The primary purpose of this study was to establish the factors influencing initial alcohol use among 14-17 year old secondary school students in Butere-Mumias District and discuss their implications for counselling. A sample of 400 secondary school students was selected using cluster and stratified random sampling techniques as the subjects were naturally grouped into Administrative Divisions, Schools, Classes, Gender and Age, which were used as sampling units. The researcher personally administered to the students one self-report questionnaire. Percentages and means were used to describe the trend of the results. Chi-square ($\chi^2$) was employed to test the null hypotheses investigated.

The results show that the major contributing factor in initial alcohol use among 14-17 year old secondary school students who are under the official age (18 years) was found to be peer pressure, the main reason for drinking was 'to find out what it is like', brand of alcohol initially used was a home brew- Busaa/Kwete, while the family home was the most common place where first taste of alcohol took place. It was also discovered that some children were introduced to alcohol use even before they attained the age of six! The implications of the results were discussed and recommendations made.

It is hoped that these findings will inform educational planners and policy makers in formulating viable policy guidelines geared towards solving the problem of under-age alcohol use in general. Educational administrators, school authorities and more so teachers in charge of school guidance and counselling programs could use these findings to plan and employ appropriate interventions in helping to prevent the problem of underage alcohol use.