

Vietnamese Drinking Culture in Business

¹Ananta Kumar Kar, ²Doan Thi Ngoc Nga

¹Lecturer, ^{1,2}Centre for International Education, Danang University of Economics, Vietnam

Abstract: Drinking alcohol has long been a habit and an integral part of the life of Vietnamese people. Restaurants and pubs grow like mushrooms and it is not difficult to hear the words “1, 2, 3 yo” daily – the saying is used to toast when drinking alcohol in Vietnam. People drink to become more open-hearted to each other and easier to make relationships. Thus, this research was established to find out whether drinking culture play a pivotal role in making business relationships in Vietnam. The statistics and outcome of the hypothesis tests confirmed that alcohol greatly contributes to make and keep relationships in business. However, it also creates an injustice in the working environment for those who are competent at work but unable to drink alcohol.

Keywords: Vietnamese Drinking Culture, Business Culture, Business Relationships, Equality at the Workplace.

I. INTRODUCTION

Drinking culture has existed in Vietnam for a very long time, and it has become an indispensable feature and significantly influences on the daily life of people. Vietnamese people use alcohol to entertain, celebrate, make friends and become more open-hearted to each other to establish closer relationships, especially business relationships, which seems to be quite popular and familiar in Vietnam in recent decades.

This topic is designed to study and understand how important drinking culture is in making business relationships in Vietnam. To achieve this target, both evidences and arguments from previous research projects, as well as the results from the primary research will be considered in the research. Primary data will be gathered and synthesized by appropriate research and statistical methods in order to convey the most objective and accurate results.

The results of the report will point out the reasons why Vietnamese people often drink alcohol with their bosses, subordinates, colleagues, partners, and customers, and reveal their thoughts on this. Besides, it will also identify both positive and negative effects that this culture has upon employee behaviours and working environment of Vietnam, and propose how to retain this unique feature of Vietnam without affecting the equality at the workplace and the results of work. Finally, the conclusion will show whether using alcohol to make relationships is really necessary in doing business.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The History of Vietnamese Drinking Culture

Wine is the oldest alcoholic beverage in Vietnamese history, which is believed to have first appeared in the time of the 18th Hung King in 408 – 258 BC (Tuoc, 2019). Wine is used as a ritual and a luxury drink in the parties of nobles and kings. In addition, Vietnamese drink wine to relieve sadness, to entertain or to celebrate, and poets also use wine as a way to inspire poetry (Khanh, 2014).

However, beer appeared in Vietnam quite late, was first introduced by the French in the late 19th century, starting with Hanoi Brewery established by Mr. Alfred Hommel in 1890 (Vy, 2017) and Saigon Brewery founded by Mr. Victor Larue in 1909 (Thu, 2017). At the time, beer is considered as a refreshing drink favoured by Vietnamese and people usually drink with their friends after work (Nghia, 2017).

Nowadays, drinking alcohol becomes a hobby and habit of Vietnamese people, they drink when being sad or happy, or even when they have free time. Moreover, they believe that drinking helps them be more open, more honest, and easier to associate with others.

B. An Overview of Alcohol Consumption in Vietnam in Recent Years

Forbes cited a research report of the Lancet Medical Review (UK) on the situation of alcohol use in 189 countries and territories between 1990 and 2017, showing that the proportion of pure alcohol consumption globally is on the rise, especially in low-income and middle-income countries like Vietnam. Vietnam is one of the countries with a large consumption growth rate of nearly 90% since 2010 (Minh, 2019).

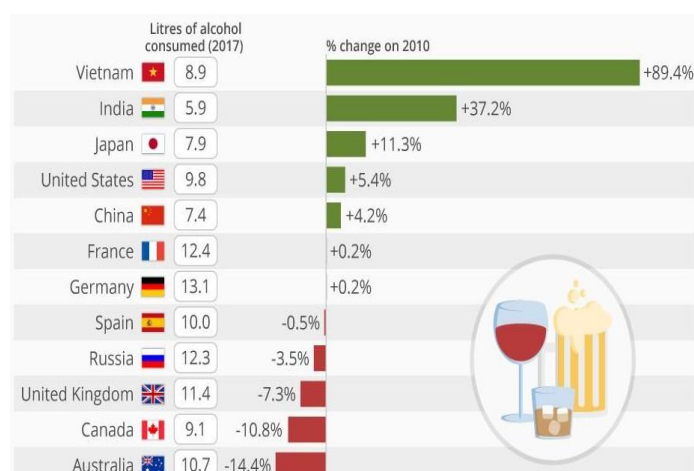


Figure 1: Average Annual Liters of Alcohol Consumed per Person in 2017 and % Change on 2010 (McCarthy, 2019)

According to national statistics, Vietnamese people consumed 4.2 billion liters of beer in 2018, which is a huge number (Giang, 2019). In particular, Vietnamese men often drink alcohol many times more than women (Dat, 2018). About 80.3% of males and 11.6% of females over 15 years of age in Vietnam drink alcohol (Trung, 2018). Trinh Hoa Binh, Director of the Centre for Social Opinion Investigation, Institute of Sociology, said that Vietnam is in the top 3 countries in Asia and top 64 countries in the world consuming alcohol the most (Binh, 2018).

Vietnamese people drink for many reasons, celebrate, entertain, exhaust bad luck, relieve stress, share feelings, etc., and one of the biggest reasons is to make and maintain relationships.

C. The Reasons Why Vietnamese People Drink to Make Relationships in Business

There are six main reasons for explaining why Vietnamese drink alcohol to build business relationships.

1) Drinking Culture Originates from the National Culture and Becomes an Entrenched Norm in Life

It is believed that drinking between government officials and business people has become "traditional etiquette", and Vietnamese people just cannot give up with a practice that has become an ingrained norm (Lam, 2013). Drinking alcohol has long been so popular that it has become a cultural feature in Vietnam, called "a cup of wine/beer is the beginning of the story", which means people must first drink, then talk. Vietnamese believe that this action shows respect to each other, and thanks to alcohol, people can become more friendly and open to start a conversation, making it easier to create and maintain closer relationships, which are extremely beneficial in life, especially in business and work.

Drinking is particularly important to men in Vietnam, they have the saying "men without alcohol like flags without wind", which means that men without drinking will be moody and lifeless like the flag without wind, and even not worth being a man. That is the reason why Vietnamese men must drink, and the rate of male drinkers (80.3%) is many times higher than female drinkers (11.6%). Women who drink alcohol are considered not to be feminine, however, a low percentage does not mean that does not happen, there is still a large number of women in Vietnam drink, and has tended to increase in recent years. Therefore, drinking to make relationships has become a habit difficult to break and an obvious thing in Vietnamese culture, especially in business culture.

2) Drinking Alcohol Stimulates Communication Skills

According to Gonzales (2020), a researcher on addiction problems, alcohol is considered as a social lubricant. It helps people create a comfortable environment to be closer and more open-hearted to each other, because alcohol increases dopamine levels, thereby activating pleasure and excitement in the human body, which enhances drinkers' generosity, empathy and friendliness.

When a large amount of alcohol is absorbed into the blood vessels of the brain, they will inhibit nerve cells, especially in the frontal lobe - where has the mission of guiding and managing behaviour, leading to a reduced ability to think and judge problems. This phenomenon is called drunk, causing drinkers not able to control their behaviour, and say whatever they think (Thanh, 2017). In simple words, human behaviour is governed by two main factors, mind and emotion. In a normal state, the human mind is more active, the brain can predict the consequences of their behaviour, so every word is carefully thought before speaking. Whereas, when getting drunk, the human mind is impaired, the body is in a state of excitement, the feeling of fear disappears, replaced by emotions, at this time the mind cannot control the behaviour, making the drunk express whatever they think, the things that they think of the most, or the cherished desires that they did not have enough brave to say. Thus, alcohol helps alleviate inferiority complex, and add courage and confidence for people to demonstrate themselves although it is just an illusion.

This argument is supported by a research published in Psychological Science. Strangers is randomly divided into group of three, researchers discovered that alcohol enhances social bonding among them. The alcohol drinkers tended to be

more involved in the conversations, and also more likely to engage everyone in these talks than those who drank non-alcoholic beverages (Sayette, 2012)

Therefore, for a long time Vietnamese people have to rely on alcohol to be more confident in the conversations and to cover their shortcomings in communication skills. They have a notion that "drunkenness reveals what soberness conceals". There are things that cannot be said at the workplace, only when sitting on "alcohol table", people are free to speak up their attitude and thinking towards others. Without the stimulation of alcohol, the discussion will be unhappy and not energetic; the communication atmosphere will slow down, lack of openness and fervency; people get bored quickly, running out of things to say, soon the talk fell into awkwardness and lack of inspiration. For timid people, when being drunk they can become more active and bolder. For melancholy people, alcohol helps them to be more open-hearted. As a result, people can understand each other more easily and from then on, relationships can become more cohesive.

3) The Working Environment Forces People to Drink

Because drinking has long become a traditional communication etiquette, beer and wine are now indispensable catalysts in contacting, building and keeping business relationships, especially in sales and marketing departments, in which relationships play an extremely important role.

In the words of Cao Huy Huan, a famous Vietnamese blogger, Vietnamese people believe that it is difficult to sign a contract or sell goods if the representative of the company cannot drink, therefore the recruitment interviews in from small to large companies in Vietnam normally has an integral question: "How is your alcohol tolerance?", and the candidate may be accepted only if the drink capacity is in a suitable level (Huan, 2014).

Drinking is supposed to make the job go more smoothly and easier to advance at work, Vietnamese believe that creating good relationships with superiors, colleagues or seniors in the company will make things more advantageous, work becomes less stressful and people can get more helps from others. Vietnamese always has a culture of paying attention on the attitude of their superiors to behave appropriately; if not, it will be difficult for them to promote at work and win the sympathy of their colleagues. In addition, as being more intimate thanks to the stimulation of alcohol, people tend to make business proposals or cooperation offers more easily, and people who receive the offer also tend to agree immediately. Besides promoting to attract investors and sign a business deal for the company, employees must also know how to create relationships with government officials to do documents smoothly. As a result, many people try to improve their drinking capacity to strike up a conversation and get along with the working environment in order to survive and promote in career.

4) Drinking Alcohol is Considered As a Way to Show Respect

According to a study of Master Truong Xuan Truong, Institute of Sociology, alcohol invitation in Vietnam is a traditional form of behaviour that shows respect and affection to the invited person (Binh, 2018). Therefore, after successfully signing a business contract, Vietnamese often invite alcohol to express thanks and gratitude to partners. This is a way to assert and maintain a long-term relationship for other business missions in the future. Besides, inviting alcohol is also a method of showing respect and closeness to the boss and

colleagues. In other words, alcohol can be used to close the gap and build trust between relationships.

5) *Drinking for the Fear of Offending Others*

Inviting alcohol is also used as a test to check a person’s beliefs and values towards others in a relationship or commitment. Vietnamese people only invite the people they like to toast in the process of drinking; therefore, if the one receiving the invitation reject or do not re-invite, they will be considered disrespectful, destroying the relationship. Moreover, drinkers often pour alcohol into glasses equally, and they must drink up; if not, they will receive criticisms or will be considered impolite.

Especially for new employees entering a company; the newer, the more active and aggressive they must be in everything, especially in drinking. With rank pressure, newbies must be sociable as much as possible to be more outstanding than others to impress the boss, or to get sympathy from colleagues and superiors. If not, colleagues, seniors or bosses will think the newbie is disrespectful and haughty, losing sympathy. This unwritten rule has made many newcomers confused and awkward (Tho, 2019).

In this way, people could not even retain their basic right is refuse. As a result, many people really do not like and do not want to drink alcohol but they must endure silently in order to please their seniors, colleagues, bosses, customers or partners.

6) *Drinking for the Fear of Being Misfit*

According to an experiment conducted by Asch, a psychologist, a person tends to follow the unspoken rules or behaviours of the social group to which he or she belongs, regardless of having a think different from the rest. In this experiment, he requested people to look at a standard line printed on a white paper, then look at other three lines and choose which one had the same length with the standard line. Each participant was sitting in a group, all of whose other people were actually collaborators in the research, deliberately selecting the wrong answer. After that, Asch has drawn a conclusion that about 75% participants chose the wrong answer following the crowd at least once, even though they knew that it was wrong (Shuttleworth, 2008).

Through the experiment above, it is easy to see that humans instinctively have a fear of being different from a social group that they belong to. Therefore, they are afraid that if they regularly refuse all drinking parties, it will gradually create a wall between them and those around. Thus, in a society that values drinking to create relationships like Vietnam, most people knows it is more harmful than beneficial, but it seems to be difficult to decline because of the fear of becoming misfit and separation from the community.

7) *Summary*

From the six reasons why people drink to make relationships above, it can be seen that they are related and form a vicious cycle in Vietnamese culture, described by the chart below:

Alcohol absorbed into the body will make people become happier, more excited, generous and open, therefore it helps them easily associate and establish relationships in business. Thanks to the essential relationships, people also get more helps from others, thereby the work is more favourable and easier to advance. After receiving the helps, invite alcohol is used as a thanks and gratitude to maintain a long-term relationship. Gradually this charter has become the organizational culture, wider is national culture. By this time it

will be hard to refuse and become a traditional etiquette and habit difficult to break. Then this vicious circle will go on and on.



Figure 2: Vietnamese Drinking Culture in Business

D. *The Impacts of Drinking Culture on Employee Behaviours and Working Environment*

Drinking brings benefits but also harms. This section analyses and evaluates both positive and negative influences of it.

1) *The Positive Impacts*

Drinking has become so popular and familiar in Vietnam because it offers a number of benefits:

Table 1: The Positive Impacts of Drinking Culture on the Employee Behaviours and the Working Environment

Impacts on Employee Behaviours	Impacts on Working Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most visible effect is that people can easily build and keep business relationships, thereby facilitating for career advancement. According to a study conducted by Robin Dunbar, a Professor of Evolutionary Psychology at Oxford University, it is concluded that a man needs to meet up with 4 people at least 2 times a week to reap the benefits of friendship and connect with friends. Men who maintain social groups by a brew will be healthier and recover from illness more quickly (Stubbs, 2013). Thus, the job can be completed with high productivity, efficiency and quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drinking after work is seen as the fastest way to bridge the gap with co-workers, bosses, partners or customers, helping in integrating with the working environment and creating a comfortable and low-pressure workplace. Because the scientific effect of alcohol is to bring fun, the stressful environments like workplaces are often hard to overlook. Some Vietnamese companies are now adding this activity to their staff care regimes, such as Happy Hour, the legalized time frame for employees to use alcoholic beverages. It shapes a unique etiquette in Vietnam.

2) *The Negative Impacts*

Most people believe that drinking is a “social problem”, because it causes serious consequences such as traffic accidents, diseases, social evils, violence, illegal and unethical acts, etc. However, this study does not mention these negative consequences, but focuses on the negative effects that alcohol has on employee behaviours and the working environment, detailed as follows:

Table 2: The Negative Impacts of Drinking Culture on the Employee Behaviours and the Working Environment

Impacts on Employee Behaviours	Impacts on Working Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the long term, heavy drinking can cause Wernicke encephalopathy, which is a neuropsychiatric syndrome leading to dementia (Quy, 2020). Obviously, overuse of alcohol will lead to adverse health effects, especially mental effects, causing a lack of alertness and fatigue, making people unable to focus on work, so that the performance and quality of work decline. If people continuously depend on alcohol when communicating, the brain will gradually lose the ability to take the communication initiative (Ha, 2020). As an inevitable result, when drinking to an uncontrollable threshold, people cannot control their behaviours and words anymore, at this time, sometimes people will utter negative words, which may lead to quarrels, disputes, and worse is violence, resulting in destruction of the relationship having built. “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. Those who have just joined the company, if they do not know how to drink, they will be considered arrogant and haughty, putting themselves apart and isolated from people. Especially the foreigners or the Vietnamese people returning from foreign countries, who are not familiar with this culture, being disadvantaged at work, they will leave or will be forced to leave. According to Huynh Van Son, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, a number of young people think that if they do not drink, they will lose the opportunity to promote (Son, 2015). Gradually drinking becomes a must-have skill instead of others essential skills. No need professional skills, just knowing how to drink is enough. Some people will look down on or boycott others if their alcohol invitation is denied. It is used as a negative way to test their influence on someone. It forms a bad habit of Vietnamese people that using alcohol to please and flatter others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can be seen that drinking alcohol has gradually become a form of stress relief and connecting colleagues, being indispensable in a lot of Vietnamese companies. However, sometimes drinking excessively leads to being no longer a free and relaxed affair. Instead, it is distorted into negative admission ritual and a solidarity culture full of pressure, forcing individuals, especially newbies and subordinates to take part in. Drinking culture creates an unwritten rule and injustice in the working environment for those who are skilled and good at their profession but cannot drink. They are more disadvantageous than others at work, because it creates an invisible distance from people and makes it hard to integrate into the workplace. Moreover, Eastern people greatly values relationships, they believe that the more relationships they have, the more opportunities they gain, which makes it difficult for Vietnamese people without wide range of relationships to advance at work.

E. Should or Should Not Drink to Create Relationships in Business?

Should or should not build a drinking culture in business is a hot topic that has long been debated and discussed in Vietnam. There are many conflicting opinions about this issue, some people say that this culture is not bad, just to bring people closer together and make fun, but some think that this culture deserves to be boycotted, because it leads to many unpredictable consequences, especially injustice in the working environment.

According to Wan Qing (晚晴) (2018), a famous Chinese author, in the eyes of most people, especially in Asia, relationships are the most valuable resource. Many people worship the view of "first is money, second is relationship"; having relationships, nothing is impossible. She also once mentioned that no one is perfect, no matter how capable a person is, they still need the help from others. However, relying too much on the help of others only makes people lose their self-respect and personal goals (Qing, 2018).

Some people are indignant that many people have no talent but they know how to drink and have good relationships, things that others find it difficult, for them just need an alcohol invitation, problem will be resolved. However, indignation also cannot change the current situation. There are a lot of unfair things in this world, accepting the existence of such unfair things is an expression of psychological maturity.

In contrast, some said that a person with limited capacity, no matter how many relationships they have, it is still useless, sooner or later they will lose these relationships. Do not turn yourself into a dependency, no one is interested in helping a demanding person. Everyone wants to build a strong relationship network, but if they do not cultivate and improve their competencies, and just care about relationships, it will make them become self-interested, causing others despise.

Obviously, there are many contradictory views on this problem, so how to find the most thorough answer? The survey in this study will contribute to find the answer for the question "should or should not drink to build relationships?"

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Saunders's Research Onion, designed by Saunders – a professor of business research methods, is a research model illustrating the detailed stages of developing a research, includes 6 main layers below:

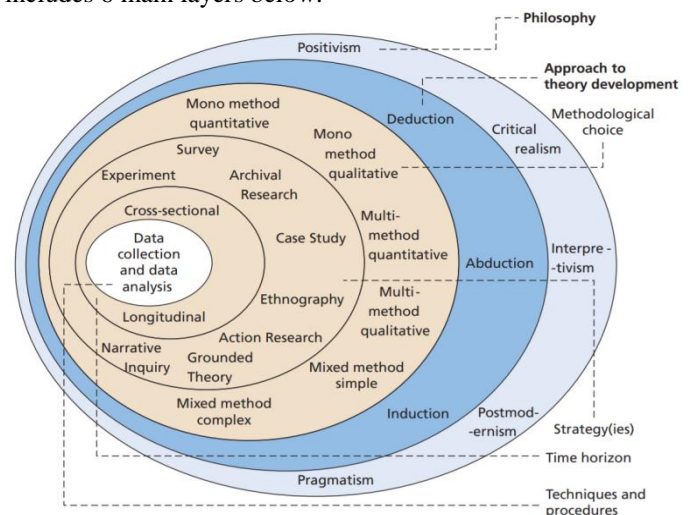


Figure 3: Saunders’s Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2018)

The research framework of this project is established based on the Saunders's Research Onion, which is described as follows:

- Research Philosophy: Pragmatism.
- Approaches to Theory Development: Deduction.
- Research Methods: Mixed method.
- Research Strategies: Survey.
- Time Horizon: Cross-sectional.
- Research Techniques and Procedures.

To perform a survey successfully, researcher must be proficient in utilizing different data collection and analysis techniques and tools such as questionnaires, sampling, statistical software, etc. The graph below presents the survey procedure, techniques and tools in this research:

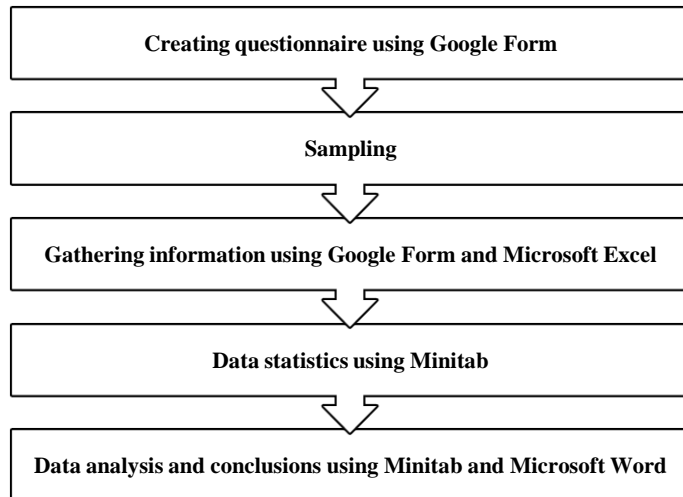


Figure 4: Survey Procedure and Techniques

A. Questionnaire

The questionnaire of this research is as follows:

Drinking Culture in Business

Skip this survey if you have never had a job. Please answer questions based on your own opinion. The survey is used for study purposes only, your information will be kept confidential. Thank you for taking time.

1. Age:
 - Under 18
 - 18 – 24
 - 25 – 39
 - 40 – 59
 - 60 and above
2. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Others
3. Have you ever owned a business?
 - Yes
 - No
4. Do you work for a private or state-owned enterprise?
 - Private
 - State-owned
 - Both
5. Do you work for a micro, small, medium, or large company?
 - Micro (<10 employees)
 - Small (10 - 49 employees)
 - Medium (50 - 249 employees)
 - Large (>249 employees)
6. Have you ever had a beer with your colleagues, bosses, partners, or customers? You can choose multiple answers
 - Yes, with my colleagues
 - Yes, with my bosses
 - Yes, with my subordinates
 - Yes, with partners and customers
 - No, never
7. How often do you drink with them?
 - Every few months
 - Once to twice a month
 - Once to twice a week
 - Every day
 - Several times a day
 - Not drink
8. When do you often drink with them? You can choose multiple answers
 - Before work
 - During work hours
 - After work
 - Day-off
 - Not drink
9. Why do people drink? You can choose multiple answers
 - To get helps and promote in career
 - To make and maintain relationship
 - To be open-hearted more "drunkenness reveals what soberness conceals"
 - Because refusing will offend
 - Because everyone drinks, I cannot refuse
 - To show my thanks for helping me
 - Because it is traditional etiquette of Vietnam
 - To get along with the working environment
 - Because it is my habit
 - To create joy for myself
10. If you refuse to drink often, are you afraid of offending them?
 - Yes
 - No
11. Do you think drinking is bad or good?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Bad
 - Terrible
12. If you had to choose between not drinking and drinking, you would choose:
 - Drinking
 - Not drinking
13. Your alcohol tolerance:
 - 1 - 2 cans
 - 3 - 6 cans
 - 7 - 12 cans
 - Over 12 cans
 - I cannot drink
14. Drinking makes your job better?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
15. Cannot drink is a disadvantage at work?
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

16. Between a skilled person and a person with wide range of relationships, who do you think will be more advantageous at work?
- Skilled person
 - Person with wide range of relationships
17. Have you ever met the question "how much can you drink" when you apply for a job?
- Yes
 - No
18. Do you often refuse to drink?
- Usually
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
19. What are the reasons you refuse to drink? You can choose multiple answers
- I am busy
 - I am tired or sick
 - I cannot drink
 - I have another appointment
 - I have to drive
 - Others
20. The best ways to create and keep relationships with customers and partners. You can choose multiple answers
- Inviting alcohol
 - Giving gifts on holidays, New Year, birthday...
 - Money
 - Care and inquire often
 - Go to coffee shops, restaurants...
 - Travel
21. How much money does your company spend per year (VND) to create and maintain relationships with partners or customers?
- 1 - 9 million
 - 10 - 99 million
 - 100 - 999 million
 - 1 - 9 billion
 - More

B. Sampling

The sampling methods in this research are quota and convenience sampling, detailed as follows:

- Participants: Anyone who works for any enterprise in Vietnam.
- Sample Size: 222 people.
- Duration: 30 days.

C. Descriptive and Inferential Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential are the two key data statistical and analytical techniques used in this research. Descriptive statistics involves in collecting, synthesizing, and summarizing data by graphical methods, numerical indices, and tables. In contrast, inferential statistics allows researchers to predict and infer trends about a population based on a sample taken from it through examining the relationships between variables, hypothesis testing and confidence intervals (B.Frey, 2018).

D. Hypothesis Tests

Three models in Minitab are used to infer and predict the trend, including: Chi-Square Test for Association, Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test, and Binary Logistic Regression.

IV. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To be reputable and reliable, the survey must consider all of the ethical issues related to the data provided by respondents. This section clarifies the five prime ethical concerns in this research.

A. Clarity and Intelligibility

The questions and content of the questionnaire are designed in a clear, structured and concise manner, going straight to the point, and restricting using metaphors and confusing words to avoid misleading and deceiving the respondents.

B. Honesty and Integrity

The survey is a real primary survey conducted by the author himself, not a fabricated, deceptive and copied one. The honesty and integrity of the study are ensured by being honest and accurate in proposing, performing, and reporting research, not editing any questions and answers after receiving responses from participants, not using the research for purposes not mentioned, and not fabricating answers.

C. Privacy and Comfort

The private space and personal information of respondents are guaranteed throughout the survey process by letting them answer alone whenever and wherever they want, direct supervision will make them uncomfortable; restricting too personal and unrelated questions; and limiting the possibility that others will see the answers of them. So that they can freely and comfortably answer in the most honest way without shame, timidity and apprehension.

D. Voluntary and Discretion

The survey is conducted based on the willingness and consent of participants, ensuring mutual benefits of both parties. Besides, respondents are allowed to answer questions according to their personal views and opinions that the researcher must respect. Voluntary and discretion in research are appreciated by writing a short introduction for participants to understand the purpose and content of the study, and not forcing participants to respond as expectations of the researcher.

E. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The information of participants are strictly protected by not allowing any unauthorized people to access, read, and share those data, using respondent identification numbers instead of their names throughout the survey process, only disclosing participants' information with their permission, restricting access to study files, storing data on secure servers or password-protected computers, and not asking participants for personal information if not absolutely necessary.

V. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Microsoft Excel is used to store data, then they will be synthesized and analyzed by Minitab.

A. Drinking Has Become a Business Culture in Vietnam

The answers of 222 Vietnamese people when being asked whether they ever had a beer with colleagues, bosses, subordinates, customers, and partners are as follows:

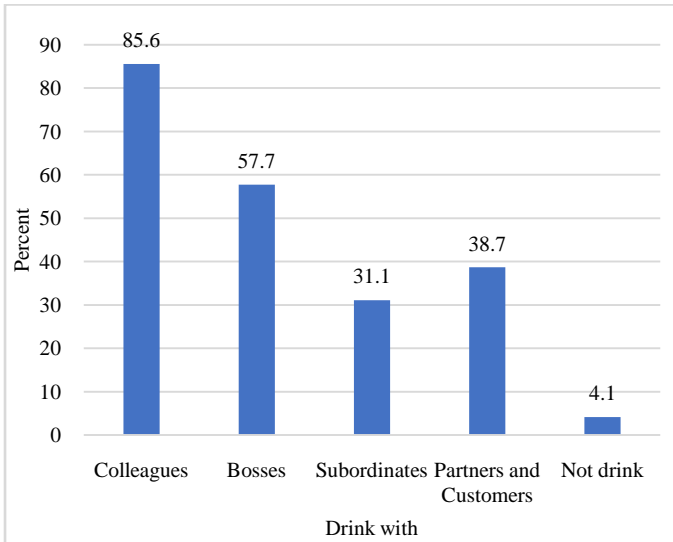


Figure 5: Drinking Situation in Vietnamese Business Environment

Looking at the chart, it can be easily seen that only 4.1% people said that they have never had a drink with their colleagues, bosses, subordinates, partners, or customers. It is an extremely small number, showing that drinking has become a traditional etiquette and an integral part of Vietnamese business culture. Statistics also shows that people normally drink together after work and in day-offs.

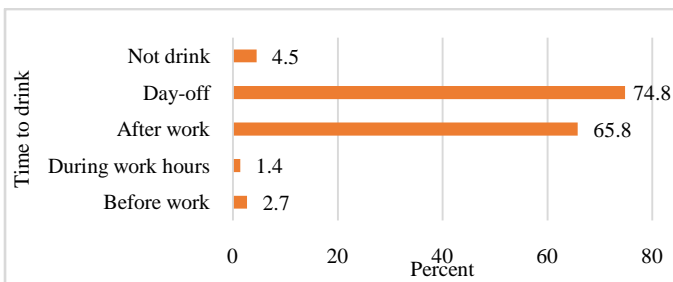


Figure 6: Time to Drink

B. The Reasons Why Vietnamese People Drink

The reasons why Vietnamese people drink with their colleagues, bosses, subordinates, partners, or customers are summarized as follows:

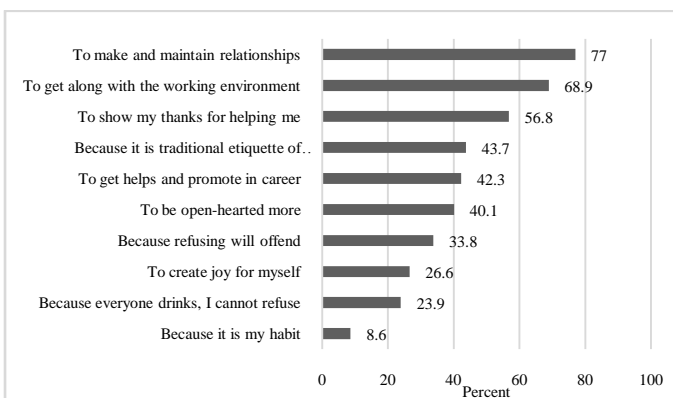


Figure 7: The Reasons Why Vietnamese People Drink

The results above support to the hypothesis having been discussed in the literature review that most Vietnamese people drink to create and keep relationships in business, the specific figure statistically is 77%. Followed by the reason to get along with the working environment with the number of 68.9%, people do not want to become misfit. The next reasons in turn are to show thanks and gratitude for helping them at work; it is

traditional etiquette of Vietnam that people just cannot give up; to get helps and advance in career; to be closer and open-hearted more “drunkenness reveals what soberness conceals”; the fear of offending others due to denying the alcohol invitation; to create joy for themselves; and because everyone drink, they cannot refuse. And the least reason with only 8.6% is that because it is their habit.

C. Job Interview Question: "How Much Can You Drink?"

The responses of people being asked whether they ever met the question “how much can you drink?” when they apply for a job are recorded as follows:

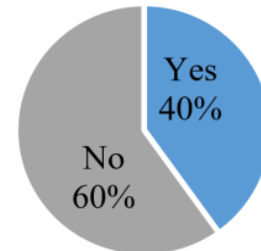


Figure 8: Have You Ever Met The Job Interview Question: "How Much Can You Drink?"

An interesting fact is that out of 222 people surveyed, 40% said they have met the question "how much can you drink?" when being interviewed for a job. It reveals that a large number of companies require their candidates to drink to create relationships for certain jobs, and if the answer is "I can drink but little" or "I cannot drink", the candidate may not be accepted. Inadvertently this creates an injustice for those who are competent but cannot drink, and also contribute to the thought of young people that no need professional skills, just knowing how to drink is enough.

D. Relationships or Competencies

People who are asked to choose a person they think to be more advantageous between a competent person and a person with wide range of relationships answer as follows:

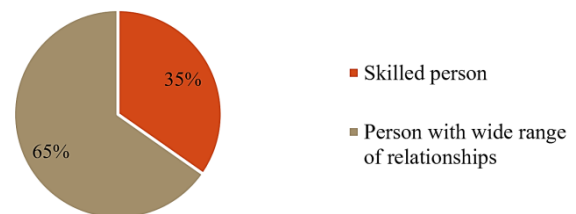


Figure 9: Relationships or Competencies

The graph shows an unexpected result that Vietnamese people value relationships rather than skills, with the proportion of 65.3%. That is the reason why they try to improve their alcohol tolerance to drink to make and maintain relationships.

1) Alcohol Tolerance versus Relationships or Competencies

The study also conduct a chi-square test to determine whether there is an association between alcohol tolerance and the selection above. The results are analyzed as follows:

- Ho: There is no association between alcohol tolerance and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and skills.
- Ha: There is an association between alcohol tolerance and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and skills.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test for Association: Alcohol Tolerance, Relationships or Competencies

Rows: Alcohol tolerance, Columns: Relationships or competencies

	Person with wide range of relationships	Skilled person	All
1 - 2 cans	22 28.09 1.3186	21 14.91 2.4831	43
3 - 6 cans	64 56.82 0.9061	23 30.18 1.7064	87
7 - 12 cans	43 41.15 0.0833	20 21.85 0.1569	63
I cannot drink	1 4.57 2.7908	6 2.43 5.2554	7
Over 12 cans	15 14.37 0.0277	7 7.63 0.0521	22
All	145	77	222

Cell Contents
Count
Expected count
Contribution to Chi-square

Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	DF	P-Value
Pearson	14.780	4	0.005
Likelihood Ratio	14.499	4	0.006

2 cell(s) with expected counts less than 5.

For this data, the Pearson chi-square statistic is 14.780 (p-value = 0.005) and the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic is 14.499 (p-value = 0.006). Both p-values are less than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a relationship between two variables. The number of people who can drink from 3 to 6 cans appreciate relationships more than skills nearly three times. Besides, the number of people can drink from 7 to 12 cans and over 12 cans value relationships are as twice as competencies. However, those who drink less than 1-2 cans or who cannot drink tend to appreciate the skills more.

2) Gender versus Relationships or Competencies

A chi-square test is performed to identify whether there is a relationship between gender and the appreciation of relationships or competencies. The findings are summarized as follows:

- Ho: There is no association between gender and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and competencies.
- Ha: There is an association between gender and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and competencies.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test for Association: Gender, Relationships or Competencies

Rows: Gender, Columns: Relationships or Competencies

	Person with wide range of relationships	Skilled person	All
Female	82 71.19 1.640	27 37.81 3.089	109
Male	63 73.81 1.582	50 39.19 2.979	113
All	145	77	222

Cell Contents
Count
Expected count
Contribution to Chi-square

Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	DF	P-Value
Pearson	9.291	1	0.002
Likelihood Ratio	9.401	1	0.002

Because the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that there is an association between the two variables. Women tend to value relationships more than men.

3) Age versus Relationships or Competencies

Another chi-square test is used to exam the relationships between age and the appreciation of relationships or competencies:

- Ho: There is no association between age and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and competencies.
- Ha: There is an association between gender and the appreciation of the importance between relationships and competencies.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Association: Age, Relationships or Competencies

Rows: Age, Columns: Relationships or Competencies

	Person with wide range of relationships	Skilled person	All
18 - 24	59 64.662 0.4958	40 34.338 0.9337	99
25 - 39	58 59.437 0.0347	33 31.563 0.0654	91
40 - 59	19 13.063 2.6982	1 6.937 5.0811	20
60 and above	6 3.919 1.1051	0 2.081 2.0811	6
Under 18	3 3.919 0.2155	3 2.081 0.4058	6
All	145	77	222

Cell Contents
Count
Expected count
Contribution to Chi-square

Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	DF	P-Value
Pearson	13.116	4	0.011
Likelihood Ratio	17.562	4	0.002

4 cell(s) with expected counts less than 5.

The p-value is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected. Age significantly influences on the thought of between having relationships and abilities which would be more advantageous at work. 100% of the elderly from 60 and above surveyed said that relationships are more important. The younger the generation, the more they appreciate the skills.

E. Drinking is a Necessary Work Skills

The chi-square goodness-of-fit test is implemented to determine whether cannot drink is a disadvantage at work. The results are as follows:

- Ho: Cannot drink does not have any effect on work.
- Ha: Cannot drink effects on the results of work.

Table 6: Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test for Observed Counts in Variable: Question 15

Observed and Expected Counts

Category	Observed	Test		Contribution to Chi-Square
		Proportion	Expected	
Strongly agree	106	0.25	55.5	45.9505
Agree	60	0.25	55.5	0.3649
Disagree	37	0.25	55.5	6.1667
Strongly disagree	19	0.25	55.5	24.0045

Chi-Square Test

N	DF	Chi-Sq.	P-Value
222	3	76.4865	0.000

The alternative hypothesis in this situation is accepted as the p-value is less than 0.05. People almost strongly agree that cannot drink is a disadvantage at work. From the test above, drinking is considered as an element that significantly effect on the work of Vietnamese people. Cannot drink may become an obstacle at work, which facilitates inequality in the working environment.

F. The Fear of Offending Others Due to Denying Alcohol Invitation

The answers of the question whether people are afraid of offending others because of refusing alcohol invitation often are presented as follows:

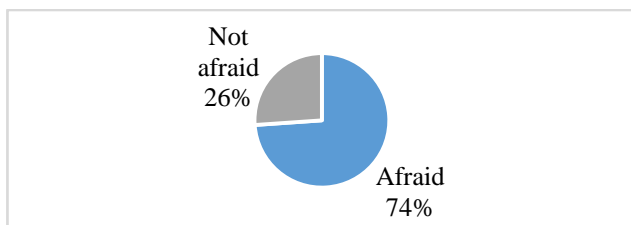


Figure 10: The Fear of Offending Others Due to Denying Alcohol Invitation

Nearly 74% of participants afraid that they will offend others if they refuse to the alcohol invitation regularly, which leads to that people sometimes or rarely deny the alcohol invitation. This argument is demonstrated by the chi-square test below:

- Ho: The afraid of offending others does not affect the frequency of refusing to drink.

- Ha: The afraid of offending others makes it more difficult for people to refuse to drink.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test for Association: Frequency of Refusing, Afraid of Offending Others

Rows: Refusing Frequency, Columns: Afraid of Offending Others

	No	Yes	All
1 – Usually	23 12.28 9.3600	24 34.72 3.3102	47
2 – Sometimes	21 20.38 0.0190	57 57.62 0.0067	78
3 – Rarely	12 21.68 4.3253	71 61.32 1.5297	83
4 – Never	2 3.66 0.7513	12 10.34 0.2657	14
All	58	164	222

Cell Contents
Count
Expected count
Contribution to Chi-square

Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	DF	P-Value
Pearson	19.568	3	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	18.945	3	0.000

1 cell(s) with expected counts less than 5.

It is clear that the alternative hypothesis is accepted because the p-value is less than 0.05. People who are afraid of offending others tend to be hard to refuse to drink than others. The bigger the fear, the less they will refuse. It can also be concluded that this fear is very common among Vietnamese people because many participants said that they sometimes (35% of participants) or rarely (37% of participants) refuse to drink.

G. The Reasons for Refusing to Drink

There are many reasons for denying to drink and the most popular reasons are:

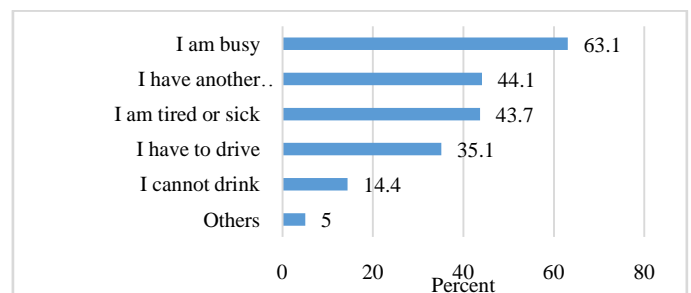


Figure 11: The Reasons for Refusing to Drink

Not surprisingly, the reason that being busy is used the most with the proportion of 63.1%. Followed by having another appointment; being tired or sick; having to drive; cannot drink; and other reasons. As of January 1, 2020, driver of any road vehicles is prohibited from using alcohol while traveling on the road (Tung, 2019), which contributes to the reason for refusing to drink because of having to drive.

H. Should or Should Not Drink

A binary logistic regression is conducted in this research to determine the factors that impacts on the decision on should or should not drink of people, detailed as follows:

Table 8: Binary Logistic Regression: Drinking or Not

Regression Equation

$$P(\text{Drinking}) = \exp(Y') / (1 + \exp(Y'))$$

$Y' = 3.633 + 0.0 \text{ Relationships or skills_Person with wide range of relationships} - 1.098 \text{ Relationships or skills_Skilled person} + 0.0 \text{ Afraid of offending others_No} + 0.271 \text{ Afraid of offending others_Yes} + 0.0 \text{ Drinking makes job better_Strongly agree} - 1.555 \text{ Drinking makes job better_Disagree} - 2.206 \text{ Drinking makes job better_Strongly disagree} + 0.0 \text{ Drinking is bad or good_Excellent} - 0.497 \text{ Drinking is bad or good_Good} - 2.233 \text{ Drinking is bad or good_Bad} - 2.803 \text{ Drinking is bad or good_Terrible} + 0.0 \text{ Gender_Female} - 0.947 \text{ Gender_Male}$
(1)

Response Information

Variable	Value	Count
Drinking or not	Drinking	133 (Event)
	Not drinking	89
	Total	222

Coefficients

Term	Coef	SE	Z-	P-	VIF
		Coef	Value	Value	
Constant	3.633	0.778	4.67	0.000	
Relationships or skills					
Skilled person	-1.098	0.391	-2.81	0.005	1.08
Afraid of offending others					
Yes	0.271	0.429	0.63	0.528	1.10
Drinking makes job better					
Agree	-1.555	0.505	-3.08	0.002	1.93
Disagree	-2.955	0.681	-4.34	0.000	1.54
Strongly disagree	-2.206	0.665	-3.32	0.001	1.52
Drinking is bad or good					
Good	-0.497	0.572	-0.87	0.385	2.51
Bad	-2.233	0.634	-3.52	0.000	2.49
Terrible	-2.803	0.948	-2.96	0.003	1.59
Gender					
Male	-0.947	0.396	-2.39	0.017	1.19

Odds Ratios for Categorical Predictors

Level A	Level B	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Relationships or skills			
Skilled person	Person with wide range of relationships	0.3334	(0.1550, 0.7169)
Afraid of offending others			
Yes	No	1.3114	(0.5652, 3.0425)
Drinking makes job better			
Agree	Strongly agree	0.2112	(0.0785, 0.5678)
Disagree	Strongly agree	0.0521	(0.0137, 0.1977)
Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	0.1102	(0.0299, 0.4055)
Disagree	Agree	0.2465	(0.0798, 0.7618)
Strongly disagree	Agree	0.5218	(0.1610, 1.6908)
Strongly disagree	Disagree	2.1166	(0.4918, 9.1099)
Drinking is bad or good			
Good	Excellent	0.6083	(0.1981, 1.8678)
Bad	Excellent	0.1072	(0.0310, 0.3713)
Terrible	Excellent	0.0606	(0.0095, 0.3891)
Bad	Good	0.1763	(0.0744, 0.4176)

Terrible	Good	0.0997	(0.0186, 0.5337)
Terrible	Bad	0.5656	(0.1068, 2.9961)
Gender			
Male	Female	0.3878	(0.1784, 0.8428)

Odds ratio for level A relative to level B

Model Summary

Deviance R-Sq	Deviance R-Sq(adj)	AIC	AICc	BIC	Area Under ROC Curve
35.95%	32.94%	211.49	212.53	245.51	0.8761

Through the test, it can be seen that should or should not drink depends on the opinions and gender of the decision maker. Looking at the coefficients, the positive values indicate that the people choosing drinking becomes more likely as the predictor increases, and vice versa, negative values reveal that the people choosing drinking becomes less likely as the predictor increases.

Odds ratios that are greater than 1 show that people are more likely to drink as the predictor grow, while those are less than 1 indicate that people are less likely to drink as the predictor rise. In these results, the odds ratio of the first factor is 0.3334, which means that a person appreciating skills than relationships is likely to choose drinking 3 times lower for who values relationships than skills.

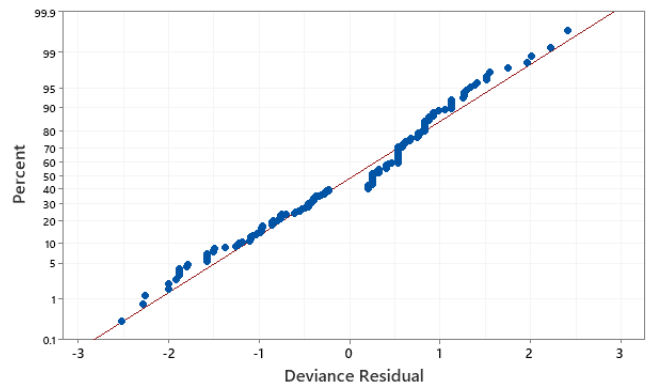


Figure 12: Normal Probability Plot: Drinking or Not

The diagram above describe that the model relatively fits the data, with the R-square of 36%.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through a series of information, statistics and tests, it can be concluded that drinking culture plays a pivotal role in making relationships in Vietnamese business environment nowadays. Although it establishes a unique etiquette in Vietnam and helps people create and maintain relationships to get along with their working environment and to develop their careers, it leads to many negative effects, especially shape the injustice for talents who have limited drinking ability. However, because drinking creates joy and helps bring people closer together, so it is not completely bad, it is only terrible when affecting fairness in the working environment. Therefore, everyone should keep drinking as a hobby, do not take advantage of drinking as a tool for promotion in career. But this is extremely difficult to accomplish because this point of view has been ingrained in the minds of the Vietnamese people.

The following shows some personal ideas of how to do this:

A. For Organizations

- Should focus on finding and developing employee skills instead of asking: "how much can you drink?"

in the job interview.

- Managers must evaluate employees based on their ability and performance without any bias, despite having a close relationship with them.
- Facilitating equal career opportunities and development for each of employee.
- Retaining customers and partners by gratitude programs.

B. For Individuals

- Relationships are extremely important to everyone. If a person cannot drink, they can go to coffee shops and eat out together or give gifts on special occasions to keep relationships, etc.
- Improve communication ability and job skills.
- Do not use drinking as a way to flatter others to search for relationships.

Wan Qing once said that “no one is perfect, no matter how capable a person is, they still need the help from others. However, too relying on the help of others only makes people lose their self-respect and personal goals”.

We cannot choose our background, but we can choose to become an ordinary, or an outstanding person. Once you have the capacity, building relationships is only sooner or later. Luck is only for those who have preparation.

Do not chase a horse, use the time chasing it to plant a meadow. When spring comes, there will be a whole herd of horses for you to choose. Do not try to be close with a person, use that time to cultivate your competencies. When the time is ripe, there will be countless friends to accompany. Therefore, improving yourself is always better than relying on others.

“When flowers bloom, butterflies and bees will come.”

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