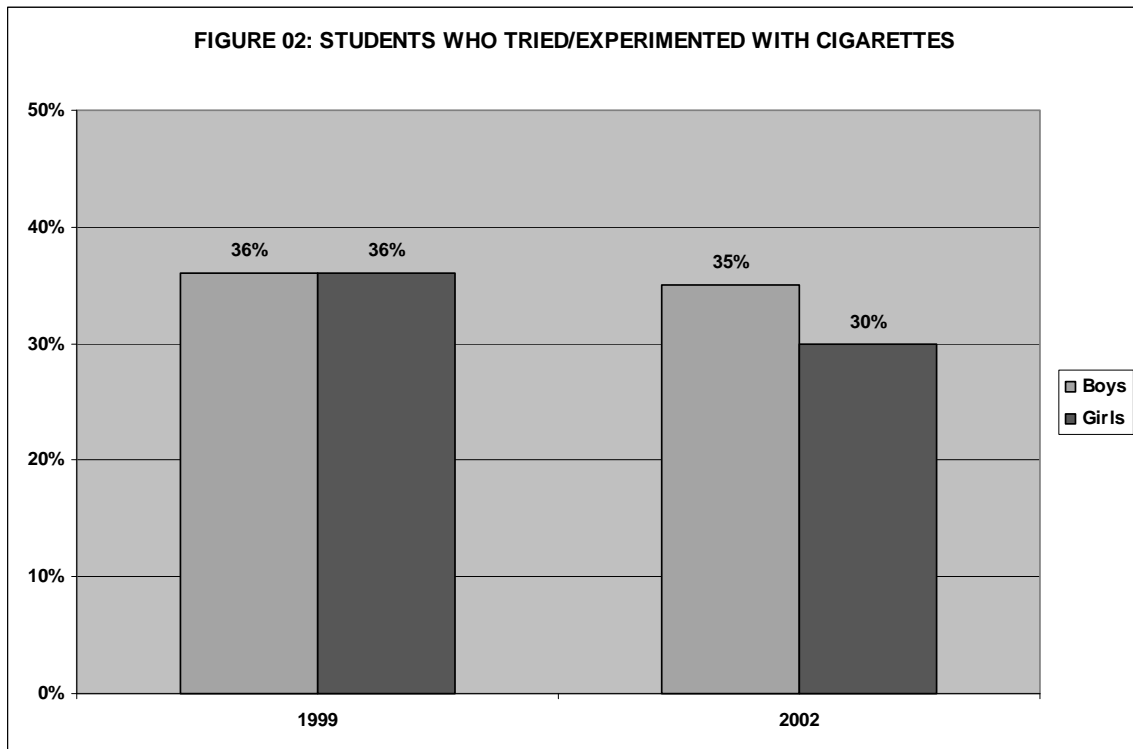


## 6.0: MAJOR OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

The survey probed several major issues and in each instance, it raised many related questions that were grouped. While each of these issue groups is examined individually, select issues that are likely to be of major concern have been consolidated here.

### 6.1: SMOKING EXPERIMENTATION AND USE:

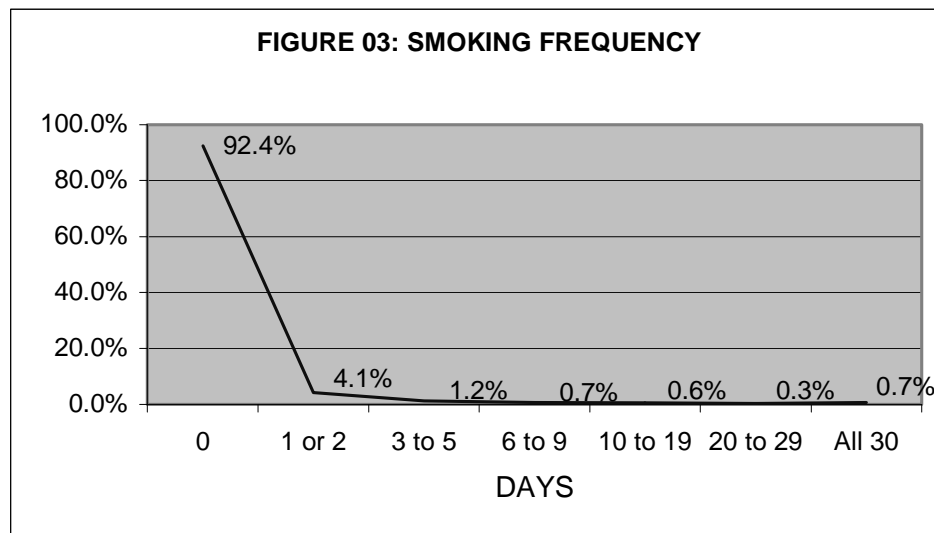
The students surveyed were asked a general question that sought to ascertain whether or not they ever smoked. Here smoking was defined as either one or two puffs of a cigarette and some 32.5% of students indicated that they had smoked before, while 67.5% had not. This pattern of experimentation, which is reflected in figure 02, appears to have been influenced marginally by gender since 35% of boys experimented, while only 30% of girls experimented. This relationship is interesting especially because in 1999 there was no significant gender relationship, but the overall level of experimentation was higher (36%). Hence it would appear that while overall experimentation dropped, usage among boys dropped less severely, although it is possible that this statistic has been influenced somewhat by the larger number of boys in this sample.



There is however a weak relationship that emerged in relation to the form-levels where students experimented most and least. Here the highest numbers of students admitting to having experimented were in form-levels 2 and 5, which were both 2.5% above average, while the form-level 3 had the lowest level of experimentation. In 1999, the highest level of experimentation was in form-level 4 and the deviation was 4% above the 1999 average of 36%, while form level 5 had the lowest level of experimentation with 30% experimentation. It is therefore evident that experimentation levels have declined and moreover there is greater uniformity among form-levels regarding student experimentation.

Compared to general experimentation, the percentage of students who admitted to having smoked in the 30 days prior to the survey period is remarkably reduced. Here some 92% of students said that they had not smoked, the inverse of which suggests that 8% of students smoked during that period. This can be compared with the quantity that experimented to reveal that more than two-thirds of those that experimented did not repeat this act in the 30 days prior to the survey, or that it was not habitual for most of those experimenting. Therefore, most of those that smoked were not habitual smokers, but did so experimentally.

Figure 03 presents this information diagrammatically and reflects a rapid decline in smoking frequency in the 30-day period under review. This decline is continuous between 1 and 29 days, except for daily smokers (all 30 days), which account for only 0.7% of those surveyed. The larger proportion of daily smokers was girls drawn from form-level 2.



## **6.2: PARENTAL INFLUENCE:**

The extent, to which the smoking of parents could have been a contributing factor to the smoking of students in the survey, was probed by way of a question that inquired into the smoking of either, or both of the student's parents. It is noteworthy that data collected in this section is almost identical to those collected in 1999 and in the few instances that it differs, this is only to the extent of one percentage point, which could be attributed to the margin of error of the study. The logical implication here would be the suggestion that while children appear to be experimenting and smoking less, their parent's habits have not changed significantly, however this determination was not the main focus of this exercise. In only 3% of instances did both parents smoke, while 16% of fathers and 3% of mothers smoked. 5% of students indicated they did not know if either of their parents smoked, which could possibly inflate the quantity of parents that smoked in instances where parents and students did not live together. The comparative examination of parental smoking is also interesting. It reveals that 81% of the students who have never smoked also have parents that are non-smokers and this is unchanged over the past three years. The inverse of this statistic suggests that 19% of students experimenting had parents who smoked. Therefore the smoking of parents could only have been a relatively minor influence, considering the fact that smoking among children is now lower, while parental smoking has remained constant.

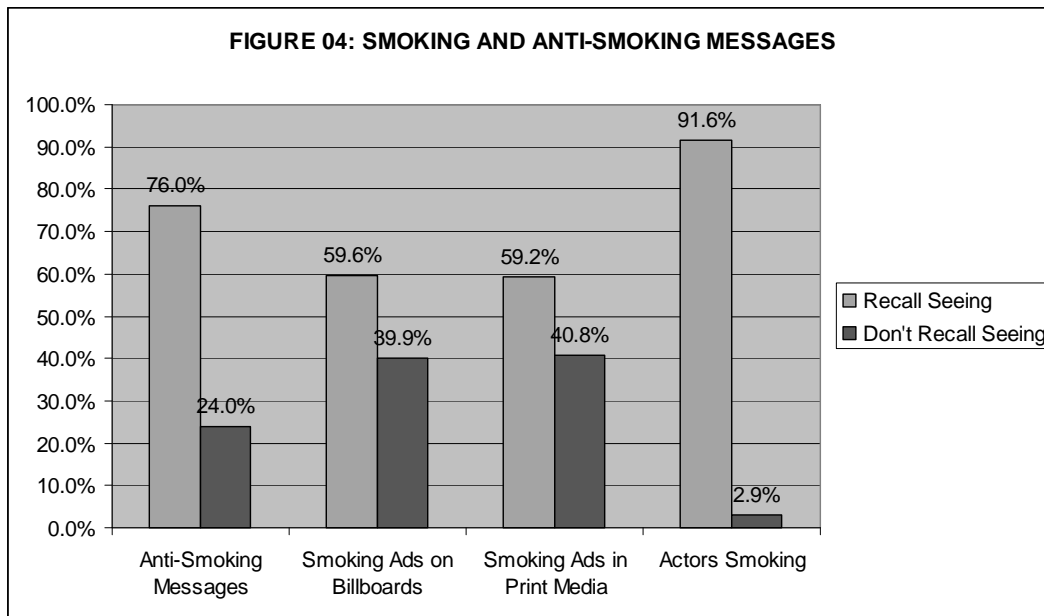
## **6.3: THE DESIRE TO QUIT SMOKING:**

Important among the attitudinal issues, which were examined, was the desire to stop smoking *presumably* among those who smoked. Among these persons, only 46% (slightly less than half) indicated a desire to stop smoking, which was 14% lower than was the case in 1999. On this occasion, there was a gender imbalance, while there was none in 1999; hence more girls than boys who smoke now want to stop. This implies that while the overall numbers of student smokers have fallen, the core that remains is more resilient to inducements to stop and moreover boys are now less inclined than girls to quit their smoking habits.

## **6.4: MEDIA INFLUENCES:**

The extent, to which the media could possibly have influenced smoking behaviour, was examined by a series of questions and the major ones are diagrammatically presented in figure 04. This general pattern suggests that students have only been marginally exposed to more anti-smoking messages, than smoking messages and the data in this study differs little from the 1999 data. The responses indicated that 76% of students actually recalled seeing an anti-smoking message over the testing period, compared with 61% that recalled seeing smoking messages on billboards and in the print media (59%).

Comparatively, it can be noted that in 1999 and 2002 a similar number of students saw anti-smoking messages, however, approximately 10% fewer students saw smoking messages in this 2002 study. An overwhelming percentage of students (92%) recall seeing actors smoking on television, hence it can be seen from figure 04 that in most cases a higher number of students recall seeing anti-smoking messages, than those seeing smoking messages in any media. This implies that anti-smoking messages are still reaching this audience with a higher level of frequency than smoking messages and moreover that the smoking messages are becoming less pronounced.

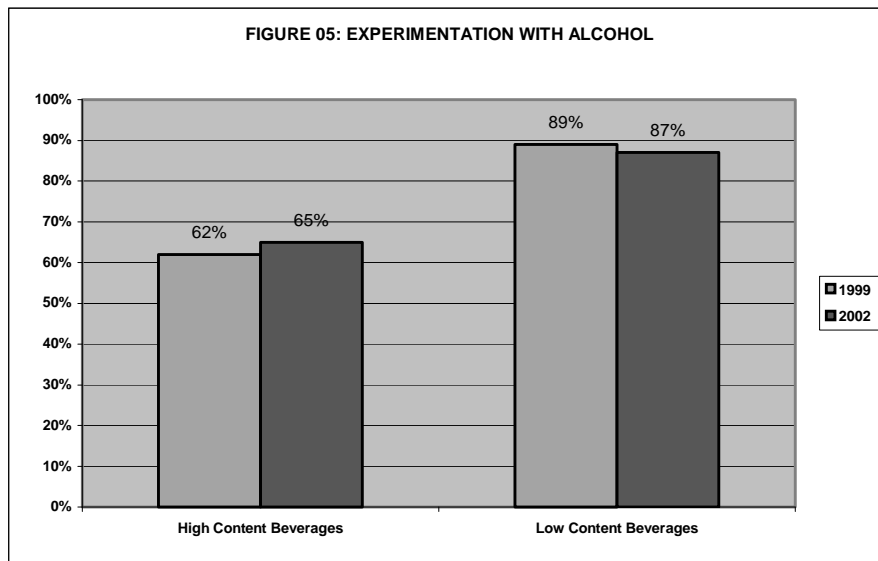


### 6.5: ANTI-SMOKING MESSAGES FROM SCHOOLS:

Here it would appear that a majority of students still are not taught, or do not recall being taught of the dangers of smoking in school. A total of 42% of students indicated that they received no instructions on the dangers of smoking, while only 42% recalled receiving such lessons and 16% were unsure. This represents 7% fewer students being taught about the dangers of smoking than was the case in 1999. Generally there was no significant difference in the recollection of anti-smoking education between form-level and gender groups, but a slightly higher number (57%) of 12 year old students noted that they received some form of education of this nature, while in 1999 teaching of this nature was more prevalent in form-levels 3 and 4. This trend would imply that more primary school children have been exposed to anti-smoking education.

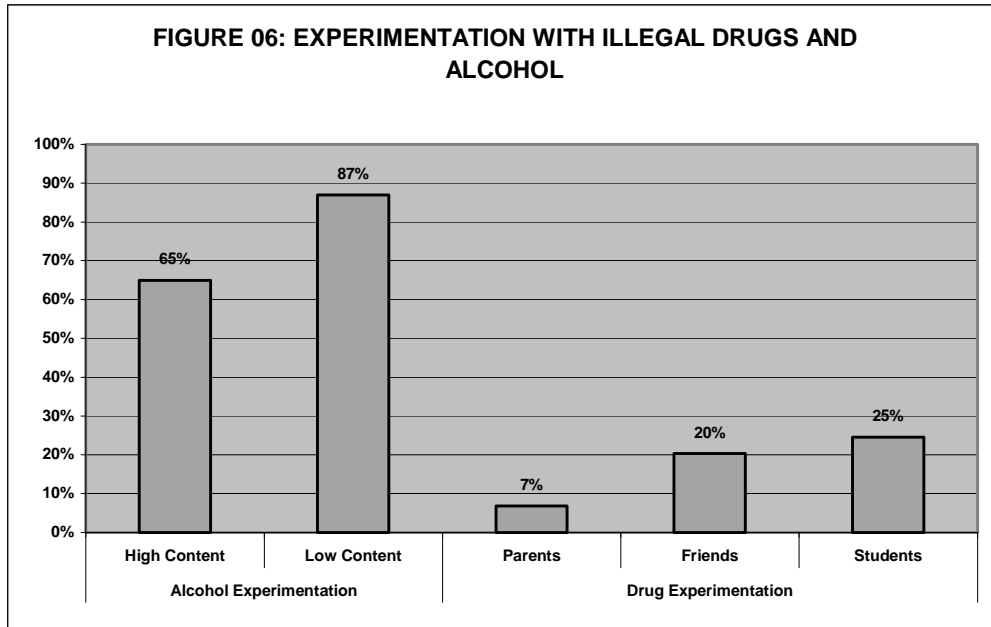
## 6.6: USE OF ALCOHOL AND PROBABLE INFLUENCES:

In relation to questions on experimentation with high and low alcohol content beverages, figure 05 demonstrates that there has been considerable experimentation among students. The quantity of students who used low content alcoholic beverages, on an experimental basis was 22% higher than those who tried high alcohol content drinks. Overall this accounts for more than two-thirds of the student population having experimented with alcohol (*high or low content*) and more than half with high content alcohol. Comparisons with the 1999 data point to similar levels of experimentation in relation to both types of alcoholic beverages, since the differences over the three years are within the margin of error of the study.



## 6.7: THE USE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS AND PROBABLE INFLUENCES:

Figure 06 facilitates an analysis of data on student experimentation with illegal drugs, as compared to the use of these by parents and close friends. Compared to the data on the use of alcohol, the quantity of students admitting to having experimented with illegal drugs appears relatively small.



Regarding the use of illegal drugs, however, any associations would have to be made between students and friends since the reported use of illegal drugs by parents does not compare favourably with that of their offspring.

## 6.8: ANTI-ALCOHOL AND ANTI-DRUG EDUCATION:

The survey sought to establish the extent to which students had been exposed to anti-drug education in schools and here 56% of students indicated that they were given anti-drug education. These levels of education were relatively constant among boys and girls, but in relation to form levels it appears to peak in the second and fifth form.