other. In response to whether interna-

tional students have shared some alcohol use practices, respondents wrote that they have shared different types of alcohol such as black vodka which is a Russian cultural drink and experimented with home-made beer given by their friends. Also they have shared different types of games such as *'beer pong,F24'* and one more new practice shared was:

'Here we have pre-parties to drink and save money,F29.'

According to Coomber et al. (2013, 48) it is common for youths in Europe to hold parties in their residents before going to clubs. This is similar to the findings of this research but Coomber further expressed concern that these parties increase the likelihood of students engaging in illegal drugs. In response to how often student parties are held in their student's residence, 43% said weekly, 13% said daily while 17% said yearly. One in ten said monthly while 7% said parties were never held within their residence. Therefore student parties are frequently held within student residents but based on my own opinion and observation some residents are located in more party friendly locations than others. For instance some residents are nearer to clubs and public transport than others hence the disparities in party frequency.

Weiss (2013, 40) carried out a study on party culture in Universities and found that the location matters because those that were near urban centers had more cases of alcohol use than those in rural areas. Furthermore residential Universities acted as a hub for reckless drinking, drug use and careless behavior. In contrast, most respondents in this research wrote that student parties in Lapland are peaceful because cases of fighting are present but rare as seen in this responses *'There is usually a lot of alcohol that eventually leads to SOME fights, M25'* or *'Nothing extreme happens, F18'* and people walk back home after getting drunk. This could be as a result of the fact that they come from different cultures and age groups so their drinking habits differ as these respondents clearly put it:

'Almost all students attend parties apart from Asians. People hangout in groups based on nationality, the parties are crowded and some people get really drunk,F29' another one said ' *younger people get completely wasted having –the time of their life- but there is a lot of reasonable people drinking just normally as part of social gathering, M16'*

The party culture is attractive to international students because it saves costs, helps them to socialize, it's fun, there is a lot of dancing and nothing extreme is expected to happen.

However, parties leave behind huge messes and there are complaints from neighbors about the noise the following day. They expressed frustrations when their expectations are not met at the party such as not getting a chance to socialize since students from same nationalities stick together. However, some students wrote that they do have some regrets after the party such as in this responses *'Sometimes I hear regrets from my friends the following day, but those thoughts last only one or two days, M16'* and *'some people get drunk and do things out of their boundaries (e.g kissing casually to strangers or someone whom they met for the first time, M10.'* Also sometimes their friends are too drunk so they are forced to carry them home.

In contrast, Weiss (2013, 120-122) found that in Universities in United States, the party culture included rape and other unwanted sexual behaviors being very common and they actually increased the probability of student's engagement in criminal behavior. In his study 28% of the students who were interviewed said they do drink and drive because they think they still drive well after taking 5 to 6 beers and it is not a big problem if caught by police. Those who have been caught by police admitted to having paid a fine of around 200 Euros and having to attend 6 Alcoholic Anonymous classes. In Finland if the police caught you drunk and driving there are more serious consequences such as confiscating your driver's license while international students run the risk of being deported. According to Weiss, the students tend to feel invisible while drunk; they lack empathy for others and lose their common sense as shown by some of the behaviors they practice such as throwing water balloons on moving vehicles from the top of a building. However, cases of such extremely bad behavior were not reported in this study and this could mean that international students have adopted the positive quality of Finnish drinking culture of drinking responsibly.

6.3 Alcohol use along gender lines

When asked which gender has more participants in student parties, more than half of the respondents said female participants are more than males on average. This is similar to the findings recorded in the book titled use of tobacco products, alcohol use and exposure to drugs (2006, 42-43) which found that among youths aged 18 years, more females than males engaged in alcohol use. Only 30 percent said male participant were

more than females in student parties and some did not give a response to that question either because they do not use alcohol or they do not attend student parties.

However, majority of the respondents wrote that male participants in alcohol use are more than female ones in their home countries and in Lapland. There was a striking difference because 73% of the respondents said males drink more than females in their home countries while 57% of them said males drink more than females in Lapland. This shows that the gap between number of males and females who drink alcohol is narrower in Finland than in other countries. Based on these statistics also we can conclude that among young people females are actually starting to outnumber males in the drinking sessions.

This findings support what several other researchers such as Pyne et al. (2002, 23) pointed out when they said that alcohol use between the sexes is becoming narrower. According to WHO (2007, 17) one of the main social concerns in recent years is that alcohol consumption rates among women are increasing and especially among young women. Number of female drinkers is increasing faster than that of male for a number of reasons. For instance besides alcohol becoming cheaper since 1950s more women have been able to join the workforce. They have enough income to drink as much as men in a society where women are no longer discriminated when they go to bars. Advertisement and increased level of stress are other suspected causes.

When asked to compare behavior of female and male students while drunk, most respondents said they behave differently and only a few said they behave the same or it is difficult to generalize. Some of these responses *include 'there is no difference, M7' or 'They behave the same, F2.' and 'boys feel more brave and perhaps are more aggressive, girls are usually more dramatic, but it is hard to make generalities, M9.'* A comparison showed that females get drunk faster, behave carelessly, lose control, are more emotional, become more sexually inviting, are more dramatic and annoying while males get braver, aggressive and make passes at girls. This was derived from responses such as:

'Women get drunk faster, they behave more carelessly and sexually inviting, men may get aggressive(also sexually) and lose more control of themselves, F6' and ' 'Females sing more and are more emotional while men are more boorish, F27.'

It is similar to what Martin (2001, 96) pointed out when he said men drink to feel strong, important and powerful and he observed that in traditional Europe women who drank alcohol became more aggressive which helped them to escape subordination and challenge patriarchal power. However, whereas it is clear from the responses that female students become more aggressive while drunk, it is not clear if they are able to achieve patriarchal power as these responses show:

'For females its dancing, yelling, screaming laughing, M16' or *'..I think female students when drunk easily get influenced by others to do things that they would not do on a normal day,F4.'*

Stewart (1990, 101) argued that drinking among women could be a way of coping with behaviors which are not well tolerated by society such as hopelessness, anger, resentment or rebellion. Probably for the female students, dancing, yelling and screaming are ways of releasing emotions built up inside and expressing rebellion. However, because it increases chances of them losing control, this research supports the findings of Room (2002, 91-92) who argued that women engage less in drug use because they are generally more vulnerable especially under the influence. He pointed out that feminists associate regulation of drug use by women with how women are controlled by society and only viewed as domestic child bearers and spouses. Therefore, in an attempt to access equality, women are stopping to depend on men for access to drugs or for protection from vulnerability especially since it is becoming safer than before to attend night clubs. Therefore modern females may not be achieving patriarchal power like in traditional Europe through drinking but they are expressing rebellion against being controlled by society and asserting their equality.

Only a third of respondents agreed with the statement that *'women should avoid alcohol consumption because it gives them a negative public image'* while the rest disagreed. This could mean that women are still able to behave decently under the influence. However, most of the respondents were female and this could have influenced the outcome. Nevertheless many people agreed with this statement in an opinion poll carried out in UK after the media had shown pictures of ladies behaving badly while drunk (Mistral 2013, 61). This shows how powerful media is in influencing our opinions. There is probably absence of media influence in discouraging women from alcohol use in Finland unlike in UK and other countries.

6.4 Finnish drinking culture

When asked if they have integrated with Finnish students in events where alcohol was served, two-thirds of the respondents said yes. This shows that Finnish students have been hospitable and generous enough to wine and dine with international students which contrasts the common opinion that Finnish people are too reserved. It also shows that their opinion on Finnish drinking culture is reliable because it is acquired through close contact. Almost 90% of adults in Finland reported having consumed alcohol in 2008 hence it is a common practice that starts being practiced in mid-adolescence from 14- 16 years of age and the heaviest period of drinking for most Finns is between 18- 22 (Latavala, 2011, 29).According to Varjonen (2013, 45) alcohol is the biggest social problem among all substances consumed in Finland based on past research and alcohol use is notably common mostly among youths though the average age of users has risen over the past ten years.

Majority of the respondents wrote that Finnish people drink too much from an early age and one respondent said it this way: '*It is the norm for Finns to drink. They spend a lot on alcohol even in work events, F2*'. Some felt that Finnish people have no resistance to alcohol and wrote that some of their Finnish friends have tried to stop drinking without success. One respondent pointed out that the reason Finns are seen to be heavy drinkers is the contrast between how calm, quiet and patient they are when sober and how talkative and sociable they become when drunk.

 While most respondents have come across Finns who are able to behave decently while drunk, one respondent wrote that they come into bars already drunk and cause problems like stepping on others without apologies. The culture of drinking while in Sauna by Finns was highlighted by two respondents and one said '*they love to drink while going to Sauna*, M21' while the other one expressed concern that this might be dangerous. Some of the most conclusive responses to what international students have learnt about Finnish drinking culture included:

'*Finns drink to get trashed, there is no concept of having just a glass of wine or beer, M26.*' and '*there is two kinds of time in the Finnish clock, time to be serious about work or study and time to relax and indeed drink, M*9'

The second response shows that Finnish drinking culture includes striking a balance between working and drinking. Similarly, Hirchovits-Gerz & Koski-Jannes (2010) said people in Finland agreed that alcohol related problems form one of the main threats in society. It could be as a result of this realization that people in Finland have made a point of differentiating between drinking and working time. Takala and Lehto (1992) also found that in Finland alcoholics are given patient treatment instead of being taken to prisons or rehabilitation camps (Hellman et al. 2012, 204). Based on this research results there are several people in Finland that try to stop using alcohol without success and so they should be encouraged to get into treatment programs. An interesting opinion on Finnish drinking culture was that:

'On one hand it is fun and I think Finns are creative drinkers. I also like the openness of it where there are all sorts of games and it is considered okay to drink too much rather than having people judge you too much. On the other hand I think it is perhaps too widespread and done too often so it causes real problems in people's lives, M26.'

Respondents had varying opinions of Finnish drinking culture; while some felt that it is well controlled, others felt that individuals have become alcoholics who are not able to control themselves. For instance some behave badly and others cannot stop once they start and it was suggested that it would be better for them to learn to open up and social-ize without alcohol. They viewed this drinking culture as a way of overcoming prob-lems such as shyness especially for male Finns, passing time over weekends and warm-ing up when it's cold. These views can be represented by the following response:

'I think many drink because they have problems but have never really solved those problems so they continue to drink. Many men can only be able to speak to you when they are drunk. They rarely do that when they are sober or are too shy to, F4'.

Formal methods of alcohol control in Finland include, prices policies, tax, laws govern-ing sale of alcohol like the hours it can be sold, the system of alcohol monopoly and use of police in arresting drunkards (Kirsimarja 2008, 16). The government has done a good job in implementing these forms of alcohol control. However, most international stu-dents found it surprising that this has not been enough to reduce drinking among Finns as expressed in these responses:

'The sale of alcohol is strongly regulated, albeit unsuccessfully, M13', 'Even compared to what it was in the past, it is still a strong drinking culture, M9' and *'There are more*

drunk people here than in other countries. Young Finnish people drink a lot but alcohol is very expensive which is really strange, F28.'

 This shows that there is need for informal methods of alcohol control to be emphasized. Kirsimarja (2008, 17-18) further argues that because the government has less formal control on alcohol as an EU member, informal control is very important. It takes place mainly within the family but workmates and friends also contribute. It is applied verbally by talking to the person concerned about his/her drinking habits or through an action such as one that will prevent a person from buying alcohol and shift the attention to something else. They can either be less conscious actions such as interrupting the person at a party when their times to go home reaches or strong punishments like violence or threats of divorce. Norms within a society also control drinking such as when a person is asked to leave a club because he/she is too drunk.

7. Causes and effects of alcohol use on international students

7.1 Causes of alcohol use

Many researchers have found similar causes of drug use among young people and they do not differ with the results of my research. For instance Coomber et al. (2013, 15) found that drug use is most prevalent among young people as they try to relax and overcome adolescent anxiety and because of a psychological need to experiment. This is supported by the fact that they have a lot of free time and few responsibilities. Sher (2010, 4) noted that in most cases patterns and cause of alcohol use transcend across nations and territories and have now become part of globalization.

Respondents wrote that causes of alcohol use were to have fun, make friends, to pass time over the weekend, deal with homesickness, trying to find love, forget daily pressure, to utilize their newly found freedom, peer pressure, to cope with frustrations, to avoid boredom and to find a sense of belonging. One such response was *'International students drink due to peer pressure, friends influence each other to drink and some start drinking while here just to belong somewhere. Emotional reasons like being heart broken or let down by someone, feeling depressed and lonely are other reasons, F27'.*

Those who come from a wet drinking culture wrote that is causes them to continue drinking as seen in these responses ' *In their home countries they have strong drinking cultures like in Czech alcohol is said to be cheaper than water, F28'* and '*No other interesting thing to do for them- especially if you consider that most international community comes from better urbanized areas (more opportunities and free time), M12'.* The second response shows that the rural setting of Rovaniemi actually provides a better environment to drink because there is nothing much to do.

It was surprising that this respondent pointed to the rural setting as a cause of alcohol use. Although this view does not represent that of the majority, the respondent fully supported his/her view by saying that rural settings do not provide students with anything much to do. This is a challenge to those researchers who found that urban areas provide a better environment for alcohol use such as Weiss (2013).For instance Sher (2010, xii) argued that urban areas shape the opinion and attitude of young people on drugs in a different way from rural areas whereby it's more acceptable in urban areas. More causes are expressed in the following response:

'During Erasmus programmes people usually drink a lot due to the fact that they don't really care about grades and do not have many classes. They want to hangout more with people in the new country, try new food, new types of alcohol.....F6'

This response clearly shows that most students sponsored by Erasmus Mundus exchange degree programme have too much free time on their hands because of their few classes. Therefore this causes them to use alcohol in utilizing their short stay in Lapland to the best of their ability. The psychological need to experiment that was mentioned by Coomber et al. (2013, 15) manifests in the last part of this response that talks about trying new types of alcohol. Another cause is as discussed in the Finnish drinking culture, the best place to interact with people from this country is in drinking sessions because most are too shy to speak while sober hence international students have to join drinking to interact with them.

There is an element of normalization being the cause of alcohol use among exchange students. Coomber et al. (2013, 16) found that normalization means that within certain groups of people controlled use of a drug is viewed as normal and expected so group members teach each other how to enjoy their effects. Responses from exchange students clearly showed that alcohol use is always normal and expected among Erasmus students as emphasized by the response above. This could mean that even those students who did

not use alcohol while back home are taught and they struggle to learn in order to find a sense of belonging within the group.

From this results I see an element of anomie which is the absence of the usual norms, values and morals as defined by Coomber et al. (2013, 16).There is a situation where international students are far from the norms, values and morals that used to control them in their home country and this causes alcohol use among them. To them this is expressed as utilizing their newly found freedom, overcoming homesickness, avoiding loneliness and doing as the Romans do. However, those who come from a wet culture probably do not face this because they simply continue doing the same things they did back home.

Cultural influence is another cause of alcohol use for international students in Lapland as expressed in this response 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.Finns do not take life too seriously, they have fun too and this is a reason for us to drink,F4'. Change is said to be inevitable and so while staying in Lapland it becomes inevitable to adopt the culture. Kirsimarja (2008, 24-25) argued that although norms contribute to social control of drinking, defining alcohol related problems and deciding on how to handle them; a person's individual norms about alcohol use are determined and shaped by those of the society at large.

Coping with the depressing dark climate was cited as a cause of alcohol use by several respondents and one simply wrote 'we drink because of the depressing dark climate, F20'. For some the contrast in climate between their home country and Finland is too much to bear so they use alcohol to cope. Dooley (2003, 112) argued that stressful life events can lead to drinking as a maladaptive behavior that seemingly eases stress or helps one to forget. Although the examples he gave of stressful life events are bereavement or failure, depressing climate can also fall in this category because all of them cause stress.

When asked to choose the single biggest reason for alcohol use among influence from friends, to have fun, coping with stress and the need to have fun, most of the respondents chose having fun and influence from friends. It was interesting to note that none of the respondents chose the need to make friends as a cause of alcohol consumption while back home but 17% of them chose this as the cause while in Lapland. None of the respondents chose coping with stress as the biggest cause of alcohol consumption either at home or in Lapland.

This is different from the findings of Wormer & Thyer (2010, 47) who found that trying to cope with negative emotions like stress was the dominant cause for drinking among students in his study. However, it is similar to what Nystrom (1993, 12) found when he did a review on students and concluded that the main reasons for student's drinking were social pressure and seeking sensational feelings since they drink in order to get stimulated more than for the purpose of reducing tension. Weiss (2013, 46) also noted that students do influence each other, a lot, into drinking.

7.2 Positive effects

Denning, Little & Glickman (2004, 67) described alcohol as a legal drug that has some benefits such as mental relaxation, stress reduction, memory inhibition for those who have gone through trauma, muscle relaxation, lessening pain and as a social lubricant it encourages interaction and creativity. These qualities of alcohol seem to be part and parcel of what the students termed as positive effects of alcohol use. However, the students do not seem to consider other more profound positive effects of minimal use of alcohol such as those cited by Smith (2012, 53) when he stated that alcohol as a stimulant is useful for medicinal purposes such as maintaining good mental health and improving blood circulation.

The most commonly cited positive effect of alcohol use was that it helps them to socialize and make friends. Other positive effects include bringing a change to their mood and thoughts, boosts confidence to talk more or approach new people, relaxation, enables them to overcome the shyness that comes with not having very good spoken English, improves their sense of humor, having fun, reduces stress, brings the ability to sleep better, it makes them happy, it brings unity and strengthens friendship. Some responses that represent these opinions are *'Loosen up a bit, having fun, laughing at one's own silliness and thus sharing emotions together, M16.'* And *'I am less shy to talk with others but when drunk, my English and Spanish are great!, M19'*.

 It is an issue of concern that several international students are not confident enough to speak in English because alcohol can only offer temporary solutions to this. In my opinion this positive effects shows that students were after immediate gratification by alcohol use but did not think much about the long term effects. For example if they used

alcohol for good mental health and improved blood circulation, they would drink in moderation but as seen in this response:

'I get more relaxed, calmer and cheerful, basically small amounts of alcohol turn me into a very positive person open for the adventures and crazy decisions, F6'

The students are not keen on moderation because they will drink until they move from withdrawn to calm and relaxed and eventually seek to be as cheerful as possible. From the response it is interesting to note that ability to make crazy decisions is considered a positive thing by the respondent. This is similar to what Mistral (2013, 41) highlighted when he said that drinking involves youths publicly and recklessly drinking excessively but warned that it puts themselves and others in danger. Weiss (2013, 120) further described the situation as one where there is an increased likelihood for students to engage in criminal behavior like fighting, stealing, vandalizing and getting in trouble with police as a result of intoxication which increases reckless and impulsive behavior while lowering level of rational thinking or concern about the consequences.

Rassool (2008, 97) argued that understanding sexuality and sense of identity are the main issues that youths struggle with. When asked to write how alcohol use affects relationships between male and female students, respondents wrote that it makes it easier to date because they interact better. It also gives them courage to discuss things they could not talk about while sober. In the process of socializing they are able to flirt, establish romantic relationships and so more relationships can actually take place which increases sexual relationships among them. One respondent termed alcohol use as the element that *'breaks barriers and enhances relationships,M16'*. Another one put it plainly as:

'I think it probably makes relationships happen. Everybody is so damn shy these days with the internet so alcohol is the only thing that makes them open up, M26'

In this response alcohol use is looked at as the only thing that can help students to open up which shows that students actually feel like they have no other choice. Varjonen et al. (2013, 102) stated that in Finland there are art activities implemented among youths to give them a chance to socialize enough so that they do not feel the need to use drugs as an aid to socializing. However, in Lapland University for example the art activities such as music or department clubs are not accessible to international students because of language barrier. Nevertheless international students organize these drinking parties on

their own so they can also organize dance clubs on their own if their biggest need is just to socialize but maybe they could use a little help on this.

It is surprising to find that internet which is a social platform is considered by this respondent as a social barrier. This is probably because it makes people not practice their skills in approaching people and making friends with them. Whereas they are bold enough to converse behind their computer screens, they are incredibly shy when having real conversations so they have to use alcohol. This is similar to the findings of Mistral (2013, 59) who argued that technology encourages drinking among women because it is used to make clubbing plans on social media and to upload pictures afterwards and in the long run it becomes a source of friendship and entertainment.

The positive effects of alcohol use found out through this research are in line with Coomber et al. (2013, 15) who argued that drug use is most prevalent among young people since they have a lot of free time and few responsibilities and it helps them to meet their psychological needs. One psychological need noted in this research is the need to change their mood and thoughts. The change is seen to be positive when it helps them to be less anxious, form and sustain relationships as one respondent wrote *'Sometimes it gives them courage to discuss about things they couldn't do when sober, M7'*. The fact that students especially those on exchange programs have a lot of time in their hands makes alcohol use a positive way of passing time.

7.3 Negative effects of alcohol use

Several researchers including Nystrom (1993, 13) have found that heavy drinking results to lower academic performance. In this research, when asked if alcohol use has affected their studies in Lapland, 55% of the respondents said it has not. The high percentage in those whose academics have not been affected by alcohol could be accounted for by being in denial, or the fact that some of the respondents do not take alcohol while others cannot afford to drink a lot among other reasons. The rest said it has affected their studies because when dealing with hangover they were not able to attend class and it makes them have less time for personal studies as expressed in these responses:

'Yes, it has lowered my performance and willingness to study on the day after drinking, M13' and 'Yes, the hangover after 'wine tasting party' was very strong and I could not study or write on computer, F28'.

From the responses it shows that even though the respondents attend classes they were not able to concentrate hence low performance. However, as we discussed in the culture of alcohol use among international students in Lapland, alcohol use takes place mostly on weekends so they probably do have enough time to recover before classes begin. This does not mean that studies are not affected at all because weekends are an opportune time for personal studies and completion of assignments. When asked to write about the negative effects that alcohol use has had on them, respondents cited a variety that belongs to different categories. As Babor et al. (2010, 15) argued, harmful effects of alcohol can fall under those that cause acute or chronic harm to the health, social or psychological status of a person.

The harmful effects of alcohol use cited by respondents that affect their health are vomiting after drinking, hangover and headaches. Respondents also wrote about the health effects that alcohol increases their chance of getting such as if taken excessively it leads to kidney and liver damage. Also if taken over a long period of time it damages the skin and causes dependence or it can cause death through fighting with bottles as weapons. These responses show that respondents have had some serious health effects from alcohol use that had negative effects on their academics as shown in the response below:

'I got sick after drinking a lot and had to miss some classes. Once when I was drunk I got into a fight with some strangers, M25' and 'at some point I start saying and doing stupid things, vomiting, next morning I have hangover sometime. Of course when drinking I realize that alcohol has a bad impact on my health and beauty in a long term perspective: drinking leads to cellulite, bad skin and liver problems, F6'.

Babor et al. (2010, 15-16) said that people who drink alcohol occasionally are likely to experience alcohol poisoning. Alcohol poisoning can result to the vomiting and headaches as experienced by respondents in this research. Mistral (2013, 43) cited the WHO (2012) report that said alcohol causes 60 types of injuries and diseases while contributing indirectly to 200 of them. The fact that respondents wrote of the health effects alcohol pre-disposes them to supports these findings by showing the health effects caused indirectly. In the quoted response it is clear that alcohol use can cause aggres-

siveness and fights which is tragic because under its influence, fights can harm any part of the body.

Although there is no existing scientific proof of social problems caused by alcohol because it is difficult to evaluate and measure this, comparison between nations and reliable measurements show that they exists. It can be felt through problems such as vandalism, public disorder, interpersonal problems, financial problems, problems at the work place, educational difficulties, social costs of diseases or rehabilitation, death, violence, and family problems like divorce and child abuse (Babor et al. 2010, 43-44).Similarly the social effects written by respondents in this research ranged from petty ones such as saying outlandish things to serious ones such as saying things that are private, destroying friendships, having slept in a police cell, increasing chances of rape and misbehavior, wasting time, lack of self-control and unawareness. Some of the responses that showed social problems were:

'If it is taken in excessive amounts it has negative effects on religious perspectives and increases rate of rape and misbehavior, F27' and 'It inhibits my socializing needs. I have stayed quiet and still when members of the opposite sex approached me, particularly if they wanted to dance. I have also spent more money than expected, M13.'

In the second response above, it is ironic that although the biggest cause of alcohol use among the students is to socialize, its effects do not meet this goal for this person and maybe for others as well. This is because as Plant & Moira (1992, 13) argued, alcohol is a depressant that slows down activities in the body making a person feel relaxed. Therefore it does not make people feel active and social all the time. The respondent also noted a negative effect of alcohol on finances and consequently economy. WHO (2007, 21) argued that social harm caused by alcohol can be ignored because it is hard to verify it but it is quantified by calculating 'the cost of illness' which is arrived at by calculating cost of productivity lost when a person is drunk for example in this case time wasted while drinking instead of studying.

Negative psychological effects of alcohol on respondents were mostly on irresponsible sexual behavior. Other psychological concerns were that it makes a person think that alcohol can solve his/ her problems but it does not. There were those who expressed concerns that they felt stressed by the thought of how it affects their beauty in the long run. Although indulging in irresponsible sexual behavior affects the health of an individual, no respondents confessed to having contracted any diseases in this way. This

problem was expressed in a way that showed those respondents were left feeling psychologically tortured as expressed in the response below:

'I have done a lot of stupid things while drunk, they include sexual intercourse with someone who I disgrace while sober and bad behavior in public places. Once I vomited on the subway while sitting at the table in a café, F6' while another one said 'I *have engaged in sexual activity without thinking which I regretted a lot because I wasn't aware of what I was doing at the time or what it meant, F4'*

These results support the findings of Riley et al. (2008, 97) whose survey on youths found that students do engage in unprotected sex as a result of excessive alcohol consumption which they end up regretting. WHO (2007, 21) talked of fear as a psychological effect of alcohol use that can affect the wider social groups for instance fights, noise and rowdiness from drunk youths keep the society in fear. In the response above the writer admits to having behaved badly and although the example given of bad behavior is mild, there is always uncertainty of exactly what drunk youths are capable of which causes fear.

Only one respondent wrote that alcohol use has a negative effect on religious practices and only one admitted to having ended up in the sober chambers of Rovaniemi police station meaning this are not commonly felt problems. However, it is clear from the results of this research that there are some serious negative effects of alcohol use whose impact far outweighs the impact of its positive effects. This view is supported by Sher (2010, xii-4) who stated that alcohol use has been found to contribute to suicide, health complications, economic problems and social dysfunction. He further explained that this is because it brings too many risky behaviors such as those of a sexual nature or criminal acts like aggressiveness.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

This research aimed at finding out more about alcohol use among international students in Lapland. The need to conduct this research was based on the fact there is a huge concern about the increase of alcohol use among youths globally. According to WHO (2007, 17) previous research has shown that intoxication and heavy drinking is common among young adults all over the world but there is a likelihood of an increase in hazardous drinking among youths in Europe based on the European school survey project on Alcohol and drugs in 29 European countries. In Finland a lot of research has been done on the field of alcohol and drugs use but very little has been done among migrants so this research aimed at filling this gap. It has done this by successfully bringing out the situation of their alcohol use, what causes it and how it affects them.

The research started by finding out the patterns of alcohol use among youths in Lapland and establishing if there are any changes among the students through comparing their alcohol use patterns before and after coming to Lapland. After that the research found out if these students have control over their alcohol use. Students who are non- alcohol users were present in the research and they gave their opinion on the topic. The framework of culture was an important theme in this research and it was divided into sub-themes. They included understanding alcohol use culture among these students as well as their party culture. The other sub-themes were to understand alcohol use along gender lines as well as getting their views on how Finnish drinking culture has affected them and what they think of it. Lastly the research aimed at finding out the causes of alcohol use among international students and how it has affected them both positively and negatively.

In this research, I started by studying what other researchers have written on the topic of alcohol use among youths globally, in Finland and in Universities. This gave me wide background knowledge on the subject and prevented me from re-inventing the wheel. After that I was able to come up with frameworks to be covered in the research which included youths and alcohol use, gender, causes and effects of alcohol use among international students. When coming up with the methodology, I started by outlining the purpose of my study and its main objectives clearly. I chose to collect data through a web based survey so that respondents could enjoy anonymity and feel free to write about their situation of alcohol use without fear of being judged. I disseminated the

questionnaire in the areas that my target group spends most of their time which is the internet. I put emphasis on finding out all the relevant ethical considerations for my study from different writers. The data analysis method that I chose was a mixed method because the data to be collected had both qualitative and quantitative qualities. However, thematic qualitative analysis is the main method I chose then I presented quantitative data in form of tables that were analyzed qualitatively.

The main findings in the research were that around half of international students in Lapland take beer and they drink weekly or monthly mostly during student parties. The main changes in alcohol use that they experienced after coming to Lapland were that they could not afford to drink much wine anymore, were not able to drink daily and instead of drinking in pubs or beer cafes they opted for student parties. This shows that the use of high price to control alcohol use has been effective among them. Around half of the students are able to control their alcohol use by avoiding binge drinking, and not having any feelings of regret or guilt after drinking. However, the other half is still struggling with trying to be in control of their alcohol use. Those students who abstain from using alcohol do this for two main reasons: they do not see its usefulness and because of religion. They do not feel peer pressure to start drinking even when they interact with those who drink.

The main findings on alcohol use along gender lines were that more females than males involve themselves with student's party culture but their behavior while drunk makes them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. However, most of the respondents felt that alcohol use does not give females a negative public image. The opinion of international students on Finnish drinking culture is that Finns drink excessively but they are able to separate time for drinking and time to work or study. Some felt that alcohol use in Finland is not a problem but others felt it poses serious challenges such as addiction and were surprised at how the high prices of alcohol have failed to discourage them from drinking. There were many causes of alcohol use among international students in Lapland but the biggest and most commonly cited reasons ware having fun and to make friends. For some this was achievable but for others alcohol use had some negative effects such as fights that prevented them from achieving this objective. Although there were many positive effects of alcohol use, the negative effects outweighed them because they heightened the chances of having a shuttered future. For instance some respondents admitted to having had irresponsible sex in the process of having fun and the health repercussions of this are not worth one night of fun.

There were several links between chapters that made me chose to structure this research the way I did. In the introduction chapter I have elaborated on how my personal experience as an international student made me come up with this topic. After exploring what has been written in the past by other researchers on the same, I discovered that there was a gap I could fill. I was also guided into coming up with frames for my study from past literature reviewed. However, the most important links were between chapter four and the remaining chapters because the methodology chosen highly affected results achieved. The data collection method of sending my questionnaire through the internet was successful in getting responses from 30 respondents within a month. The ethical consideration of respecting privacy, autonomy, confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was fruitful. This is because respondents did not shy away from writing on how much they drink or talking about some negative effects of alcohol even though they were of private nature such as sexual experiences. Choosing to synchronize qualitative and quantitative analysis also turned out to be useful for the kind of data obtained.

The research faced several challenges and limitation and I shall address them here in details. After pilot testing my questionnaire in a face to face interview I opted to do a survey. In the data collection process the challenge was that several respondents sent me some complains that the questionnaire was too long and I encouraged them to be compassionate in assisting me to complete this comparative study. I could see from the short answers given that they probably felt quite exhausted. Some chose not to answer some questions and others got bored somewhere in the middle so they submitted it half-filled. However, this was not a big challenge because most respondents completed the questionnaire, followed instructions and gave comprehensive responses. The limitation in data collection process was that if a respondent wrote something that needed elaboration, there was no chance to probe.

There are some important facts and figures that were not mentioned in the main body. They include the fact that most of the respondents did not fill inn all questions in the questionnaire but chose to leave some out. The questions that were left out by most respondents were on alcohol use along gender lines for example differences between male and females while under the influence of alcohol so probably this topic was uncomfortable for them. Where the respondents wrote something that was not clear I coded that as 'unclear data' but I have not included it in the previous parts of my report. For example when asked to respond to the question what have you learnt about Finnish culture, one respondent answered *'Beer with ice.Why? M18'* and this respondent did not answer any

other question. I do not really understand what the response meant but probably the respondent was served beer with ice in a Finnish pub and was not happy about it. Guest (2012, 63) argued that the importance of labeling poor data is assessing the quality of data received such that if it is repetitive it shows that there was a problem with the phrasing, order or delivering the question. Since I only got one unclear data I am confident that the tool used in this research was efficient.

This research came up with new information whose uniqueness posed several challenges to previous researches. For instance according to the study done on student's party culture by Weiss (2013, 120) the party culture in Universities included rape and other unwanted sexual behaviors being very common and they actually increased the probability of student's engagement in criminal behavior. In contrast respondents in this study stated that although they had irresponsible sexual encounters they were not done through rape or force and criminal behavior was not prevalent among them. This probably shows that there is a big difference in party culture between American Universities such as those covered by Weiss and Finnish universities. This could also be a contributing factor to Finland having one of the best education systems in the world. I would therefore recommend that other countries should continue sending their students on exchange studies in Finland where they can adopt a culture of drinking responsibly.

It was interesting to note that coping with stress was the lowest ranked reason for alcohol use among international students. This challenged The findings of Wormer & Thyer (2010, 47) who found that trying to cope with negative emotions like stress was the dominant cause for drinking among students in his study. This shows that the studying environment in Lapland is good hence it does not have many stressful factors. For example the fact that education is free relieves students off the stress of thinking about how they will come up with fees. Therefore they use alcohol for social purposes such as making friends and having fun. Drinking alcohol for social purposes has much higher chances of achieving or sustaining control and avoiding dependence than drinking to avoid stress. This means that even those students who reported poor control over their drinking would not find it extremely hard to reform if they have the will and opportunity to join rehabilitation programs. I recommend that those offering alcohol use rehabilitation services should make them more available to international students through communication.

The research was a valuable contribution to knowledge in the social work field of drug and substance use. In this field information is needed so that social workers can enhance their services in rehabilitating those who are abusing alcohol. From this research, social workers in Finland can see that approximately half of international students have crossed the thin line between use and abuse of alcohol. Therefore I recommend that they need to be made more aware of the rehabilitation services available to them. Other bodies that can benefit from this research include Universities, churches and colleges in Lapland. They can read on the causes and effects of alcohol use on international students then come up with ways of helping them in prevention. I would recommend that they should establish more extra curriculum activities within the schools and student's residential areas. These activities can include indoor games, dance and various clubs which should be done in both English and Finnish. They would create an opportunity for students to socialize and use their free time in alcohol free activities.

Possible areas for further research include finding out if international students use other drugs as well such as bhang and pharmaceuticals along with alcohol. This is because in this research one respondent mentioned that he prefers to smoke 'hashish' or 'weed' instead of using alcohol. It would therefore be important to know how many other students engage in this kind of practice and how does it affect their lives and those of the society around them. It would also be important to find out the prevalence of smoking among international students for statistical purposes. The cultural aspect in use of alcohol and other drugs still has more that can be researched on for instance finding out if the 'wet' culture in Finland attracts more international students or discourages them from studying here. Another area that needs further research is finding out how much information international students have about the rehabilitation services available in Lapland for example if they are aware of where they can get harm reduction services. I would recommend that the rehabilitation websites in Lapland should be written in Finish, Swedish and English so that international students also get a chance to read more about them.

The purpose and aims of this study were achieved successfully after carefully applying the research methodology. The study was able to bring out the students' drinking culture, it's causes and effects. Most importantly the study brought out areas in which the Finnish drinking culture has affected international students since they came to Finland. It was clear that roughly half of them had to change their drinking habits by reducing alcohol use since they could not afford it while in Lapland. However, the other half of

these students increased their alcohol use because of the party culture and the need to emulate the Finnish lifestyle. In their drinking patterns there were traces of influence from the Finnish culture such as not taking alcohol daily together with meals anymore but instead getting intoxicated over the weekend. Their general opinion of Finnish drinking culture was that although Finns drink too much, they are able to control themselves so that it does not affect their work or studies. The study brought out the fact that the gap between male and female drinkers is non-existent among youths and females who use alcohol are slightly more than males.

The study was able to explore the topic in depth by paying attention to details such as where alcohol use takes place among the students, the brands of alcohol they consume, how much they consume, how often, how well they are able to control their alcohol use and so on. These details were fundamental in bringing out the patterns and changes of alcohol use among international student. They were presented in form of tables that helped to bring out a comparative aspect of the study. Clear comparisons could be drawn out between how international students used alcohol while back in their home countries and while in Lapland. For example back home they did not make homemade alcohol but they make some in Lapland probably to save on costs. Also back home they could afford some good quality alcohol like wine but not in Lapland. Those who take long drink in Lapland seemed not to do the same back home so probably this was a new drink they got exposed to. Therefore from these examples it is clear that the study successfully brought out comparisons.

In my opinion, the study painted a picture of a group of students who use alcohol mostly to socialize in student parties held within their apartments. Almost half of them are able to have a good time, drink moderately and remain in control of their drinking but the other half is not. Nevertheless these students do not see anything wrong with their drinking culture or patterns because they are living in a 'wet' culture that has normalized and accepted use of alcohol for intoxication purposes. They boldly accept the negative and positive consequences of their alcohol use as a normal part of life. The negative effects that alcohol use has had on their studies exist but they are minimal. However they do have some regrets about some of the thing they did while drunk that make them wish they had chosen safer methods of socializing. One respondent made this plea and hoped that someone is willing to listen *'It would be nice to have something apart from alcohol that can help us to socialize, F29'.* I would recommend that the plea of this stu-

dents and recommendations in this study be addressed for a better community of international students in Lapland.

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https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ncJm6zM9vfYvL4J_QvWJNo-3GIbfPdw9s0-InNTAmw0/viewform?c=0&w=1

https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/what-is-alcohol/alcohol-ingredients-and-chemicals

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

These questions are aimed at collecting information on the topic 'Alcohol use among international students in Lapland' as part of a master's in comparative social work degree program. Finnish drinking culture is said to be a 'wet' culture that is different from many other cultures around the world, therefore I aim at establishing its influence on your drinking patterns, habits, culture and moral values. I am an international student who hopes that the results of this study will substantiate any stereotypes about this topic. This is a totally anonymous questionnaire; you should not state your name or any other information that can be used to identify you. If you wish to contact the researcher for a personal interview or any other information, my email address is hwanjiru@ulapland.fi.

(If you do not use alcohol, answer only question 1 - 5 then go straight to question 28- 33 of this questionnaire.)

1. What is your age group?

- o 15-18
- o 19-22
- o 23-26
- o 27-30
- o 30 and above

2. What is your gender?

- o Male
- o Female

3. Which continent do you come from?

- o Europe
- o Asia
- o North America
- o South America

o   Antarctica

o   Australia

4.Which category do you belong to?

o   Exchange student

o   Full time student

5. How long have you been in Finland?

o   Less than 6 months

o   1 year

o   2 years

o   more than 2 years

6. People drink alcohol in various places, for me, in my home country, the most common place is

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, AN ALCOHOLIC DRINK IS DE-FINED AS EITHER: 1 REGULAR BEER (25-35 cl), 1 RREGULAR CIDER (25-33cl), 1 GLASS OF WINE (10-12.5cl), OR 1 MEASURE/SHOT OF SPIRITS (4cl).

o   A pub or beer café

o   Restaurant

o   Student party

o   Home environment

o   Sauna

6b. People drink alcohol in various places, for me, in Lapland, the most common place is

o   A pub or beer café

o   Restaurant

o   Student party

o   Home environment

o   Sauna

7. While in your home country, how often do you have any kind of drink that contains alcohol?

o Daily

o 3-4 times a week

o 3- 4 times a Month

o 3- 10 times in the past Year

7b. While in Lapland, how often do you have any kind of drink that contains alcohol?

o Daily

o 3-4 times a week

o 3- 4 times a Month

o 3- 10 times in the past Year

8. Which of the following types of alcohol did you take while in your home country?

o Beer

o Cider

o Wine

o Spirits

o Homemade alcohol

o Long drink

8b. which of the following types of alcohol do you take while in your Lapland?

o Beer

o Cider

o Wine

o Spirits

o Homemade alcohol

o Long drink

9. How often do you normally end up taking more than 5 units of alcohol on a typical day when you are drinking back home?

o Never

o Weekly

o Monthly

o   Daily or almost daily

9b. How often do you normally end up taking more than 5 units of alcohol on a typical day when you are drinking in Lapland?

o   Never
o   Weekly
o   Monthly
o   Daily or almost daily

10. How often, while in your home country, were you not able to stop drinking once you started?

o   Never
o   Daily or almost daily
o   Once a week
o   Once a month
o   Once a year

10b. How often, while in Lapland, were you not able to stop drinking once you started?

o   Never
o   Daily or almost daily
o   Once a week
o   Once a month
o   Once a year

11. How often, while in your home country, did you have a feeling of guilt or regret after drinking?

o   Daily or almost daily
o   Once a week
o   Once a month
o   Once a year
o   Never

11b. How often, while in Lapland, did you have a feeling of guilt or regret after drinking?

o   Daily or almost daily

o   Once a week

o   Once a month

o   Once a year

o   Never

12. What were your reasons for drinking alcohol while in your home country?

o   I was influenced by my friends

o   Having fun

o   To cope with stress

o   The need to make friends

12b. What were your reasons for drinking alcohol while in Lapland?

o   I was influenced by my friends

o   Having fun

o   To cope with stress

o   The need to make friends

13. Describe any habits, norms and values that you observe back home but they have changed since you came to Finland.

14. Have you shared some new practices on alcohol consumption with your friends? If yes, describe some of them.

15. Have you integrated with Finnish students in social events where alcohol was served?

o   Yes

o   No

16. What have you learnt about Finnish drinking culture?

17. What is your view or opinion on Finnish drinking culture?

18. Why do international students engage in alcohol consumption?

19. Describe your observations, expectations, and feelings while in student parties at Lapland and explain the end result of the parties.

20. Has alcohol use or 'partying' affected your studies in Lapland? If the answer is 'yes' how has it affected your studies?

21. Describe the positive effects alcohol has had on you?

22. Describe the negative effects alcohol has had on you and share some of the things you have done while drunk that you are not happy about?

23. How often are student parties held in your student's residence?

o Daily
o Weekly
o Monthly
o Yearly
o Never

24. In student parties, which gender has more participants on average?

o Male
o Female

25. Which gender participates more in alcohol use in your home country?

o Female
o Male

25b. Which gender participates more in alcohol use in Lapland?

o Female
o Male

26. How does consumption of alcohol affect relationships between male and female students?

27. 'Women should avoid consumption of gives them a negative public image' do you agree or disagree with the statement above?

o I agree
o I disagree

28. Compare the behavior of female students to that of male students while under the influence of alcohol.

(This section is to be filled only by those who DO NOT use alcohol)

29. If you do not consume alcohol what are your reasons for not doing so?

30. If you do not consume alcohol, how is your experience when you attend parties?

o   I do not attend student parties
o   The parties are fun to be in.
o   The parties are uncomfortable to be in.
o   The parties help me to socialize.

31. What do you know about the Finnish drinking culture and habits

32. Describe the differences and similarities in alcohol consumption between Finland and your home country.

33. From your observation, how are drinking habits of students affected when they come to Finland?

34. What reactions do you get from other students who drink alcohol when you tell them that you do not? For example are you able to socialize with them or do their reactions make you feel left out?