

The Role of Conformity to Masculinity Norms on Alcohol Use among Male Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Murang'a County, Kenya.

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Abstract

Alcohol addiction is a problem that continues to affect the global population. Being male has been reported as higher risk to alcohol consumption compared to being female. This has been linked to many male related factors with limited studies done on the role of conformity to masculinity on alcohol consumption. Alcohol abuse is considerably rampant among teachers and has impacted negatively on teaching and learning especially in public schools where productivity of teachers is extremely low, giving rise to a worrying trend. This study sought to establish the relationship between conformity to masculinity norms and alcohol abuse among male teachers in Murang'a County, Kenya. The study adopted the correlational research design targeting

2642 male teachers employed by teacher service commission in secondary schools in Murang'a County with a sample size of 422 participants. The quantitative data was collected using standardized masculine behaviour scale (MBS) and alcohol use disorders identification test (AUDIT) self-administered questionnaires. The study found statistically significant correlation between conformity to masculinity norms and alcohol use disorders on all the domains of the Masculine Behavior Scale. This study may be significant to rehabilitation centers in developing and implementing men-centered interventions for treatment and control of alcohol consumption among patients.

Key Words: *Masculinity Norms, Alcohol Consumption, Teachers, Addiction*

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) reports a rise in substance consumption in many countries accounting for about 4.5% of the global disease burden and 3.8% of all deaths worldwide. For instance, in 2012, approximately 1,700 deaths among the youths were attributed to substance use disorders in the United Kingdom out of which over 70% of the casualties were male (UNODC, 2018).

In United Kingdom, UNODC (2018) report estimates that about six million people drink above the recommended daily guidelines. Studies report mood fluctuation among al-

cohol users which is attributed to many cases of domestic violence (Owusu & Agbemafle, 2016). Miles et al. (2014), have reported male-dominant gender roles among alcohol users with the outcome being gender transformative behavior. Other studies report that alcohol drinking behavior of the husband is a risk factor of gender based violence (Shrestha, 2016). Viellas et al. (2013) found that in Brazil alcohol consumption by husbands was a risk factor for gender based violence towards women. In Ethiopia women have been reported to experience physical aggression as a result of their husbands drinking behavior (Gebrezgi et al. (2017).

Vaughan, Wong & Middendorf (2014) links endorsement of some masculine norms to the consumption of alcoholic drinks among men. Other studies link learning male culturally and socially accepted codes of conduct to alcohol use (Nascimento & Bebercomohomem, 2016).

According to Iwamoto et al., 2014 masculinity may play an important role in drug abuse among men. According to Thompson & Bennett (2015), masculinity defines the societal expectations of what it means to be a man. The Theory of Reasoned Action posits that people develop certain beliefs as to whether or not certain behaviors are acceptable (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). These beliefs shape one's perception of the behavior and determine one's intention to perform or not perform the behavior (Kim, Lee, & Yoon, 2015).

Heber (2017) posits that males are to a higher extent both perpetrators of violence in the

society. This is because notions of masculinity, and what it means to be a man, seem to be the driving factor behind much of the risky behavior that males engage in. In many studies, young men have identified violence as an important way to display power and to prove their masculinity in their communities. Hoffmeester (2017), reports normalization of toxic masculinity among the South African population linking it to gender-based violence.

According to American Psychological Association (APA), (2018) diverse social identities among men contribute to how they experience and perform their male roles, which in turn contribute to their relationship, psychological and health outcomes. The APA acknowledges that across the world men hold privilege to power, but also have mental health challenges, substance abuse, imprisonment and earlier mortality.

A critical analysis of theoretical models presents conforming to masculine norms as both risk and protective factor in alcohol consumption (Levant & Richmond, 2007). Primacy of work has been viewed as protective factor for alcohol use as those who endorse this norm fear that it may affect their work performance (Iwamoto, 2010). Young et al., (2005) has also linked masculine norms of risk taking and to increased alcohol consumption as they may reflect the ability to withstand

Wells et al. (2014), postulated that for young adult male college and university students, masculinity is an important factor related to both alcohol abuse and negative drinking consequences. They suggested that address-

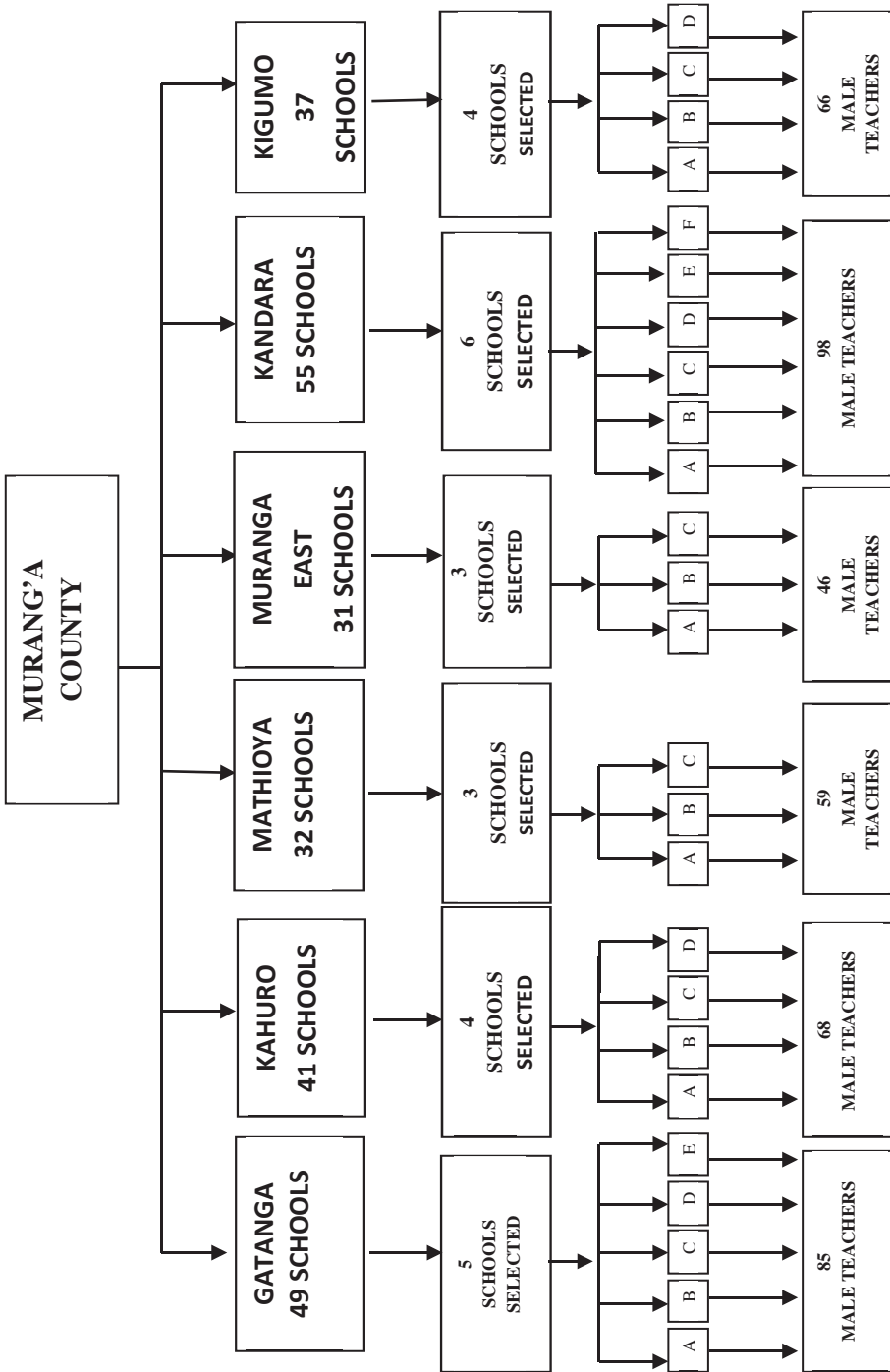
ing male norms about masculinity may help to reduce alcohol abuse and negative drinking consequences. This study therefore sought to examine conformity to masculinity norms and its relationship with alcohol consumption among male teachers. This was to address the gap in many studies on addiction which seem to focus on students resulting to inadequate data on drug use among teachers.

Methodology

This study adopted the correlation research design to examine associations between variables. The study was conducted in Murang'a County which was purposively selected since alcohol abuse has been an area of major concern due to its far reaching impact on the individuals, families and the

community (Kariuki & Oteyo, 2013).

Multistage random sampling was applied in this study. Simple random sampling method was used to select 6 out of the 8 sub counties in Murang'a County. Simple random sampling method was used to select the required number of secondary schools in each sub county. Male teachers in each of the sampled secondary schools was selected proportionately through simple random sampling. The sample size for the study was 422 male teachers which included those who use alcohol and those who did not. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula $S = X^2NP(1-P) / d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)$



Research Instruments

The study used standardized questionnaires (Masculine Behaviour Scale and Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test) to collect data

Masculine Behavior Scale (MBS) Instrument

This is a 20 item self-report instrument measuring the extent to which people engage in behaviors that are stereotypically attributed to males (Snell, 2013). Four behavioral tendencies including restrictive emotionality, inhibited affection, success obsession and exaggerated self-reliance were assessed. Participants were asked how much they agree or disagree with various statements on the scale.

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) is a 10-item screening tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess alcohol consumption, drinking behaviors, and alcohol-related problems a self-report version of the AUDIT has 10 questions (Babor et al., 2001). The AUDIT has been validated across genders and in a wide range of racial/ethnic groups and is well suited for use, (Saunders et al., 1993).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured anonymity of the participants in order to adhere to confidentiality. Participants' names and identity were not captured on the study instruments. Due

to the emotional nature of the study, a Counseling Psychologist was contracted to accompany the research team in the field during data collection in order to debrief any participant who would be in need of such services as a result of participating in the study.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the association between variables. Sociodemographic data was analyzed using descriptive analysis.

Results

The results focused on sociodemographic variables, conformity to masculinity norms and alcohol use.

Demographic Information

The study considered the age of the participants crucial since it was necessary to ascertain the level of maturity of male teachers. From the findings, 39.3% of the participants fell between the ages 30-39 years, 28.7% between ages 20-29 years while 10.9% were aged between 50- 60 years. The level of academic qualifications was sought because it was expected to create both intellectual and social status change which in turn could have some effect on alcohol consumption and conformity to masculinity. The findings indicate that 66.8% had attained a bachelor's degree followed by diploma at 20.1%. The number of the male teachers who had master's degree constituted 12.1% while the PhD comprised of 0.7% of the sample.

Alcohol Use Prevalence in the Sample

The findings indicated that 45.5% of the participants were non users of alcohol, 7.1% were harmful users while 47.4% presented with severe alcohol use disorder. This implies high alcohol use prevalence in the population under study.

Table 1:

		Success Obsession	Alcohol Use Severity
Success Obsession	Pearson Correlation	1	-.288**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	422	421
Alcohol Use Severity	Pearson Correlation	-.288**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	422	422

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results indicate that the alcohol use severity had a negative correlation with success obsession ($p < .001$, $r = -.288$). This means that as the success obsession increases, alcohol severity use level decreases.

Success obsession Norm and Alcohol Use

The study sought to examine the association between success obsession norm and alcohol use. The results are presented in Table 1.

Restrictive Emotionality Norm and Alcohol Use

The study sought to examine the association between restrictive emotionality norm and alcohol use. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 2:**Correlation between Restrictive Emotionality and Alcohol Use**

		Restrictive Emotionality	Alcohol Use Severity
Restrictive Emotionality	Pearson	1	-.336**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	422	421
Alcohol Use Severity	Pearson	-.336**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	422	422

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings indicate that the alcohol use severity was negatively correlated with restrictive Emotionality ($p < .01$, $r = -.336$). This means that an increase in restrictive emotionality would lead to a decrease in alcohol use severity levels. Restrictive emotionality implies that one doesn't talk to others about their emotions which would inhibit self-disclose.

Inhibited Affection Norm and Alcohol Use

The study sought to examine the association between restrictive emotionality norm and alcohol use. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3:

Correlation between Inhibited Affection and Alcohol Use			
		Inhibited Affection	Alcohol Use Severity
Inhibited Affection	Pearson Correlation	1	-.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	422	421
Alcohol Use Severity	Pearson Correlation	-.305**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	422	422

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results indicate that the alcohol use severity was negatively correlated with inhibited affection ($p < .01$, $r = -.305$). This means that an increase in inhibited affection would lead to a corresponding decrease in alcohol use severity level. Inhibited affection may manifest in terms of restrictive expression of emotions in intimate relationships especially in public. It implies that many of these teachers seldom tell others about their feelings of love and affection for them and do not often admit that they have emotional feelings since they tend to avoid being in really close, intimate relationships.

Exaggerated Self-reliance Norm and Alcohol Use

The study sought to examine the association between restrictive emotionality norm and alcohol use. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4:

Correlation between Exaggerated Self-reliance Norm and Alcohol Use			
		Exaggerated Self Reliance and Control	Alcohol Use Severity
Exaggerated Self Reliance and Control	Pearson Correlation	1	-.217**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	422	422
Alcohol Use Severity	Pearson Correlation	-.217**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	422	422

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results indicate that the alcohol use severity was negatively correlated with exaggerated self-reliance and control ($p < .01$, $r = -.217$). This means that when the exaggerated self-reliance and control measure increases, alcohol use severity levels decrease. Exaggerated self-reliance may manifest through trying to be in control of everything in life. This would imply that it is a source of sustaining power and self-efficacy which would be associated with the patriarchal nature of the Kenyan society.

Discussion

The findings revealed that there was high prevalence of alcohol use among teachers in Muranga County. This is consistent with the findings of Maina (2016) that identified Murang'a County as one of the counties struggling with serious problem of alcohol and substance addiction especially among men across all age groups. Leone, et al (2016) found that, when men are in the presence of male peers, the effect of social pressures discourages them from appearing weak, "un-masculine" or feminine. Men have been attributed with increased alcohol consumption to overcome societal stresses (Sacco, et al., 2014). Elsewhere, frustrations associated with work topped the list of reasons adduced for drinking (Rao, et al., 2015).

Theoretical models associate masculine norms to risk and protective actors for alcohol consumption (Levant & Richmond, 2007). This study found that conformity to masculinity norms negatively correlated

with alcohol use. This implies that skewness to higher masculinity norms scores has the potential to reduce problematic alcohol use among males. However Young et al. (2005) posits that masculine norms of willingness to take risks and higher affinity to power may increase the risk of drinking because they reflect one's perceived ability to withstand high amounts of alcohol. Wells et al. (2014) postulated that for young adult male college and university students, masculinity is an important factor related to both alcohol abuse and negative drinking consequences. This is consistent with our findings which placed conformity to masculinity as an important variable that could inhibit alcohol consumption.

The issue of success obsession may lead the male teacher in two different directions. While the findings in this study show that success obsession is negatively correlated with alcohol use, other scholars have obtained contrasting results. For instance, among other masculine norms that were assessed in the study, success obsession was found to be a major driving of the need to binge-drinking to intoxication among the addicted students (Iwamoto, et al 2011; Kaya & Iwamoto, 2016). According Bushman (1997) drinking is often construed, at least according to masculine norms, seen as competitive. This highlights the crucial need to explore gender issues contributing to addiction because in the school setup, the male teachers serve as role models to their students by default. According to Darabos & Hoyt (2017) restrictive emotionality norm does not permit men to openly show their emotions,

it only allows them to express their feelings 'in a masked form' and as a result these feelings become generally unrecognised, unexpressed and misunderstood by one's self and others. The findings however are inconsistent with Vaughan, Wong & Middendorf (2014) who assert that in relation to alcohol, there is a link between the endorsement of some masculine norms, such as being aggressive, vigorous, having greater emotional control and the consumption of beverages by men. In fact, experience with alcoholic beverage is a means of learning male culturally and socially accepted codes of conduct (Nascimento & Bebercomohomem, 2016).

The exaggerated self-reliance as a means that enhance the wellness of men is also echoed by Syzdek, and Addis, (2010) who concluded that masculine role norms encouraging self-reliance among men, when endorsed in an unmitigated manner, are associated with less help-seeking and higher depression. It can however have negative consequences. Negative attitudes towards having open emotional expression have also been shown to enhance trait anxiety among men. Wong, Pituch & Rochlen (2006), contend that unlike their female counterparts, many men find it difficult identifying and expressing feelings, each of which, whether by choice or when forced by circumstances, restrictive emotionality can intensify trait anxiety among men. Brabete et al. (2013) and Sanchez-Lopez et al (2013) reliably established that conformity to self-reliance

was positively correlated to consumption of alcohol and tobacco use. This can possibly be explained by the decision to show the level of independence and self-confidence by indulging in the use of alcohol and tobacco. Contrary to this finding, a research conducted among male college students illustrated that conformity to self-reliance protected them against heavy drinking for men (Iwamoto et al, 2014). These findings show a direct relationship between the increased risk of alcohol abuse and the scales for self-reliance.

The findings in this study suggest that the constant view of masculinity as a negative experience needs to be reviewed. Even though the study does not imply causality there is need to critically examine the feminist movements' philosophy implication on male identity. This paper argues that male dominated society should be fought with the aim of establishing an egalitarian society and not a female dominated society. No gender should be treated as subordinate but both should be given equal opportunities. From these findings it is important to begin addressing the rising levels of alcohol addiction among men in Kenya by reconstructing the lost identity of the man through targeted positive masculinity enhancement programs. It is important to begin empowering the boy child in order to learn to coexist with the already empowered girl child hence reducing substance use and other identity related mental health challenges.

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