



**THE FILIPINO AS THE
QUINTESSENTIAL DRINKER: A Study
of Alcohol Drinking Patterns Among
Filipinos**

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Purpose of the Study

To examine the available literature on and observations about drinking patterns in the Philippines, to include its history, its key cultural aspects in Filipino society and indicators of alcohol-related impact (both positive and negative)

Country Profile: Alcohol Drinking Among Filipinos (WHO, 2004; DOH-UP, 2001)

- Total recorded per capita consumption of Filipinos is 3.75 litres of pure alcohol for those 15 years and above and increases by 10% every year (Filipinos only third to Thailand and Japan)
- 38.9% of Filipinos are occasional alcohol drinkers, 11.1% are regular drinkers (13% males and 5.9% females) while 4.8% are heavy drinkers (6.6% males and 1.3% females) though children
- Filipino drinkers drink beer (78.5%), liquor--rum, gin, whisky and *lambanog* (70.6%), and wine, *tuba*, sangria, sherry (42.4%)

Country Profile: Alcohol Drinking Among Filipinos (WHO, 2004; DOH-UP, 2001)

- Filipinos drink to socialize (45.5%), to remove stress and burden (23.8%), or just be happy and gain pleasure (17.5%).
- 60% of Filipino youth ages 13 years and above have taken or are taking alcoholic beverages—79% males and 21% females.
- Figures for moderate and heavy drinkers among the young and women from 2001-2004 are found to be increasing, still with more males at 66.6% and women slowly catching up at 33.4%.
- Drinking is still more acceptable among males among the young, and those likely to drink are those who are not living with their parents, whose parents approve of drinking, who frequent social gatherings or parties, bars and discos and those who do not normally take part in any sport activity

Structure of Alcohol Industry in the Philippines



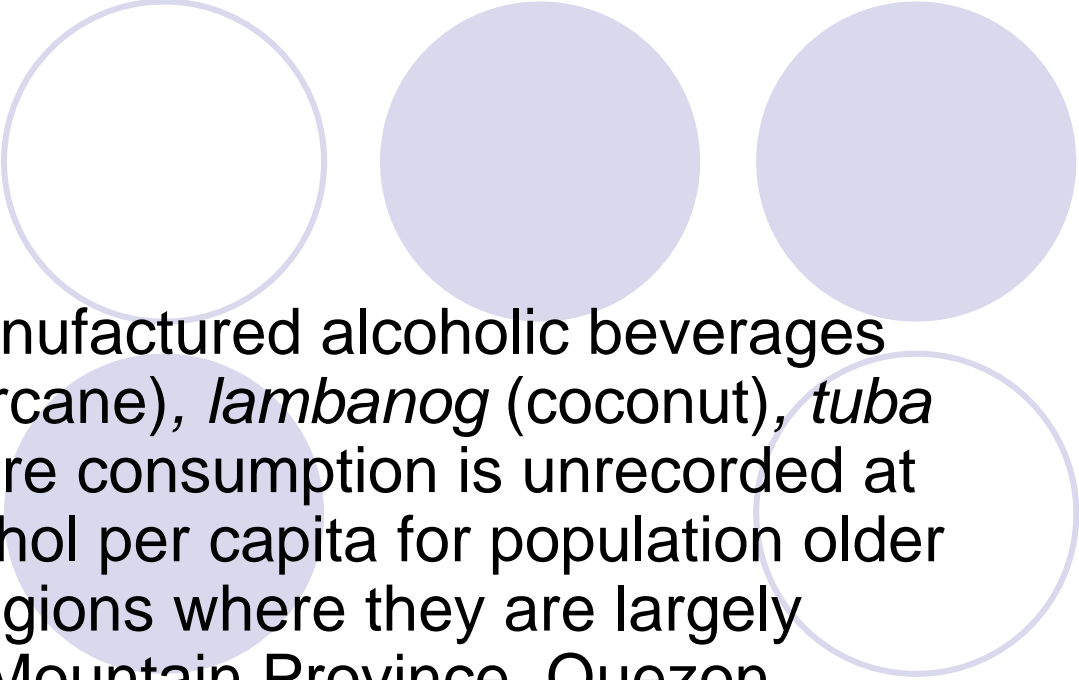
Manufacturing

- Manufacturing of beer and liquors is one of the most profitable industries in the Philippines. Four of its manufacturing companies i.e. San Miguel Corporation, Tanduay Distillers, Ginebra San Miguel and Asia Brewery has been consistently among the top 75 among the top 1000 corporations in the country.
- Despite recorded economic downturn and gloomy outlook for the Philippine economy, sales and consumption of alcoholic drinks are found to remain high and are projected to expand positively. This is due largely to the increasing disposable incomes among the young and the emerging influence of Western pub drinking.
- Massive and aggressive advertising helps the alcohol industry achieve its optimum sales where 80% of cost for every bottle is spent on advertising (Health Action Information Network, 2004).

Structure of Alcohol Industry in the Philippines

Tradition

- Alcohol drinking has been traditionally associated with happiness, success, thrill and sexual prowess, especially for the males, contemporary images of the young and the women emerging.
- Alcohol is projected as part of the day-to-day lives as portrayed in soap operas, basketball leagues, comedy shows and music video channels.



- Indigenously manufactured alcoholic beverages include *basi* (sugarcane), *lambanog* (coconut), *tuba* or *tapuy* (rice) where consumption is unrecorded at 3.0 litres pure alcohol per capita for population older than 15 years in regions where they are largely produced (Ilocos, Mountain Province, Quezon, Negros).

Structure of Alcohol Industry in the Philippines



Beer Festivals

- For the past two decades, October has been designated as beer-month where beer festivals are celebrated in major cities of the country with famous rock bands.
- To manifest its extreme and growing popularity among the Filipino youths, last year's beer festival ran for 3 months—from September to November.
- Beer festivals are largely attended by the young—college students, young professionals, both sexes.
- Minimal police records on both petty crimes and traffic violations are found during this time and in these areas.

Alcohol Drinking Patterns Among Filipinos



Positive Values

- Roman Catholicism from the Spanish colonizers has entrenched not just a religion but a culture with collective joyous festivities and celebrations followed by dining, drinking and merrymaking.
- Alcohol drinking is portrayed with positive images and focus on Filipino values—thirst quenching, bonding, friendship, camaraderie, unity, youthfulness, fun and excitement.
- In more rural and remote villages, alcohol is used as a substance with healing properties.

Alcohol Drinking Patterns Among Filipinos



- In contemporary Filipino society, with rapid urbanization and globalization taking place (and all the stressors that go with it), alcohol drinking is a way of coping, escaping and medicating oneself.
- Addiction becomes highly possible with level of deprivation high, the opportunity to overcome it is low.
- Relaxing, unwinding and loosening effects of alcohol is compatible as well with the natural inhibitions of Filipinos.

Outcomes of Drinking: Benefits and Problems

- Alcohol is a tool for bonding, socializing, relaxing and depressing inhibitions, facilitates self-expression and self-disclosure.
- Alcohol helps in healing.
- Alcohol generates income for the millions of households selling them in small variety stores within neighborhoods.
- However, liver cirrhosis and liver cancer (among the top 15 leading causes of death recorded in the country for the past 10 years), cardiac related diseases, stroke and trauma are the top most diseases related to alcohol.

Outcomes of Drinking: Benefits and Problems

- An average Filipino family spends 1% of its income on alcoholic beverages. For moderate and heavy drinkers, it can go up as high as 20% (Family Income and Expenditure Survey, NEDA, 2004).
- Regular drinking to get intoxicated means less disposable money for food, less time for family, can cause intra-family violence, marital conflicts or children running away from home.

Drunken Driving



- No law against drunk driving; only a traffic violation when it causes injuries.
- Reported increase of 70% from 2002 to 2006 in drunk driving with attendant casualties in major thoroughfares of Metro Manila (Department of Transportation and Communications, 2008).
- No sobriety tests or other collaterals to confirm drunkenness among drivers, even in public and private hospitals.

Drunken Driving

- Alcohol-related accidents often take place at late evenings or early mornings, with marked increase during weekends or holidays.
- Very little public awareness on personal, legal, physical and moral consequences of drunk driving. Schools do not talk about the reality of drunk driving and riding.

Alcoholism

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping circles on the left and three separate circles on the right. The leftmost circle is solid light purple, and the one it overlaps is a white circle with a light purple outline. The three circles on the right are arranged horizontally: a solid light purple circle, a white circle with a light purple outline, and another solid light purple circle.

- Filipinos do not perceive heavy drinking or alcohol addiction as a clinical problem. Low admissions in rehabilitation or treatment programs.

Alcoholism

A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping circles on the left and three separate circles on the right. The leftmost circle is solid light purple, and the one it overlaps is a white circle with a light purple outline. The three circles on the right are arranged horizontally: a solid light purple circle, a white circle with a light purple outline, and another solid light purple circle.

- Alcohol has consistently been recorded as the top poisoning agent for the past 19 years.



Alcohol and Gender

- Alcohol is present in all cases of domestic violence, with husband identified as the abuser.
- 8 out of 10 cases of sexual abuse against girl-children happen under the influence of alcohol, with abusers including boys under age 15.
- Alcohol abuse exacerbates and reinforces the power imbalance between males and females, especially in intimate relationships.

Alcohol and Gender



- There are regions in the country where female drinking is more common and are socially acceptable.
- Attendant and resulting behaviors among drunken women are still found to be less violent as against males.

The background features five light purple circles. Three are arranged in a top row: one is an outline, and two are solid. Two are arranged in a bottom row: two are solid, and one is an outline.

Thank you for your attention.

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