

# Severity of Alcohol Consumption: Its Impact to Social Interaction Anxiety of Criminology Students

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**Abstract**— College student-drinking remains a big drawback on campuses across the globe. Alcohol consumption has been related to different incidences of the students. This study primarily aimed to ascertain the significant relationship and influence of the criminology students' alcohol consumption to their social interaction anxiety. The respondents (n = 263) were bona fide students of Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOS CST) main campus taking Bachelor of Science in Criminology. Employing the non-experimental quantitative research design with descriptive-correlation and inferential methods, the data were collected through adopted questionnaires: Severity of Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire (SADQ) developed by Addiction Research Unit at the Maudesley Hospital; and Social Interaction Anxiety Scale designed by Mattick and Clark (1998). Statistical tools such as Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Linear Regression Analysis were utilized in the analysis of the data. The findings revealed the moderately significant negative relationship between the variables with an obtained P-value of 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ), and with the correlation coefficient R-value of -0.485. It was also found that alcohol consumption is a predictor of social interaction anxiety of criminology students, and that the increase on the level of alcohol consumption would tend to decrease the level of their social interaction anxiety.

**Index Terms**— *alcohol consumption, criminology students, severity, severity of alcohol dependence questionnaire, social interaction anxiety*

## INTRODUCTION

Alcohol consumption is the drinking of beverages containing ethyl alcohol, and beverages of such alcohol are consumed largely for their physiological and psychological effects on human but often consumed within specific social contexts and may even be a part of religious practices (Keller and Vaillant, 2017). People who are experiencing social interaction disorder may intake alcohol to reduce their anxiety when appearing in public. They may feel that there is a need for them to drink alcoholic beverages in order to ease their anxiety (Metcalf, 2017).

According to Monahan and Lannutti (2000), the most common conception about alcohol is that it serves as a social lubricant or a mechanism to ease feelings of anxiety and nervousness during social interactions. Clapp et al. (2000) asserted that alcohol consumption is a social activity among college students, which tends to take place primarily on the weekends. These students believe that drinking helps them relax, improve their mood, reduce anxiety, and make them better communicators (Norris, 1994).

For centuries drinking was commonly regarded as part of the character of Russian people (Keenan et al., 2015). There had

been studies that addressed many factors affecting population-level drinking but very few had addressed the social and contextual factors that were associated with individual change in drinking over the life course (Stuckler et al., 2009). On the other hand, some countries traditionally had some of the lowest rates of alcohol use problems in the world just like that of the Israel (Rahav et al., 1999). Kane et al., (2014) investigated the interaction of alcohol consumption, social support and time in Israel and found out that social support was associated with fewer depression symptoms and this relationship was modified by alcohol use and time.

Meanwhile, college is an environment in which social interaction is developmentally and psychologically important, and where social situations often involve alcohol use (Lewes et al., 2008). However, there have been a number of reports of the negative impacts and accidents among college students who were involved in drinking. Hingson et al. (2009) stated that unintentional injury deaths relating to alcohol of college students whose age ranging from 18-24 had enlarged by 3% per 100,000. On the age ranging from 21-24 in 2001, 599,000 (10.5%) full-time 4-year college students were injured because of alcohol consumption, 696,

000 (12%) were beaten by another college student who also consumes alcohol, and in sexual assault or date rape cases that is also related to alcohol, 97, 000 (2%) were victims.

In the Philippines, Valbuena (2006) stated that alcohol abuse problem is increasing. These chronic alcoholics often fail to ask help for their problems and that is very alarming because they end up having incurable diseases such as liver cirrhosis. People aging 18 years old and above are the ones who can drink alcoholic beverages legally in the Philippines but it is estimated that 60% of young people will have at least tried alcohol before then. Underage boys are drinking more alcoholic beverages than those of their opposite sex which also are underage but the females seem to be closing the gap. In City of Mati, Pajo and Biong (2013) stated that alcoholic exposure is one of the compositions and as well serve as a moderating factor to those 35 out-of-school youth of Barangay Central, Mati City that has already incurred criminal records as early as their age. 37% of this out-of-school youth had always been exposed to alcohol but 20% of them had never experience to drink alcoholic beverages before. Among all other moderating factors like individual sports participation and socio-economic status, alcohol abuse has the least effect on the violence of these delinquents, yet it has found out that majority of them indulged in alcoholic drinks.

Ham et al. (2007) remarked that although social anxiety and problems related to alcohol consumption usually takes place at the same time yet the relationship between these two was still quite non-understandable.

With the foregoing scenario, the researcher wanted to study the severity of alcohol consumption and its relationship and impact to social interaction of Criminology students. The researchers were interested about how the alcohol consumption affects the social interaction anxiety of criminology students.

### ***Severity of Alcohol Consumption***

In this study, severity of alcohol consumption refers to the extent of alcohol intake of the criminology students based on the level of alcohol cravings and physical effects.

Galbicsek (2017) stated that the college years are some of the most prevalent times to engage with alcohol with alarming 80% of college students – four out of every five – drink alcohol to different levels. A predicted 50% of these students who participate in binge drinking severely consume alcohol in just a short period of time. Numerous of young adults confess to consume alcohol even before they take the college or the tertiary level (Hingson et al., 2009). The very moment they graduated high school and live on their own, college students explore newfound experiences out from their obtained freedom and independence. Exposure of alcohol during sporting events and activities in the society is sometimes a temptation. The first try on drinking alcohol can outburst to an excessive one (Carey et al., 2007). In fact, Devos-Comby and Lange (2008) revealed that alcohol consumption college students established substantial

attention in the scientific literature and the media for its impact on students and the college community.

### ***Social Interaction Anxiety***

In this study, social interaction anxiety to the way Criminology students communicate, act and socialize with other people in various aspects in the society. It also includes their interactions towards their classmates, peers, instructors and to anyone around them.

Sun and Longazel (2008) indicated that college students with low self-control were the ones who have the higher chance to be exposed in alcohol drinking, drinking while driving and even with unwanted behaviors. Lewes et al. (2008) also remarked that students with social anxiety may drink for coping reasons in order to alleviate negative affect. Problems arising from these things are likely experienced by students whose participation was low to the organized events of the university or to students who attend parties regularly.

## **METHOD**

This research utilized quantitative non-experimental design method of research using the descriptive-correlation technique and inferential method. The descriptive method of research through the adapted survey questionnaires was utilized which involves the collection, recording, and interpretation of the data (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2017). The inferential research was applied in the analysis of data which could lead to predictions about the entire set of data (Walpole et al., 2014; Kozak, 2014).

### ***Research Subject and Instrument***

The respondents of this study were the students of the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) taking Bachelor of Science in Criminology. A total of 263 students were randomly selected to answer questionnaire: the 20-item Severity of Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire (SADQ) developed by Addiction Research Unit at the Maudesley Hospital, and the 20-item Social Interaction Anxiety Scale designed by Mattick and Clark (1998).

The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 wherein 1 refers to very low, 2 for low, 3 for moderate, 4 as high and 5 for very high. It also had undergone moderate modifications, revisions and validated by the expert to conceptualize the content in order for the questions to be suitable for the respondents. These questionnaires were also subjected to reliability test through pilot testing in order to determine the Cronbach's Alpha values before it has undergone content validation by experts with external validator. After the test was made, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient provided the internal consistency value of .952 which implied that the set of questionnaires was excellent (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

**Ethical Consideration**

The researchers followed an ethical guideline. This included undertaking an ethics review process before engaging any interview to the participants so as to ensure that procedures are fair and unbiased to all respondents. Utmost confidentiality was considered which included the anonymity, responses, and other pertinent information of the respondents.

In this research endeavor, participants were not subjected to harm in any ways whatsoever; their full consent was sought before taking any actions, any deception about the aims of the research was avoided and any communication in relation to the research was done with honesty and transparency.

**RESULTS**

**Comparison of Mean Differences on the Level of Severity of Alcohol Consumption and Social Interaction Anxiety across Gender, Year Level and Age Bracket**

Shown in table 1 are the mean differences for the level of severity of alcohol consumption (SAC) as analyzed per gender, year level and age bracket of the students. This analysis indicated that male criminology students had significantly higher level of SAC compared to female ( $p=.007$ ). However, there were no statistically significant differences on the level of SAC for these students across their year level ( $p=.216$ ) and age bracket ( $p=.192$ )

Table 1. Comparison of Mean Differences on the Level of Severity of Alcohol Consumption (SAC) among Criminology Students as Analyzed across Gender, Year Level and Age Bracket

	N	$\bar{x}$	F	Sig.
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	179	2.61	7.408*	.007
Female	84	2.24		
<b>Year Level</b>				
First Year	28	2.44	1.419	.216
Second Year	49	2.32		
Third Year	119	2.44		
Fourth Year	67	2.66		
<b>Age Bracket</b>				
18-20 y.o.	45	2.52	1.584	.192
21-23 y.o.	120	2.35		
24-26 y.o.	87	2.59		
>26 y.o.	11	2.74		

Presented on table 2 are the mean differences for the level of social interaction anxiety (SIA) as analyzed per gender, year level and age bracket of the students. This result conveyed that there was a significant difference to the level of SIA among criminology students on their year level ( $p=.018$ ); wherein first year students are more anxious compared the higher years. Nonetheless, no significant difference found to

the level of anxiety among their gender ( $p=.163$ ) and age bracket ( $p=.296$ )

Table 2. Comparison of Mean Differences on the Level of Social Interaction Anxiety (SIA) among Criminology Students as Analyzed across Gender, Year Level and Age Bracket

	N	$\bar{x}$	F	p
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	179	2.25	1.956	.163
Female	84	2.47		
<b>Year Level</b>				
First Year	28	2.74	4.043*	.018
Second Year	49	2.37		
Third Year	119	2.28		
Fourth Year	67	2.18		
<b>Age Bracket</b>				
18-20 y.o.	45	2.63	1.284	.296
21-23 y.o.	120	2.32		
24-26 y.o.	87	2.22		
>26 y.o.	11	1.85		

Displayed on Table 3 are the results for the correlation between severity of alcohol consumption and social interaction anxiety using the Pearson product-moment correlation. This showed that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between the severity of alcohol consumption and social interaction anxiety among the criminology students ( $r=-.485$ ,  $p=.000$ ). This implies that for every increase in the level of the students' alcohol consumption, the level of their social interaction anxiety also decreases.

Table 3. Correlation between Severity of Alcohol Consumption and Social Interaction Anxiety (Pearson Correlation)

		Social Interaction Anxiety
Alcohol Consumption	r	-.485**
	Sig.	.000

Exhibited in table 4 are the coefficients and model summary of the regression analysis on the influence of severity of alcohol consumption of the criminology students to their social interaction anxiety. The table indicates that the regression model significantly influences the dependent variable ( $p=.000$ ). Moreover, this result implies that the model explains 76.1% ( $R^2=.761$ ) of the variation in the social interaction anxiety which purports that 76.1% of the social interaction anxiety of the students is affected by the alcohol consumption and the remaining 23.9% might have been affected by some factors which were not included in this study.

The outcomes also showed that the regression equation would be:  $SIA=1.666-0.3745(SAC)$ , where the response

variable is social interaction anxiety (SIA) and the predictor is severity of alcohol consumption (SAC). This model revealed that for every unit increase in the alcohol consumption of the criminology students, their social interaction decreases by 0.3745 unit; and if their alcohol consumption is zero, the level of social interaction anxiety is 1.666.

Table 4. Regression Analysis on the Influence of Severity of Alcohol Consumption to Social Interaction Anxiety

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value
Constant	1.666	.122	13.65	.000
Alcohol Consumption	-.3745	.0780	4.80	.000
R	.875			
R <sup>2</sup>	.761			
F-value	30.744			
P-value	.000			

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to ascertain the relationship and influence of severity of alcohol consumption and social interaction anxiety. The results showed that men have high level of alcohol consumption compared to women. This result is in congruence to the study conducted by Valbuena (2002) where it was revealed that greater percentage of men drink alcohol than women. The significant difference on the level of consumption between men and women was supported by the previous studies wherein men were reported to have higher rates of alcohol use than women have (Ham, Zamboanga, Bacon, & Garcia, 2009). Amongst the Filipinos, this is due to the fact that parents are giving more freedom to their sons in drinking than to their daughters. However, a report by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) showed that female university students are more likely to surpass weekly alcohol consumption limits than that of men (Hoepfner et al., 2013).

Moreover, too much exposure on the factors affecting the environment like spending time at the campus, staying longer at the universities indicates more chance to drink alcohol (Lorant et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the results showed that there were no significant differences on the alcohol consumption across year level and age brackets of the students. This means that whatever year level they are in, and no matter how old they are, they tend to have the same level of consumption.

This study also revealed that the students' social interaction anxiety is significantly different according to their year level. That is, when their level of anxiety decreases as their year level progresses. Nonetheless, there has no statistically significant differences found across their gender and age bracket. This finding is very consistent to the previous studies conducted which purported that there was no

significant difference on the social anxiety among college students when matched according to their gender and age (Sholeh, Sakinah, Fadhila, Nugraha, & Widiastara, 2018; Thomas, Randall, & Carrigan, 2003; Heimberg, Mueller, Holt, Hope, & Liebowitz, 1992).

This study showed that alcohol consumption is statistically negatively correlated with social interaction anxiety ( $r=-.485$ ;  $p=.000$ ). This moderately negative relationship is in consonance with the study conducted by Lewis et al. (2008) which revealed that alcohol consumption is negatively associated with social anxiety. He even remarked that consuming alcohol is often perceived an ignition or a social lubricant, and there have been many instances that this paves way for building relationships. Social anxiety was negatively associated to alcohol use yet unconnected to alcohol-related problems (Ham, Bonin, & Hope, 2007). For socially anxious students, alcohol consumption may be considered as a way of reducing uneasiness in social situations (Carrigan & Randall, 2003).

The regression model presents that alcohol consumption significantly and negatively influenced social interaction. This implies that students who consume more alcohol would tend to have lower anxiety. That is, their confidence would be lubricated and enhanced when they drink. In fact a study revealed that moderate drinkers have been reported to experience more social interaction and/or more intimate relationships compared with students with little or no binge drinking episodes and students reporting the heaviest drinking (Lewes et al., 2008).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this investigation has contributed to the extant body of understanding and substantiation to the complex relationship between anxiety and alcohol consumption. This revealed that level of social interaction anxiety amongst students is significantly correlated and influenced by the level of severity of alcohol consumption. However, it is suggested that further studies be made taking up wider scope considering that this only endeavored to explore the data from the students taking Bachelor of Science in Criminology. Furthermore, future researchers may include social stressors of the students so that they could prudently and thoroughly investigate the deeper causation of the relationships between the variables.

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