

**The interactive effects of Gender and Social
Norms in predicting the initiation and
longitudinal patterns of alcohol intoxication**

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OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Alcohol Consumption
- Reasons Associated with Alcohol Consumption
- Gender, Social Norms and alcohol consumption behavior
- Interactive Effects
- Conclusion

Introduction

- Alcohol consumption is an old phenomenon.
- People from all walks of life drink alcohol. In some communities people start drinking alcohol at a very early age. Yet, some communities do not allow even getting closer to alcohol. In such communities restriction are associated to different beliefs and those who consume are seen as violators of the norms set by their communities.

Alcohol Consumption

- At any rate, alcohol consumption has not been approved wholesale i.e. without being doubted due to its effects on health and income. Even those consuming or produce alcohol know the effects.
- The consequences of heavy or “binge” drinking pose serious risk for drinkers, but also for those in the immediate environment (Wechsler et al. 1994).
- Heavy drinking has been associated with physical or sexual assault, criminal violations, and unsafe sexual activity (Wechsler et al. 1994).
- Heavy alcohol use has also been linked to adverse health consequences including vehicle accidents, injuries, and accidental deaths (Cabalatungan, ...).
- Families of alcoholics are negatively affected by the drinker and may become victims of violent assault (Leonard 1993).

Reasons Associated with Alcohol Consumption

- There are many reasons why people engage in alcohol consumption in society. Among them:
- People drink alcohol to cope with stress ; People drink alcohol because of social influences (Abbey, Smith & Scott, 2015). Such social influences include behavior generated from the individual or developed from social practices which the society may believe or opt to live in which may lead to pressurize an individual to consume alcohol as part of community's life or try to fit in.
- In a long run, the community creates its own life style to treat alcohol as a symbol and justification of their identity.
- In this regard, in many society the life system is associated with alcohol consumption in events, such as, celebrations, rituals, and funeral ceremonies.
- Social influences turn alcohol consumption as a social norm. It customizes the behavior to individual becoming a practice within community setup.

Gender, Social Norms and alcohol consumption behavior

- Alcohol consumption may differ according to culture and environments we are living in, either by age groups, gender, community status and others. In Australia, for instance, 32% of the young aged 18–19 years old consume alcohol at unsafe levels and 27% of those aged between 20 and 29 years old drinking enough to put them at risk for long-term alcohol-related harm (AIHW, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2011). But this, can be different to other communities, young people will not allowed to drink to the excess because it is special for adults or key leader as a respect to honor them. Or they will be given special type of alcohol not similar for other people will drink like women, may they will be given soft alcohol.

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- Social norms are among the issue contributes to hinder gender quality to achieving the SDG goal number 1 to number 16. This is due to biased gender social norms to undervalue women's capabilities and rights in society. It therefore affects families and society at large. Men are to be considered heavy drinkers.
- Biologically men's bodies are able to handle higher doses of alcohol, since Men tend to have lower body fat ratios than women, the fact that alcohol is stored in body fat, men need to drink more in order to feel the substance's effects ([Mckenna, https://www.theraleighhouse.com/addiction-blog/why-men-drink-more-than-women](https://www.theraleighhouse.com/addiction-blog/why-men-drink-more-than-women))
- In the past, the behavior discriminated women, there other clubs were identified for men who drank heavily and women wouldn't dare to enter. There were also specific drinks for men and women.
- There are different profiles of alcohol consumption for men and women, and different courses and prognoses associated with problems caused by alcohol abuse.

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- The experience in African countries shows that, it is normal for men to go to the bars and start drinking alcohol and spend the whole day in there from the morning at 8 am to night.
- Also men can sit anywhere even at the counter, but for a women, she has to go and hide herself somewhere within the bar premises and drink beer or any type of alcohol. If they become drunk, society will not bother to support them, but they treat them like mad men.
- The situation constrain other groups' choices and opportunities and especially women, girls and children by regulating behavior and setting the boundaries of what they are expected to do and be. Therefore, the biased gender social norms are a major impediment to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

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- Male population drink more than their women counterparts in African and European countries due to cultural oriented norms or income differences (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2844334/#R22>)
- Therefore, masculine norms appear to have a direct and indirect effect on alcohol use through alcohol expectancies.
- It makes sense that distinct feminine norms may heighten risk or be associated to alcohol expectancies and drinking motives
- Therefore, the pattern of drinking is influenced by what is deemed acceptable behavior for men and women.

Interactive Effects

Unexpected behavior/believes

- There are different profiles of alcohol consumption for men and women, and different courses and prognoses associated with problems caused by alcohol abuse.
- Conformity to norms associated with traditional masculine role (dominance, womanising, aggressiveness, risk behaviours) is related to greater alcohol use such as;
- Women are not allowed to make alcohol during they are menstruating
- Others say that if they want to stop drinking, they just drink breast feed once
- Women are fixed in selling alcohol at the bar and selling locally beer they act as attractions for male drinkers
- Conformity to norms associated with traditional feminine role (interest in home life and family care) is related with lower alcohol

- It is women's role to produce local beer or alcohol but have limited space at the brewing alcohol industries
- In other communities they use alcohol to give dowry
- Young children are given alcohol by their parents when they are busy doing farm work, and also busy to sell alcohol the best example in Iringa – Tanzania, this means they start drinking behavior in earlier age and they grew up to that environment.
- Parents fail to give children good food on time, because time forces them to sleep by giving them alcohol and they end up getting malnourished. However, poor nutrition is the main reason for the deaths of children under five years of age and it is estimated to cost the Government 2.6 percent of the National GDP every year, this was a small survey taken in Iringa (Mwanachi communication LTD)

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- What it affect most women, men and children who when drink
- In previous year like 1970s back, a woman drinking alcohol in society was seen as a disrespectful person
- Other studies show that, at this moment, alcohol consumption among women has steadily increased over the past 30 years, and women's drinking behavior is now similar to that of men's.
- Apparently, the main reason of women and probably men as well drink much because they tend to believe in managing their stress.
- However, many studies investigated that many men who drink alcohol become to be the source of domestic and sexual violence. The intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive, serious problem detrimental to the health of number of women.
- Although IPV may be perpetrated by either men or women, the majority of victims are women and women report experiencing more serious forms of violence and more serious consequences of violence than do men, including an increased risk of developing mental health and substance use problems. More than 50% of the women who experienced IPV suffered some mental health problem and nearly 75% of the women who experienced 'severe' IPV had one or more diagnosed mental health disorders.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/gha.v7.24815%40zgha20.2014.7.issue-sl?src=reccsys>

Conclusion

- Socially norms and value treats alcohol use in different way as per respected society. However, it leave them behind with no development at all, neither for individual nor to community levels.