

The Impact of Alcohol Consumption on Human Capital Optimal Performance: A Synthetic Exploration

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Abstract

The likelihood of experiencing harm from alcohol consumption rises with the amount an individual drinks. These harms can impact various parts of the body including, the brain, heart, liver, digestive system, endocrine system, immune system and many other areas. Indeed, alcohol impacts health in numerous ways, with excessive consumption having potential to harm nearly every system of the human body. Consequently, this paper is designed to present the harmful effects of alcohol on the health and wellbeing of individuals thereby impacting adversely on families, organizations, communities and ultimately the universe. Standing on the theoretical postulations of Alcohol Expectancy Theory, the negative influence of alcohol consumption to humanity is no doubt germane. To this end, we recommend among others that with the unprecedented rise in deaths and disabilities from alcohol-related consequences, it is imperative for countries and organizations to come together to impart a uniform, evidence-based message and policy agenda for alcohol control.

Keyword: *Alcohol, Alcohol Consumption; Alcohol Consequences; Human Capital; Human Capital Development*

Introduction

The slogan of the World Health Organization, (2018) “Control alcohol, promote health, protect future generations” is very germane and instructive. It maintained that the detrimental use of alcohol is a major risk factor affecting global population health and significantly influences various health-related objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in relation to maternal and mental health, child health, infectious diseases (HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis), non-communicable diseases and mental health, injuries and poisonings. The consequences linked to alcohol consumption are diverse, encompassing academic challenges, psychosocial issues, antisocial behavior, injuries, and various other risky activities. (Attwood, Ataya, Benton, Penton- Voak, & Munafo, 2009; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000) in Gary & Barb, (2023).

It’s important to acknowledge that alcohol consumption in various forms has been widespread in many countries throughout history. As economies in low- and middle-income nations develop, the levels of alcohol use, along with its commercial production and distribution, are on the rise. This increase brings numerous health-related consequences. Alcohol use ranks among the top three risk factors for disease burden, following high blood pressure and tobacco use, and is linked to over 200 different diseases. There are also significant correlations between alcohol use and certain infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. While some studies have identified a

connection between alcohol consumption and risky sexual behavior related to HIV/AIDS, others have found no such association (Lingsay & Shireen, 2015).

According to Lingsay & Shireen, (2015) the most recent global status report on alcohol and health from the World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that alcohol use accounts for six percent of all deaths and five percent of the burden of disease and injury worldwide. It ranks as one of the top three risk factors for disease burden, following high blood pressure and tobacco use, including secondhand smoke (WHO 2014). Alcohol consumption is linked to more than 200 types of diseases and injuries, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, liver cirrhosis, motor vehicle accidents, and epilepsy. (Hahn, Woolf-King & Muyindike 2011; Lim, 2013; Rehm & Mathers, 2009; WHO 2014) in Lingsay & Shireen, (2015) Excessive alcohol consumption poses a significant global health risk, affecting various health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to maternal and child health, infectious diseases (such as HIV, hepatitis, and tuberculosis), non-communicable diseases, mental health, and incidents of injuries and poisonings. Additionally, the production and consumption of alcohol are closely linked to other targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Alcohol consumption can have significant impacts on human capital functioning, affecting both individual productivity and overall economic growth. Below are summary highlight of these impacts:

Health Effects: Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to chronic diseases such as liver cirrhosis, cardiovascular diseases, and various cancers. Poor health reduces an individual's ability to work effectively and increases absenteeism. Alcohol abuse is linked to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and alcohol dependence. These conditions can impair cognitive functions, decision-making abilities, and overall mental well-being.

Productivity: Alcohol consumption can impair cognitive functions and motor skills, leading to decreased productivity and increased risk of workplace accidents. Employees with alcohol-related issues are more likely to have lower job performance and higher rates of absenteeism.

In educational settings, alcohol consumption among students can negatively impact their academic performance. Studies have shown that heavy drinking is associated with lower grades and higher dropout rates.

Economic Costs: The treatment of alcohol-related health conditions imposes a significant burden on healthcare systems. This includes costs for medical care, rehabilitation, and long-term treatment of chronic conditions. The economic impact of alcohol consumption is not limited to healthcare costs. Lost productivity due to absenteeism, reduced work performance, and premature mortality also contribute to economic losses.

Social Implications: Alcohol abuse can strain family relationships and social networks. This can lead to social isolation, domestic violence, and other social problems that further impact an individual's well-being and productivity. Alcohol consumption is often linked to increased rates of crime, including violent offenses and public disturbances. Legal issues and incarceration can disrupt an individual's career and educational pursuits.

Policy and Prevention: Effective public health policies and interventions are crucial for reducing alcohol consumption and mitigating its negative impacts. These include awareness campaigns, restrictions on alcohol advertising, and support for addiction treatment programs. Employers can implement workplace programs to address alcohol-related issues, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs), health screenings, and policies that promote a healthy work environment.

No doubt, alcohol consumption has far-reaching effects on human capital functioning, impacting negatively on health, productivity, economic costs, and social well-being. Addressing these issues through comprehensive public health strategies and workplace interventions is essential for improving overall human capital and economic outcomes.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to examine how alcohol consumption can adversely affect the health and optimal performance of human capital.

Methodology

The paper made use of content analysis but both primary and secondary data were utilized. The primary data was purely participant observation while the secondary data were generated from existing literatures on the effects of alcohol consumption on the physical wellbeing of the human mind and his/her optimal performance.

Conceptual Analysis: Alcohol

Alcohol, or ethanol, is a chemical compound prevalent in alcoholic beverages. As a central nervous system depressant, it reduces brain and bodily activity. It is created through the fermentation of sugars by yeast or by distilling grains, fruits, or vegetables. Alcohol is a psychoactive substance that can be harmful and has become a frequent part of social gatherings in many cultures. Furthermore, alcohol consumption highlights socio-economic disparities. It is legally available in most countries for individuals over the age of 18. Alcohol's chemical name is ethanol ($\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$) or ethyl alcohol, Alberta Health Services, (2022). Pure ethyl alcohol is a clear, colourless liquid. As a drug, alcohol is a substance that changes the way a person thinks, feels, or behaves. Alcohol is a depressant and it affects every organ in the body.

There are two forms of alcohol: Beverage alcohol (for consumption) and concentrated alcohol (not for consumption). Beverage alcohol encompasses drinks such as beer, wine, cider, vodka, gin, rum, and whiskey. In contrast, non-consumable alcohols, particularly methyl alcohol (methanol), pose serious dangers due to their chemical composition. Methanol is a clear, colorless liquid that is highly toxic and should never be ingested, as it cannot be rendered safe for consumption. Even small amounts of methanol can lead to blindness or be fatal. It is found in products like paint removers, antifreeze, liquid fuels, lacquer thinners, and certain industrial cleaners. Additionally, ethyl alcohol (ethanol) in some forms is also not intended for consumption due to its toxic effects. This includes items like rubbing alcohol, vanilla extract, aftershave lotions, cooking wines, and mouthwashes, Alberta Health Services, (2022).

According to the World Heart Federation (WHF) (2020), the prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) has nearly doubled over the past few decades, with alcohol playing a significant role in this increase. Alcohol consumption has also been linked to deaths from infectious diseases, both intentional and unintentional injuries, digestive disorders, and various non-communicable diseases, including cancer. The economic burden of alcohol-related health issues is considerable, affecting individuals, organizations, and nations alike. The lack of universal guidelines and robust policy measures has contributed to greater alcohol consumption and accessibility. WHF (2020) highlighted that the World Health Organization (WHO) has called for a 10% relative reduction in harmful alcohol use between 2013 and 2025.

However, inadequate investment in effective alcohol control measures, along with individual choices and the ongoing presence of misinformation and industry influence, have obstructed public health professionals' efforts to significantly reduce alcohol-related harm and mortality. Alcohol, a psychoactive and harmful substance, has become a prevalent part of social gatherings in many cultures. Furthermore, its consumption reflects socio-economic disparities among individuals.

The negative consequence in the body of the consumer of alcohol can be both positive and negative, depending on the amount consumed and the individual's tolerance. In small amounts, alcohol can produce feelings of relaxation and euphoria, and can reduce inhibitions and social anxiety. However, as the amount of alcohol consumed increases, the effects can become more negative, including impaired judgment, coordination, and reaction time, as well as increased risk of accidents and injuries. Alcohol is metabolized by the liver, and excessive alcohol consumption can lead to liver damage and disease. Long-term consumption could also lead to a range of complications on wellness. Additionally, alcohol consumption can interact with certain medications and exacerbate underlying health conditions.

Reiterating, it is important to note that the effects of alcohol can vary depending on factors such as age, gender, bodyweight, and overall health. It is also important to be aware of the potential risks associated with alcohol consumption, such as the risk of accidents and injuries, particularly when driving or operating heavy machinery.

Overall, it is important to approach alcohol consumption with caution and to be aware of the potential risks and negative effects.

Alcohol Consumption: Alcohol consumption is the activity of drinking alcoholic beverages, which contain the psychoactive substance ethanol. Moderate alcohol consumption may have some potential health benefits for certain individuals. For example, moderate intake could reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke in some. This is because alcohol can increase high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, which is the "good" cholesterol that helps remove other forms of cholesterol from the body. Intake of alcohol in moderation also increases the level of antioxidants in the body, which can help protect against oxidative stress and inflammation.

However, the potential of moderate alcohol consumption are generally out-weighted by the negative effects of excessive alcohol consumption. As pointed earlier, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to a range of health problems, including liver disease, heart disease, certain types of cancer, and mental health disorders. Excessive alcohol consumption can also increase the risk of accidents and injuries, particularly when driving or operating heavy machinery. According to Babor, T., R. Campbell, R. R., & Saunders, J. (1994) in Lindsay, M & Shireen, A, (2015) hazardous drinking is defined as alcohol use that carries the risk of harm whereas harmful use is defined as the presence of existing complications.

In The position of WHO, (2018) the consumption of alcohol constitute a great deal of people's social, cultural and religious beliefs which seemingly gives some amount of satisfaction to those users. But it is important to note that the definition of moderate and excessive alcohol consumption varies depending on factors such as age, gender, and overall health. Generally, moderate alcohol consumption is essentially those who take about a drink each day for women and for men, those who take about two drinks each day. Excessive alcohol consumption is typically therefore, those who consume from three and above drinks each day or at any single occasion. What is note worthy is ones knowledge of the numerous consequences surrounding alcohol consumption, especially the risk of accidents and injuries. Overall, it is important to approach alcohol consumption with caution and to be aware of the potential risks and negative effects.

Alcohol Addiction: An addict according to Longman Contemporary English Dictionary is 'a person who is unable to free himself from a harmful habit, especially of taking drugs'. Therefore, an addict to a substance will continue to depend on it despite its negative effects on him and the consequence that follows it. To Hornby, (2010) an addict is a person who is unable to stop taking harmful drugs; a person who is very interested in something and spends a lot of his time and resources on it. Thus, addiction is the act of or condition of being hooked to something. An addict is someone who has a physical or psychological dependence on a substance or behavior, which can lead to negative consequences in their life. Addiction can involve: Substances such as alcohol, drugs (licit or illicit), prescription medications, or tobacco. Behaviors such as gambling, internet use, social media, video games, shopping, or sex are also prone to addiction. Common characteristics of addiction include but not limited to: Loss of control: inability to stop or limit the behavior. Tolerance: needing more to achieve the same effect. Withdrawal: experiencing physical or emotional symptoms when stopping. Neglect: ignoring responsibilities, relationships, or personal care, and continued use despite negative consequences. There are different types of addiction which includes substance use disorder (SUD), behavioral addiction (e.g., gaming disorder), process addiction (e.g., compulsive gambling) and co-occurring disorders (e.g., mental health issues with addiction). Signs of addiction vary but basically include secrecy, mood changes, increased risk-taking, financial problems, social isolation, health issues and failed attempts to quit. It should be noted however, that addiction is a treatable condition.

Therefore, alcohol addiction, also known as Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), is a chronic and complex condition characterized by the excessive and compulsive consumption of alcohol despite adverse consequences. Causes of alcohol addiction could be genetics: family history, genetic predisposition, environmental factors: peer pressure, stress, trauma, mental health: anxiety, depression, personality disorders, brain chemistry: imbalance of neurotransmitters (dopamine, serotonin), social and cultural influences: accessibility and social norms.

The signs and symptoms of alcohol addiction include; Increased tolerance: needing more alcohol for the same effect, Withdrawal symptoms when stopping or reducing alcohol intake, Loss of control: drinking more or

longer than intended, Neglect: ignoring responsibilities, relationships, personal care, Continued use despite physical, emotional, or social problems, Secrecy: hiding or lying about alcohol use, Mood changes: irritability, aggression, depression, Blackouts: memory loss due to excessive drinking.

Tremors, seizures and liver damage constitute physical symptoms.

Stages of alcohol addiction are social drinking which could be casual, moderate or problem drinking; excessive drinking which comes with negative consequences; dependence which hooks the addict both physical and psychological reliance, and addiction where the person loss of control of the habit and indulge in compulsive drinking.

Alcohol addiction comes with the following consequences. Physical health: Liver disease, heart problems, cancer; Mental health: depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts; Social relationships: family conflicts, friendships strained; Employment and finances: Job loss, financial instability; Legal issues: DUIs, arrests, court-ordered treatment among others.

Prevention of alcohol addiction involve the combination of the following measures: Education: awareness campaigns, school programs; Community support: support groups, local initiatives; Policy changes: regulations, taxation; Early intervention: Screening, brief interventions and Family involvement: parenting skills, guidance. Remember, alcohol addiction is treatable.

Human Capital: Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes that individuals possess, which enable them to contribute to the production of goods and services. It is a key factor in economic growth and development, as well as in individual and organizational success. Human capital is developed through education, training, and experience. Education provides Individuals with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to pursue further education and career opportunities. Training and experience help individuals to develop specific skills and abilities that are relevant to their chosen careers.

Human capital is a term that refers to the people who make up an organization's workforce. These individuals are responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the organization and achieving its goals and objectives. The concept of human capital is an important aspect of any organization because it helps to ensure that the right people are in the right positions at the right time, with the necessary skills and abilities to perform their jobs effectively (Draper and Abiraj 2018). They explained that human capital professionals are responsible for the management of all aspects of the workforce, including recruitment, training and development, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and compliance with labor laws and regulations. Human capital professionals work closely with management to ensure that the organization is staffed appropriately and that the workforce is developed and motivated to achieve organizational goals.

Investing in human capital can have a positive impact on individuals and society as a whole. For individuals, investing in education and training can lead to higher incomes, better job opportunities, and increased job satisfaction. For society, investing in human capital can lead to increased productivity, innovation, and economic growth.

Governments and organizations can invest in human capital through a variety of means, Including education and training programs, as well as through policies and incentives that encourage individuals to invest in their own human capital. For example, governments can Invest in education and training programs by providing funding for schools, universities, and Vocational training programs. They can also offer incentives such as tax-credits or scholarships to encourage individuals to pursue education and training.

Organizations can invest in human capital by providing training and development opportunities for their employees, as well as by offering competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain top talent. They can also invest in the development of their employees by providing opportunities for advancement and career growth.

Overall, investing in human capital is essential for both individuals and society as a whole. It can Lead to increased productivity, innovation, and economic growth, as well as to improved individual and organizational success.

Results

Alcohol and the Human System

Alcohol consumption affects various systems of the human body, leading to both short-term and long-term health consequences. This includes but not limited to the following:

Central Nervous System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol acts as a depressant, slowing down brain function and neural activity. This leads to lowered inhibitions, impaired judgment, and coordination, and slowed reaction times. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use can cause significant damage to the brain, resulting in cognitive impairments, memory loss, and conditions like Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome (a severe brain disorder).

Digestive System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol irritates the stomach lining, causing nausea, vomiting, and gastritis. It can also increase acid production, leading to heartburn and indigestion.

Long-term Effects: Prolonged alcohol use can lead to liver diseases such as fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis, and cirrhosis. It can also increase the risk of gastrointestinal cancers.

Cardiovascular System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol consumption can cause spikes in blood pressure and irregular heartbeats (arrhythmia). It can also lead to a temporary increase in heart rate. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use is associated with cardiomyopathy (weakening of the heart muscle), hypertension, and an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Immune System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol can weaken the immune system, making the body more susceptible to infections. Long-term Effects: Prolonged alcohol use can lead to a persistent state of immune suppression, increasing the risk of infections and diseases.

Endocrine System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol can disrupt the balance of hormones in the body, affecting metabolism and energy levels. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use can lead to hormonal imbalances, affecting reproductive health and leading to conditions like infertility and sexual dysfunction.

Musculoskeletal System: Short-term Effects: Alcohol consumption can lead to muscle weakness and decreased coordination. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use can result in muscle wasting and bone density loss, increasing the risk of fractures and osteoporosis.

Mental Health: Short-term Effects: Alcohol can cause mood swings, anxiety, and depression. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use is strongly linked to mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and alcohol dependence.

Social and Behavioral Effects: Short-term Effects: Alcohol consumption can lead to risky behaviors, such as drunk driving and unprotected sex. Long-term Effects: Chronic alcohol use can result in social isolation, relationship problems, and legal issues.

Thus, alcohol consumption has wide-ranging effects on the human body, impacting multiple systems and leading to both immediate and long-term health consequences. Reducing alcohol consumption and seeking help for alcohol-related issues are crucial steps in maintaining overall health and well-being.

Women, during pregnancy are encouraged to abstain from alcohol consumption so as not to endanger the development of the fetus. Derek, (2006) posit that a woman who indulge in alcohol consumption during pregnancy may eventually give birth to babies who are smaller than expected or have the 'fetal alcohol syndrome'. This is a condition in which the baby is unusually small, mentally retarded and has characteristic features.

Tabular Presentation of the Effects of Alcohol in the Body

S/No	Affected Area	Results
1	Central Nervous System	Depression, High levels can result in coma/death,

		Gastro-intestinal irritant resulting in ulcers, Erosion of Lining, and pancreatic irritations.
2	Liver	Change in fat metabolism and eventually scarring of the liver.
3	Circulatory System	Temporary increase in heartbeat and blood pressure, Peripheral blood vessels dilate resulting in heat loss And feeling of warmth.
4	Fluid Balance	Water shifts within the body to give feeling of thirst, Diuretic effect Increases urine output.
5	Sensation and Perception	Reduced sensitivity to taste and odour, Tunnel vision, Reduction in peripheral sight, Limits the ability to distinguish Light intensity, Sensitivity to colours especially red decreases.
6	Motor Performance	Most types of performance are duely impaired by intoxicating doses, Increases swaying, especially if eyes are closed, Coordination for tracing Moving objects is impaired.
7	Attention, Memory, and Conceptual process	Inhibits the ability to absorb and process information from more than one source at a time, accuracy, speed and consistency of task is impaired, Significant memory loss occurs with high doses and may develop into blackouts involving amnesia, Creates difficulties in processing and later Recalling information, Heavy drinkers will perform lower on abstraction and adaptive abilities when sober.
8	Emotions	Decreases inhibitions and "frees" people up in tight social situations
9	Sexuality	Large doses of alcohol frustrate sexual performance, Sex lives become disturbed, deficient, and ineffectual, Impotency occurs
10	Sleep	Several drinks decrease REM, or dreaming sleep, resulting in impaired concentration and memory, Increased anxiety, tiredness and irritability.

Source: Center for Health Education and Wellness, Johns Hopkins University. <http://www.jhu.edu/health/>

Alcohol and Workplace Environment

Alcohol consumption can significantly impact productivity in multiple ways:

Cognitive Impairment: Even moderate drinking can impair cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and decision-making. This leads to decreased efficiency and increased errors at work.

Physical Health Issues: Chronic alcohol consumption can cause health problems like liver disease, cardiovascular issues, and weakened immune systems. Poor health results in more sick days and lower overall productivity.

Mental Health Problems: Alcohol abuse is linked to mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, which can reduce motivation and focus, hampering productivity.

Increased Absenteeism: Employees with alcohol-related issues are more likely to miss work due to hangovers, illnesses, or related health complications, leading to higher absenteeism rates.

Presenteeism: This is when employees are physically present but mentally checked out due to hangovers or alcohol-related health issues, leading to reduced performance.

Workplace Accidents: Alcohol impairs coordination and judgment, increasing the risk of workplace accidents and injuries, which can further reduce productivity and increase costs.

Lower Quality of Work: Alcohol can affect the quality of work produced, leading to mistakes and lower standards in tasks that require attention to detail and precision.

Effectively managing and reducing alcohol consumption through workplace programs and public health initiatives can mitigate these impacts and enhance overall productivity.

Alcohol consumption has a substantial impact on economic costs, affecting both individuals and society as a whole. Here are some key areas where these costs manifest:

Healthcare Costs: These include expenses for treating alcohol-related health conditions such as liver disease, cardiovascular problems, and mental health issues. The cost of hospitalizations, medications, and long-term care can be significant. There are also indirect medical costs which are costs related to the loss of productivity due to illness, disability, and premature death caused by alcohol-related conditions.

Productivity Loss:

Absenteeism: Employees with alcohol-related health issues are more likely to miss work, leading to lost productivity and increased costs for employers. **Presenteeism:** This refers to employees being present at work but functioning at a reduced capacity due to the effects of alcohol, resulting in lower overall productivity. **Workplace Accidents:** Alcohol consumption increases the risk of workplace accidents and injuries, leading to additional costs related to medical treatment, workers' compensation, and lost work time.

Social Costs: Crime and Legal Issues: Alcohol consumption is associated with higher rates of crime, including violent offenses and public disturbances. The costs include law enforcement, legal proceedings, and incarceration. **Family and Social Problems:** Alcohol abuse can lead to family breakdowns, domestic violence, and social isolation, which have broader social and economic implications.

Economic Burden on Society: Lost Economic Output: The combined effects of healthcare costs, productivity loss, and social issues result in a significant economic burden on society. This includes both direct costs (e.g., healthcare expenses) and indirect costs (e.g., lost productivity).

Prevention and Treatment Costs: Public Health Interventions: Governments and organizations invest in prevention and treatment programs to reduce alcohol consumption and its associated harms. These programs include awareness campaigns, addiction treatment services, and support for affected individuals and families.

Certainly, alcohol consumption imposes a wide range of economic costs, from direct healthcare expenses to indirect costs related to productivity loss and social issues. Addressing these costs requires a comprehensive approach that includes public health interventions, workplace policies, and support for affected individuals and families.

Alcohol consumption can have a profound impact on social well-being, influencing various aspects of an individual's life and community. This includes:

Family Dynamics: Alcohol abuse can strain family relationships, leading to conflicts, domestic violence, and even family breakdowns. Children in such environments often suffer from emotional and psychological distress, affecting their development and future well-being.

Social Relationships: Heavy drinking can lead to social isolation as individuals may withdraw from friends and social activities. It can also cause conflicts and strain relationships with friends and colleagues due to irresponsible or harmful behavior while under the influence.

Mental Health: Alcohol can exacerbate mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, which in turn affects social interactions and overall social well-being. Individuals may struggle with maintaining healthy relationships and managing social responsibilities.

Community Safety: High levels of alcohol consumption are often linked to increased crime rates, including violent offenses and public disturbances. This can reduce community safety and quality of life, creating a sense of insecurity and fear among residents.

Workplace Environment: Alcohol consumption can lead to reduced productivity and performance at work, affecting not just the individual but also their coworkers and the overall workplace atmosphere. It can result in increased absenteeism and higher accident rates, disrupting the work environment.

Financial Strain: The cost of purchasing alcohol and managing related health issues can lead to financial difficulties. This can affect the individual's ability to meet financial obligations, further straining social relationships and causing stress.

Social Stigma: Individuals with alcohol dependency may face social stigma and discrimination, leading to feelings of shame and low self-esteem. This can hinder their ability to seek help and support, perpetuating the cycle of abuse.

Quality of Life: Chronic alcohol use can diminish overall quality of life, affecting physical health, mental health, and social interactions. It can prevent individuals from participating fully in social and community activities, leading to a sense of disconnection and loneliness.

Accordingly, alcohol consumption can deeply affect social well-being, impacting family dynamics, social relationships, mental health, community safety, workplace environments, financial stability, and overall quality of life. Addressing these issues through support systems, public health initiatives, and community programs is crucial for promoting social well-being and reducing the negative impacts of alcohol consumption.

Discussion

Theoretical Framework: Alcohol Expectancy Theory.

This theory, based on Social Learning Theory, suggests that people develop beliefs about the effects of alcohol through observation and experience. These beliefs, or expectancies, influence their drinking behavior. For example, if someone believes that drinking will make them more sociable, they are more likely to drink in social situations.

Alcohol Expectancy Theory is a psychological framework that explains how individuals' beliefs about the effects of alcohol influence their drinking behavior.

Expectancies: These are beliefs or expectations about the outcomes of drinking alcohol. They can be positive (e.g., feeling more sociable, relaxed, or confident) or negative (e.g., feeling sick, losing control, or experiencing hangovers). **Memory Representation:** Expectancies are formed based on past experiences, observations, and cultural influences. They are stored in memory and shape how individuals perceive and interpret situations involving alcohol.

The mechanisms upon which this is explored include: Cognitive Processes: When individuals encounter a situation where alcohol is present, they recall their expectancies from memory. These expectancies influence their decision to drink and their behavior while drinking. Behavioral Influence: Positive expectancies can encourage drinking behavior, as individuals anticipate enjoyable outcomes. Conversely, negative expectancies can deter drinking if individuals expect unpleasant consequences.

Applications: Predicting Drinking Patterns: Alcohol expectancy theory is used to predict and understand drinking behavior. Research has shown that individuals with strong positive expectancies are more likely to engage in heavy drinking.

Intervention Strategies: The theory is applied in designing interventions to reduce harmful drinking. By altering expectancies (e.g., through education or cognitive-behavioral techniques), it is possible to influence drinking behavior. Numerous studies have demonstrated the power of alcohol expectancies to predict drinking patterns and alcohol-related behaviors. For example, individuals who believe that alcohol will make them more sociable are more likely to drink in social settings. Indeed, advances in cognitive neuroscience have further refined the theory, incorporating insights into how expectancies are formed, stored, and activated in the brain.

Thus, Alcohol Expectancy Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the psychological factors that drive alcohol consumption. By addressing expectancies, interventions can be developed to promote healthier drinking behaviors and reduce the risks associated with alcohol abuse.

Psychological Theories: These theories include psychoanalytic factors, personality traits, classical conditioning, and social learning. They explore how psychological factors, such as stress, coping mechanisms, and learned behaviors, contribute to alcohol consumption. The Psychological Theory of Alcohol explores the mental and emotional factors that contribute to alcohol use and abuse. We can explain further as follows: Cognitive Factors: This includes beliefs, expectations, and attitudes towards alcohol. People may drink because they believe it will help them relax, improve their social interactions, or enhance their mood. Emotional Factors: Alcohol is often used as a coping mechanism to deal with negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, or depression. It provides temporary relief but can lead to dependency over time. Personality Traits: Certain personality traits, such as impulsivity, sensation-seeking, and low self-esteem, are associated with higher risks of alcohol use and abuse. Behavioral Factors: Learned behaviors and habits also play a role. People may develop drinking habits based on past experiences and reinforcement, either positive (e.g., social approval) or negative (e.g., relief from stress).

Mechanisms: Self-Medication Hypothesis: This suggests that individuals use alcohol to self-medicate and alleviate psychological distress. While it may provide temporary relief, it can exacerbate underlying mental health issues in the long term.

Applications: Therapeutic Interventions: Psychological theories inform various therapeutic approaches to treat alcohol use disorders. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors related to alcohol use. Preventive Measures: Understanding psychological factors can aid in developing preventive strategies, such as educational programs that address emotional coping skills and promote healthier alternatives to drinking.

Policy Making: Policies that address mental health and provide support for stress management can help reduce alcohol abuse. Research Evidence. Empirical Studies: Numerous studies have found a strong link between psychological factors and alcohol use. For example, research indicates that individuals with higher levels of anxiety and depression are more likely to use alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Longitudinal Research: Studies that track individuals over time show how personality traits and emotional states can influence drinking patterns and the development of alcohol-related problems.

Accordingly, the Psychological Theory of Alcohol provides insights into the mental and emotional drivers behind alcohol use. By addressing these underlying psychological factors, interventions can be more effective in preventing and treating alcohol abuse.

Social Theories: Social theories emphasize the role of social systems, availability, and cultural norms in alcohol consumption. They suggest that factors such as peer pressure, social environment, and cultural attitudes towards drinking influence an individual's drinking behavior. The Social Theory of Alcohol posits that alcohol consumption is heavily influenced by social contexts and interactions. **Social Norms:** Drinking behavior is often shaped by societal norms and cultural expectations. For example, in some cultures, drinking is a social activity that is encouraged and celebrated, while in others, it may be frowned upon. **Socialization:** Individuals learn drinking behaviors through socialization processes, such as observing family members, peers, and media representations of alcohol use. **Peer Influence:** Friends and social groups play a significant role in influencing drinking behavior. The desire to fit in and be accepted by peers can lead individuals to drink more or less, depending on the group's norms. **Social Roles:** Different social roles and settings can dictate drinking behavior. For instance, professional networking events might encourage moderate drinking, while college parties might promote heavier drinking.

Mechanisms: **Social Learning:** People learn drinking behaviors by observing and imitating others, especially those they consider role models or peers. This is known as social learning theory.

Social Reinforcement: Positive reinforcement from social groups, such as praise or acceptance, can encourage drinking behavior. Conversely, negative reinforcement, such as criticism or exclusion, can deter it. **Social Identity:** Drinking can be a way to express and reinforce social identity. For example, identifying as a "party person" or a "social drinker" can influence one's drinking habits.

Applications: **Public Health Campaigns:** Understanding the social influences on drinking can help design effective public health campaigns. For example, campaigns that promote responsible drinking within social contexts can be more effective than those that focus solely on individual behavior. **Policy Making:** Policies that regulate alcohol availability and marketing can shape social norms and reduce harmful drinking behaviors. For instance, restrictions on alcohol advertising can decrease the normalization of heavy drinking. **Intervention Programs:** Programs that target social groups and environments, such as college campuses or workplaces, can help reduce excessive drinking by changing social norms and providing alternative social activities.

Research Evidence: **Empirical Studies:** Research has shown that social factors, such as peer pressure and social norms, significantly influence drinking behavior. Studies have also demonstrated that interventions targeting social contexts can reduce alcohol consumption. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Comparing drinking behaviors across different cultures highlights the role of social norms and values in shaping alcohol consumption. For example, cultures with strong social drinking traditions may have higher rates of alcohol use.

Particularly, the Social Theory of Alcohol emphasizes the importance of social contexts, norms, and interactions in shaping drinking behavior. By understanding these social influences, we can develop more effective strategies to promote responsible drinking and reduce alcohol-related harm.

Each of these theories provides a different lens through which to understand alcohol consumption, highlighting the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to drinking behavior.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The assertion that the "extent of alcohol-related diseases and social burdens starkly contrasts with the resources allocated at all levels to mitigate alcohol misuse" remains accurate eight years after the WHO's endorsement of the Global Strategy to reduce harmful alcohol use. The reductions in alcohol misuse seen in some regions were primarily achieved through internal resources utilizing the WHO's most cost-effective interventions.

With the unprecedented rise in the deaths and disabilities from alcohol-related diseases and other illnesses, it is imperative for countries and organizations to come together to impart a uniform, evidence-based message and policy agenda for alcohol control.

As the negative effects of alcohol consumption continue to increase, particularly in developing countries, there is a pressing global duty to oversee alcohol use for potential harm. Implementing a uniform set of behavioral

questions would enable researchers to track alcohol consumption and facilitate multi-country comparisons. This, in turn, would guide policy decisions and target interventions where they are most urgently needed.

Numerous upcoming opportunities could guide WHO Member States in mitigating alcohol-related harms. The integration of a health objective within the SDGs, specifically targeting the prevention of narcotic drug abuse and the harmful use of alcohol, alongside recognizing harmful alcohol use as a critical risk factor in its action plan, ensures that alcohol and related policies remain prioritized on the global agenda.

Furthermore, the extensive textual analysis and insights provided in this paper aim to offer fresh opportunities for advocacy, increase awareness, strengthen political commitments, and encourage global efforts to minimize the harmful use of alcohol.

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