

## Predicting the Negative Impact of Alcohol Drinking on Depression and Social Behaviors of Youth - A Demographical Analysis

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| Keywords   | Abstract   |
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| Alcohol Drinking, Depression, Social Behaviors, Youth, Demographical Analysis. | <i>Past studies have shown that alcohol drinking brings positive and significant changes with an impact on the depression and social behavior of youth belonging to different demographic statuses, but the core and contradictory argument-based objective of this study is that alcohol drinking has only a negative impact with no significant change in the depression and social behavior of youth in Pakistan. The current study used adopted and adapted measures for the collection of data from the targeted population with the help of an online survey. Due to sensitive nature of the issue and difficulty of approaching the target respondents, a snowball sampling technique has been used for data collection from 200 youngsters in urban and rural areas of Pakistan. Moreover, the SPSS (V-25) based statistical results indicated that the alpha values of all variables are in an excellent range. The overall results indicated that exposure to alcohol drinking has a negative impact on depression (<math>B = -.01</math>) and social behavior (<math>B = -.29</math>), and the findings from the demographical analysis revealed that alcohol drinking has a negative impact on the depression and social behavior of youth. The statistically significant outcomes of the current study proved that alcohol drinking has a negative impact on the depression and social behavior of Pakistani youth. Moreover, some new dimensions are also recommended for upcoming researchers in this area.</i> |

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The report of the “National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism” has declared that the use of alcohol remains a persistent health and social issue for adolescents all over the world (Abuse, 2020). As concluded by Schulenberg et al. (2017), exposure to alcohol drinking is more prevalent among young people as compared to other age groups. Recently, Johnston et al. (2003) predicted an increase in “alcohol drinking” among youth with a significant effect on their psychological, mental and physical health. Moreover, Schick et al. (2022) also found that “exposure to alcohol drinking” is strongly linked with (depression, anxiety, and stress) and social behaviours of youth (Cservinka & Brumback, 2017).

In Pakistan, the youth have different demographic status due to cultural diversity, societal norms, and values (Naeem et al., 2022). The Islamic state of Pakistan has banned “alcohol drinking” publicly, but the youth in Pakistan have exposure to “alcohol drinking” (Ahmed et al., 2022), and the prevalence of “alcohol drinking” has a strong association with internalising problems (depression, anxiety) and externalising problems, i.e., aggressive and delinquent behavior (Shahzad et al., 2020).

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

In light of the contradictory evidences, past studies provide a theoretical and statistical gap to check these issues in Pakistani society with new dimensions. The current study has the opposite claim that “exposure to alcohol drinking” has a negative and insignificant impact on the “depression” and “social behavior” of that youth who has different demographics, i.e., gender, age, education, and residential areas, and the core and utmost intention of the current study is to predict the negative impact of “exposure to alcohol drinking” on the “depression” and “social behavior” of youth. Lastly, it is also important to mention that past studies have focused on positive and significant effects with changes due to “alcohol drinking,” but this study has the only concern with the negative effect on the youth. Finally, the current study will have academic and industrial significance and importance for researchers and clinical practitioners.

### **1.2. Objectives of Study**

1. To assess the negative impact of alcohol drinking on the depression of youth.
2. To measure the negative impact of alcohol drinking on the social behavior of youth.
3. To analyse the negative impact of alcohol drinking on the demographic status of youth.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the context of “alcohol drinking,” the report of CBSHQ (2016) has concluded that “exposure to alcohol drinking” has a positive and negative impact on youth who have different demographics. Moreover, the studies of Choi et al. (2016) and Foulds et al. (2015) have found that there is a significant relationship between “alcohol drinking” and depression in male and female youngsters. Furthermore, the study of Villanueva et al. (2024) statistically proved that a positive and significant relationship exists between “alcohol drinking” and “depression” levels of different age groups of females. while Patel and Makadia's (2018) study claimed that alcohol consumption and social behavior of males was statistically significant, and no effect was found among females.

The past and recent literature has demonstrated and provided database evidence that “alcohol drinking” and depression have strong linkages, connections, and impacts with aspects of age, gender, education, and area of youth of different societies from all over the world (Udo & Grilo, 2019). With the support of some other investigations, it was found that most of the depressed individuals use more “alcohol” to overcome their depressive symptoms (Lardier et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study of Caldwell et al. (2002) explained that alcohol use and depression are interconnected, and this relationship also has a negative effect on the social behavior of alcohol

users (Goldstick et al., 2018). Similarly, the study of Walton et al. (2011) supported past research that there are positive and negative impacts of “alcohol drinking” on the violent and aggressive behavior of youth having different demographic statuses. The study of Goldstick et al. (2018) claimed that high levels of “alcohol drinking” have extremely significant effects on the societal behaviours of youngsters.

Baiden et al. (2021) and Jager et al. (2022) verified that “alcohol drinking” has a positive and significant impact on the social behaviours of those youngsters who have different social demographics. Rosales et al. (2023) explained through “Minority Stress Theory” (Meyer, 1995) and “Bagge & Sher’s model (2008) that more prevalence of “alcohol drinking” has a more significant impact on the depression, anxiety, stress, and social behavior of drinkers. But the findings of Gémes et al. (2019) claimed that there is no link between exposure to alcohol drinking and a higher level of depression. Similarly, García-Esquinas et al. (2018) found no reliable relationship between alcohol use and depression in males. Furthermore, Paulson et al. (2018) tested the moderate-level effects of alcohol consumption on depression, psychological health, and behavioural issues, but the outcomes were totally erratic and inconsistent.

### **3. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

#### **3.1. Study Design and Setting**

Most of the studies in past literature have been conducted with quantitative methods and cross-sectional designs, so the current study followed a cross-sectional research design. The data of the study has been collected from those youngsters who have had a prevalence of alcohol drinking in the last 12 months and excluded those youngsters who have had no exposure to alcohol. Moreover, only those male and female youngsters are recruited who are in the age range of 21-33 and others are excluded. In addition, the religion factor is also ignored in the study because alcohol drinkers may belong to any of the religions.

#### **3.2. Population and Measures of the Study**

The targeted population of the current study is not the general youth. The uniqueness of this study is that it has been conducted on those youth who are addicted to alcohol and living in a conservative society. There are four parts of the data collection tool. The first part is based on the demographic profile of respondents, which is a key part of this study for statistical analysis. This section covered the questions about gender, age, area, and educational level of respondents. The second part of the data collection tool is “Exposure to Alcohol Drinking.” This variable was developed on the basis of past studies of “alcohol consumption,” “alcohol drinking,” and “drinking habit” among youth, and this variable has 15 items with an alpha value of (0.76) and was measured with the help of a dichotomous and 5-point Likert scale. As the past studies suggested, a high level of validity and reliability of the items. The third variable of the data collection tool is “depression,” which was derived from the “DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), and this construct has 7 items with a (0.71) alpha value, and this variable uses a 4-point scale, which is given in DASS-21, and many of the past studies also supported it through a high level of validity and reliability. The last variable of this study is “social behavior of young adults,” and this scale was adopted from Crothers et al. (2009). The original scale has 14 items

and is measured through a 5-point Likert scale with a (0.91) alpha value, and reported a high level of validity and reliability.

### 3.3. Sample Characteristics and Sampling Technique

In Pakistan, “alcohol drinking” is prohibited due to societal and religious norms and values. In this context, there are a lot of problems to approach and search out the targeted sample, so for solving this issue, the “snowball sampling” technique as suggested by Baltar & Brunet (2012) is used for data collection from 200 youngsters who have “prevalence to alcohol drinking” and belong to urban and rural areas of Pakistan. In addition, it is very difficult to collect data from the large sample size when the respondents feel insecure about giving data. So, in the case of sensitive studies, it is also recommended that the snowballing sampling technique be much better to collect the data from the targeted respondents.

### 3.4. Data Collection Method

The nature of the study is quantitative, and data was collected by using a questionnaire with the help of an online survey method. As per the need of the study, data was collected from the urban and rural areas of Pakistan, and it was not compulsory for the respondents belonging to a specific city or area. It was difficult to approach the targeted respondents physically, so the online data collection platform Google Docs was preferred for data collection from the targeted respondents.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The current study used SPSS (V-25) for data analysis. The first part of the analysis is a descriptive analysis of the demographic information of the respondents. The reliability analysis shows that “exposure to alcohol drinking,” having 15 items, has an alpha value of (0.76); “depression” has an alpha value of (0.71), whereas social behavior has an alpha value of (0.91). The second part of the analysis showed the total effect of “exposure to alcohol drinking” on “depression” and “social behavior” of youth. The regression analysis has been applied to demographics (gender, area, education, and age) to check the impact of “exposure to alcohol drinking on “depression” and “social behavior” of youth.

## 4. RESULTS

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| Variable  | Category | f(%)       | Mean | SD   |
|-----------|----------|------------|------|------|
| Area      | Urban    | 100 (50.0) | 1.50 | .501 |
|           | Rural    | 100(50.0)  |      |      |
| Gender    | Male     | 191(95.5)  | 1.05 | .208 |
|           | Female   | 9(4.5)     |      |      |
| Education | BS       | 21(10.5)   | 2.48 | .802 |
|           | Masters  | 81(40.5)   |      |      |
|           | M.Phil.  | 80(40.0)   |      |      |
|           | PhD      | 18(9.0)    |      |      |

|     |             |          |      |      |
|-----|-------------|----------|------|------|
| Age | 18-21 Years | 14(7.0)  | 3.07 | .943 |
|     | 22-25 Years | 40(20.0) |      |      |
|     | 26-29 Years | 64(32.0) |      |      |
|     | 30-33 Years | 82(41.0) |      |      |

Table1 indicates the demographic information of youth of Pakistan as it is revealed that 100 (50.0%) respondents belong to urban areas and 100 (50.0%) respondents belong to rural areas. The data shows that 191(95.5) are males and 9(4.5) are female respondents. Moreover, 21(10.5) respondents have BS education and 81(40.5) have Masters Education as well as 80(40.0) have M.Phil level education and only 18(9.0) respondents have PhD level education. The table reveals that 14(7.0) respondents belong to age group of 18-21 and 40(20.0) of them are in age group of 22-25. Furthermore, 64(32.0) have age between 26-29 and 81(41.0) respondents belong to 30-33 age group.

**Table 2: Negative Impact of Alcohol Drinking on Depression and Social Behavior of Youth**

| Variables  | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>p</i> | Impact   |
|------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| AD-----Dep | -.017    | -0.370   | 0.001                 | 0.712    | Negative |
| AD-----SB  | -.209    | -1.644   | 0.013                 | 0.102    | Negative |

Note: AD: Alcohol Drinking, Dep: Depression; SB: Social Behavior

Table2 indicated that “Alcohol drinking” has a negative ( $B = -0.017$ ,  $t = -0.370$ ,  $R^2 = 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.712$ ) impact on depression of youth as well as outcomes of statistical test shows that alcohol drinking also has negative ( $B = -0.209$ ,  $t = -1.644$ ,  $R^2 = 0.013$ ,  $p = 0.102$ ) impact on the social behavior of youth. Hence, the major hypothesis of the study is proved and contradicted from the findings of the past studies.

**Table 3: Gender wise Impact of Alcohol Consumption on Depression and Social Behavior of Youth**

| Variables | Gender | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>P</i> | Impact   |
|-----------|--------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| AD----Dep | Male   | -.027    | -0.564   | -0.004                | 0.574    | Negative |
| AD----Dep | Female | .582     | 1.932    | 0.255                 | 0.095    | Positive |
| AD----SB  | Male   | -.232    | -1.826   | 0.017                 | 0.069    | Negative |
| AD----SB  | Female | 1.025    | 0.920    | 0.108                 | 0.388    | Positive |

Note: AD: Alcohol Drinking; Dep: Depression; SB: Social Behavior

Table no 3 indicated the negative impact of alcohol drinking on depression and social behavior of males and females youth. The test results show that alcohol drinking has negative impact on depression of males ( $B = -0.027$ ) but interestingly there is positive impact on females ( $B = 0.582$ ) depression. Whereas, it is statistical evidence from data that alcohol drinking has negative impact on social behavior of males ( $B = -.232$ ) and alcohol drinking has positive impact on females ( $B = 1.025$ ) social behavior.

**Table 4: Area wise Impact of Alcohol Consumption on Depression and Social Behavior of Youth**

| Variables | Area  | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>p</i> | Impact   |
|-----------|-------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| AD----Dep | Urban | -.081    | -1.373   | 0.019                 | 0.173    | Negative |
| AD----Dep | Rural | .071     | 0.943    | 0.009                 | 0.348    | Positive |
| AD----SB  | Urban | -.384    | -2.340   | .053                  | .021     | Negative |
| AD----SB  | Rural | .035     | .176     | .000                  | .861     | Positive |

AD: Alcohol Drinking; Dep: Depression; SB: Social Behavior

Table no 4 indicated effects of alcohol drinking on depression and social behavior of urban and rural based youth. It is indicated that alcohol drinking has negative impact on depression of urban youth ( $B = -0.081$ ) but very interestingly there is a positive impact on depression of rural youth ( $B = 0.071$ ). Whereas, it is a numerical sign from data that alcohol drinking has negative impact on social behavior of urban youth ( $B = -0.384$ ) but on the other hands interestingly alcohol drinking has positive impact on social behavior of rural youth ( $B = .035$ ).

**Table 5: Education wise Impact of Alcohol Drinking on Depression and Social Behavior of Youth**

| Variables | Education | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>p</i> | Impact   |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| AD----Dep | BS        | .052     | 0.481    | 0.012                 | 0.636    | Positive |
| AD----Dep | Masters   | .109     | 0.986    | 0.012                 | 0.327    | Positive |
| AD----Dep | M.Phil    | -.074    | -1.246   | 0.020                 | 0.216    | Negative |
| AD----Dep | PhD       | -.131    | -0.676   | 0.028                 | 0.509    | Negative |
| AD----SB  | BS        | .234     | 0.765    | 0.030                 | 0.454    | Positive |
| AD----SB  | Masters   | -.051    | -0.175   | 0.000                 | 0.862    | Negative |
| AD----SB  | M.Phil    | -.418    | -2.819   | 0.092                 | 0.000    | Negative |
| AD----SB  | PhD       | -.531    | -1.172   | 0.079                 | 0.258    | Negative |

Note: AD: Alcohol Drinking; Dep: Depression; SB: Social Behavior

Table no 5 statistically examined the impact of alcohol consumption on depression and social behavior of those youth who have BS, Masters, M. Phil and PhD level education. It is indicated in above table that alcohol drinking has more negative impact on depression of those students who have PhD education ( $B = -0.131$ ). Whereas, test results also demonstrated that alcohol drinking has negative impact on depression of M.Phil students ( $B = -0.074$ ). Moreover, this is very interesting indication that alcohol drinking has positive impact on depression of Masters Students ( $B = 0.109$ ) as well as positive impact on depression of BS students ( $B = 0.052$ ). Statistical outcomes demonstrated the impact of alcohol drinking on the “social behavior” of those youth who have BS, Masters, M.Phil and PhD level education. The evidences from statistical results show that alcohol drinking has negative impact on the social behavior of M. Phil students ( $B = -.418$ ) as well as PhD students ( $B = -0.531$ ). It is indicated that alcohol drinking also has a negative impact ( $B = -0.051$ ) on the social behavior of Masters level students but interestingly positive impact ( $B = .234$ ) on the “social behavior” of BS students.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The past studies documented that there is a positive and significant relationship between alcohol drinking and depression in youngsters (Núñez et al., 2023; Milot Travers & Mahalik, 2021). Similarly, past studies also proved (Luecha et al., 2023; Schüürmann & Goagoses, 2022) a positive and negative but significant relationship between alcohol drinking and the social behavior of youngsters, but the current study has claimed that alcohol drinking has only a negative impact on the “depression” and “social behavior” of the youth in Pakistan.

The study of Wu et al. (2008) proved that there is no significant association between alcohol drinking and depression of girls but remained significant for boys and, to some extent, is in line with the statistical outcomes of the current study. It is found that alcohol drinking has no significant impact on the depression of educated youth, and the study findings of Martinez et al. (2015) consistently support this claim. The study of Mngoma et al. (2023) proved that alcohol drinking has no effect on depression in different groups of age, education, and gender. The current study also proved that alcohol drinking has no effect on depression in different age groups of youth. Moreover, Seben et al. (2012) concluded that the association between alcohol drinking and depression in educated youth and its outcomes are supported by the current study findings.

On the same statistical patterns, the conclusion of Kelley et al.'s 2011 study found that exposure to alcohol has a negative impact on the depression of young adults. Similarly, An & Xiang (2015) estimated the negative effect of heavy drinking on the depression of youngsters. Moreover, “regression analysis” was applied to the demographic data of the youth, and statistical evidence also proved that exposure to alcohol drinking has a negative impact on the “depression” of urban males. This indication has taken support from the findings of Green et al. (2016) that alcohol drinking has a negative effect on the depression of urban youth who are in the age group of 18-29. The current findings are also related to the past conclusion of Shillington and Clapp (2006) that alcohol drinking has a negative impact on the social behavior of educated urban youth. Moreover, major outcomes of the study also revealed that the “exposure to alcohol drinking” has a positive effect on the “social behavior” of females. In addition, the youth who are living in rural areas and youth in the age group of 26-29 also have positive effects on their social behavior” due to the “exposure to alcohol drinking”. So, the application of statistical analysis on demographic data concludes that the alcohol drinking habit of youth has a negative impact on their “depression” and “social behavior” in Pakistan, but no significant change has been observed. The major and core findings of the study contradicted the conclusions of the most prominent studies (Rubio et al., 2023; Lasserre et al., 2022; Caumiant et al., 2023; Dumas et al., 2020) that alcohol drinking brings significant change in the depression and social behavior of the youth.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In the current study, data has been collected from 200 youngsters with the help of adopted and adapted measures from those respondents who have consumed “Alcohol” in the last six months. The analysis is conducted through SPSS (V-25), and test results indicated that exposure to alcohol drinking has negative effects on the “depression” and “social behavior” of youth in Pakistan. Previous studies documented that mostly youngsters drink alcohol or use other

poly drugs to overcome the depressive symptoms, and these depressive symptoms also bring changes in their social behaviours. This was the major questions that how the alcohol drinking reduce the depression and what is major change in their social behaviors. Most of the studies proved that alcohol drinking and consumption bring significant change in depression and social behaviours of youth, but the current study claims that there is no change in depression and social behaviours of youth in Pakistan. It is concluded that exposure to alcohol drinking does not bring significant change in the depression and social behavior of youth who have different demographic backgrounds, but the current study statistically proved that in the conservative society of Pakistan, there are some social and cultural barriers that have a significant influence on maintaining the depression and social behavior of youth.

### **6.1. Limitations, Future Directions and Implications of Study**

Like other studies, the current study has limitations. As the current study is focused on those youngsters only who have exposure to and prevalence of alcohol, it is suggested that the prevalence of other substance use among youth in Pakistan needs to be checked. The population of the study is complex, and the sample size is small, but for future studies, a large sample should be taken to check the poly-drug use among youth in Pakistan. Moreover, the core findings of the current study provide a new paradigm for researchers to identify and dig out those concealed influences of other factors maintaining this negative impact on Pakistani youth. In the context of the theoretical implementations, the current study has tested contrary effects that are very limited in past studies, and statistical tests are implemented on demographics. Therefore, the findings will add new information and knowledge to the theory of alcohol drinking, depression, and social behavior.

In the framework of methodological implementations, sampling technique, sample size, and demographical analysis will be helpful for those researchers who want to conduct research on sensitive issues. The core findings have practical implications for industrial practitioners of clinical psychology for treatment of “depression” and “social behavior” of youth who have exposure to alcohol drinking. It is also suggested that there is a need to check the indirect effects and direct effects with the help of untested variables, and the findings of the study suggested that there is a need to prepare interventions to overcome the depression of the youngsters as well as a need to prepare health-related promotional programs for youth to be safe from alcohol addiction.

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