

**Research Article****PATTERN OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF SEMINARIANS IN SELECTED RELIGIOUS FORMATION HOUSES IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA****<sup>1</sup>Filiyanus Ekka and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Maria Ntarangwe**<sup>1</sup>Marist International University College, Masters Programme of Counselling Psychology and Spirituality, Kenya  
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**Abstract**

Pattern of alcohol consumption is observed into the life of some seminarians in the Formation Houses in Nairobi County Kenya. The study investigates the relationship between seminarians' consumption of alcohol and their psycho-spiritual wellbeing in Nairobi County, Kenya. There is only a single objective that directs this study project: The objective of the research are anchored on two theories namely: Nature and Nurture theory by Francis Galton (1874) and Disease theory of Alcoholism by Morten Jellinek (1960). It focuses on the strain of demanding training and the effects of substance usage on spiritual development. Data for the study was gathered using a correlational design. The target population is 128 seminarians from five different selected religious formation houses of different congregations. The researcher has used the stratified random sampling method by using the Slovin Formula of 97 seminarians as the sample size. The researcher has adopted standardized questionnaires (AUDIT and P-SWBS) to collect quantitative data and interview grid to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data, primarily collected through structured questionnaires, is analysed using statistical methods to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. After the collection of structured questionnaires, the responses are entered into a statistical software package IBM SPSS Statistics. The finding indicates that as alcohol consumption increases, psycho-spiritual wellbeing tends to decrease. In other words, seminarians who consume more alcohol are likely to report lower levels of spiritual and psychological wellness. Thus, finding invites the seminarians to be vigilant, to think twice before they consume alcohol. Because alcohol can lead seminarians to physical, spiritual, psychological and interpersonal sickness.

**Keywords:** The US, Indo-Pacific, policy.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the Catholic Church, decree on the priestly training – *OPTATAM TOTIUS* – proclaimed by his Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 28, 1965, it is mentioned very clearly that entire training of the seminarians should be oriented to the formation of true shepherds of the souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is very clearly indicated that in the priestly training all the spheres of training, such as human formation, physical, spiritual, intellectual and disciplinary formation is to be followed strictly without any compromise for the sake of the service of the people of God (Paul VI, 1965). Dallas Theological Seminary on alcohol (2024) clearly states that in the present days one can easily notice that unless the discipline with regard to the pattern of consuming alcohol becomes the core of the truth of seminarian's life, formation will not be holistic. There is a psycho-spiritual outcry in Catholic seminaries about seminarians using alcohol. This crisis brings the tension that exists between seminarians and the traditional expectations of seminary life. Drinking too much or little can seriously affect one's ability to maintain the emotional and psycho-spiritual stability needed for self-awareness and pastoral care (Ruffing & Oleson *et al.*, 2021). Alcohol affects different people differently (Egunjobi, 2023), seminarians who struggle with alcohol-related problems may experience increased worry, sadness, and a lowered sense of self-worth, which can impair their capacity to relate to people in an honest way and to pursue their vocation with determination.

Alcohol consumption among seminarians can lead to additional difficulties such as sexual conflicts, financial mismanagement, and academic dishonesty (Stuer, 2010). In the past and even in the present times Christian faithful have brought attention to disturbing misbehaviour among seminarians, especially with regard to alcohol use, sexual immorality and stealing money. Addressing the witness of the faithful is crucial for restoring confidence in the integrity and witness of future clergy (Carrigan, 1967). It is evident studies that examine the prevalence of alcohol misuse and how it relates to moral principles and spiritual activities are few. Additionally, little is known about the long-term effects of alcohol regulations on the conduct of the future clergy members and how well they work in seminaries (Wechsler & Thum *et al.*, 1970).

**Research Objectives:** To establish the relation between Alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing of seminarians in selected formation houses in Nairobi County Kenya.

**Research Questions:** What is the relationship between Alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing of seminarians in selected formation houses in Nairobi County Kenya?

**Literature Review:**

**Alcohol Consumption and Psychospiritual Well-being:** This study critically investigates the relationship between seminarians' patterns of alcohol consumption and their psycho-spiritual well-being. The aim is to uncover how alcohol use intersects with mental, emotional, and spiritual health,

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which are foundational to the holistic development required of those in religious formation. Given the pivotal role seminarians play as future spiritual leaders, understanding factors that could undermine their integrity and mission is both urgent and necessary. Muthuku, Oginde, and Chiroma (2023) stress that interventions promoting wellness, resilience, and sober living are essential for fostering effective leadership and safeguarding the spiritual vitality of seminarians.

In many African cultures, including Kenya, alcohol plays a dual role as both a social lubricant and a potential source of social dysfunction. Its presence in religious and community celebrations such as weddings, birthdays, and funerals underscores its embeddedness in communal life. However, the same cultural normalisation often masks the underlying issues of alcohol misuse, which can lead to marital breakdowns, domestic violence, academic underperformance, and emotional instability. These social consequences prompt the need to examine the less visible, but deeply consequential, impact of alcohol on the spiritual and psychological formation of seminarians. Empirical studies further underscore the intricate link between spirituality and alcohol use. Churakova et al. (2017), in a study conducted in Ukraine, found a statistically significant inverse relationship between spirituality and the frequency of alcohol consumption. Using the Nature and Nurture theory, they concluded that higher alcohol use was associated with lower levels of spirituality and more maladaptive coping strategies, especially among younger individuals. This finding is applicable to seminarians, who, despite being in environments of structured faith formation, may still resort to alcohol as a coping mechanism due to stress, isolation, or peer influence.

Similarly, Leung (2021) demonstrated in Hong Kong that among university students including seminarians there was a significant inverse relationship between spiritual well-being and psychological distress. Those with higher scores in spiritual domains reported lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. The study highlighted the value of personal and communal spiritual dimensions as buffers against mental health challenges. Applying the disease theory of alcoholism, the findings support the notion that fostering psycho-spiritual resilience in religious formation can act as a protective factor against emotional disorders and substance misuse.

Lim et al. (2021) in Singapore further reinforce this association by showing that individuals with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) score significantly lower in measures of life satisfaction and personal well-being. These results suggest that even moderate levels of alcohol consumption may diminish the psycho-emotional vitality necessary for a fulfilling and morally upright life an especially crucial concern for those in seminary settings. Although seminarians undergo a unique form of psychosocial development, their vulnerability to external stressors and personal struggles may increase their risk of using alcohol as a maladaptive outlet. Evidence from Catholic institutions also points to longstanding concerns regarding alcohol misuse within seminaries. For example, the Mount Angel Seminary handbook (2018) reveals an institutional awareness of alcohol-related issues, outlining strict policies and acknowledging the availability of alcohol within the seminary context. This dichotomy between official discouragement of alcohol misuse and its permitted social use exemplifies a broader contradiction in seminary life. It raises critical questions about the historical tolerance of alcohol and

whether a culture of quiet acceptance enables risky behaviours. The potential legacy of previous seminarians' habits, coupled with weak formation oversight, may contribute to current trends of alcohol abuse.

Chukwurah (2023), examining seminarians in Nigeria, found that higher spiritual intelligence defined as the ability to apply spiritual values and practices to everyday life was negatively correlated with psychological distress. This suggests that cultivating spiritual awareness can enhance emotional regulation and resilience. For seminarians, this capacity is indispensable for navigating the demands of formation, including celibacy, obedience, academic pressure, and communal living.

Mukabana et al. (2024) expand this insight by examining the relationship between dark personality traits and spiritual well-being among consecrated men and women in Nairobi. Their findings indicate that certain personality dispositions, such as Machiavellianism and psychopathy, are prevalent and inversely related to spiritual maturity. This highlights the necessity of integrating psycho-spiritual screening and development into seminary formation to identify risk factors for maladaptive behaviours, including substance abuse.

Takahashi et al. (2017), focusing on rural Kenya, reveal that hazardous drinking is often influenced by social networks, accessibility of alcohol (especially traditional brews), and gender norms. The implication is clear: environmental and cultural factors significantly shape alcohol consumption patterns. For seminarians in Nairobi County many of whom may come from rural or peri-urban backgrounds such influences may persist and inform their attitudes and behaviours toward alcohol. Efforts to curb alcohol misuse must therefore be both formative and contextual, addressing personal values as well as broader social environments.

The study by Agnes et al. (2023) in Murang'a County among male public-school teachers figures who, like seminarians, serve as moral role models found that alcohol use significantly impaired teaching effectiveness. This parallels the concern that seminarians who misuse alcohol may undermine their own spiritual authority and credibility. Since seminarians are training to be moral and spiritual leaders, their personal conduct has far-reaching implications. Consistent alcohol use not only jeopardizes their spiritual integrity but also diminishes the effectiveness of their future ministry.

Within the African context, spirituality remains central to identity and healing. John Mbiti famously observed that "Africans are notoriously religious," with God, church, and spirituality at the core of daily life. The study by Bosire and Potelwa et al. (2021) in Soweto, South Africa, revealed that residents frequently turn to religious rituals such as prayer, holy water, and community worship as primary modes of healing and resilience. The findings highlight that health and spirituality are intertwined, especially in African societies where formal psychological support may be limited. Seminaries must therefore not only recognize but actively incorporate local spiritual traditions that align with Christian values to promote holistic well-being.

In conclusion, the reviewed literature consistently demonstrates a strong and often negative relationship between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual well-being. From

empirical evidence across Ukraine, Hong Kong, Nigeria, and Kenya, there emerges a clear pattern: higher alcohol use is linked to diminished spiritual resilience, increased psychological distress, and compromised personal well-being. This study builds upon existing research by narrowing the focus to Catholic seminarians a group often overlooked in general studies on Christian youth. The findings will contribute to tailored interventions that enhance psycho-spiritual formation, promote healthier coping mechanisms, and uphold the moral integrity essential to religious vocation.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study employed a Correlational research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study on the pattern of alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing of seminarians was conducted in selected religious formation houses located in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, is a significant religious and educational hub, hosting numerous institutions of higher learning, including seminaries and religious formation houses affiliated with various religious orders.

**Table 1. Sample Size**

Respondents	Population Size	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Returned	Questionnaire Return Rate-	Instrument- Interview
Formation house 1	15 formees	12	10	10.30 (10)	1
Formation house 2	40 formees	30	28	28.86 (29)	2
Formation house 3	20 formees	18	18	18.55 (19)	2
Formation house 4	18 formees	15	13	13.40(13)	1
Formation house 5	35 formees	25	22	22.68 (23)	2
Total	128	97	91	94%	8

The study focused on understanding how alcohol consumption patterns and its psycho-spiritual effects manifested within this specific group. The target population represented a total of 128 formees across five different religious formation houses. These seminarians were at various years of their religious formation, providing a diverse sample that included a wide range of experiences and perspectives. Given the mixed method of the study, the emphasis is on achieving data saturation rather than strictly adhering to numerical sampling formulas. However, to ensure a representative sample, the study aims to include approximately 76% (75.78125) of the total population, translating to about 97 seminarians.

### Data Collection and Data Analysis

Two structured questionnaires namely Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and a version of the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (P-SWBS) were used for the quantitative data collection and semi structured interview were used for the qualitative data collection. The qualitative data, gathered through semi-structured interviews was analysed using thematic analysis to uncover deeper insights into the seminarians' experiences and perceptions regarding the pattern of alcohol consumption and seminarian's psycho-spiritual wellbeing.

Table 1 explains in details how the quantitative and qualitative instruments were ministered.

### Relation between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing of seminarians in selected formation houses

The analysis of alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing among seminarians provides crucial insights into their lifestyle and overall mental and spiritual health. The mean alcohol consumption score of 2.5 (SD = 1.2) indicates that, on average, seminarians consume alcohol at a low to moderate level. Given the nature of their vocation, where spiritual discipline and self-regulation are emphasized, it is not surprising that alcohol consumption remains relatively controlled. However, the standard deviation of 1.2 suggests some variability in drinking habits, meaning that while some seminarians abstain or drink minimally, others may consume alcohol at a slightly higher level. The mean psycho-spiritual wellbeing score of 6.8 (SD = 1.5) indicates that seminarians generally experience a high level of psycho-spiritual wellbeing. A score closer to 10 would suggest near-optimal spiritual health, while a lower score would indicate psychological distress or spiritual struggles. The standard deviation of 1.5 suggests that while many seminarians report strong psycho-spiritual wellbeing, some experience fluctuations, possibly due to external stressors,

personal struggles, or differing levels of commitment to their spiritual practices.

### Descriptive Statistics of Alcohol Consumption and Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Alcohol Consumption and Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Alcohol Consumption Score	2.5	1.2
Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing Score	6.8	1.5

The findings suggest that seminarians, as a group, generally uphold moderate alcohol consumption habits while maintaining high levels of psycho-spiritual wellbeing. These results align with expectations, as seminarians are often guided by religious principles that encourage moderation and self-discipline. However, the variation in scores suggests that some individuals might be consuming alcohol more frequently or in larger quantities, which could be linked to various personal, social, or environmental factors. The high psycho-spiritual wellbeing score reflects strong mental and emotional resilience, which could stem from their structured routines, faith-based practices, and sense of purpose. Still, the presence of variability in both alcohol consumption and wellbeing scores highlights the need for further exploration of individual differences.

It would be valuable to examine how external stressors such as academic pressure, personal doubts, or social influences impact both alcohol consumption and wellbeing levels among seminarians. These findings could inform pastoral care programs, ensuring that seminarians receive adequate support in maintaining both their spiritual and psychological health.

### Correlation analysis between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing. The results indicate a moderate to strong negative correlation ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the two variables. This suggests that as alcohol consumption increases, psycho-spiritual wellbeing tends to decrease. In other words, seminarians who consume more alcohol are likely to report lower levels of spiritual and psychological wellness. The negative correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, meaning that the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance. This finding aligns with existing literature that suggests excessive alcohol consumption can impair cognitive functions, emotional stability, and spiritual clarity. The strength of the correlation, while not perfect, suggests that alcohol consumption plays a considerable role in influencing psycho-spiritual wellbeing, though other factors may also contribute to this relationship (Johnson & Sheets *et al.*, 2008).

**Table 1: Correlation analysis between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing**

Variables	Alcohol Consumption	Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing
Alcohol Consumption	1	-0.62**
Psycho-Spiritual Wellbeing	-0.62**	1

Significance Level: \*\* $p < 0.01$  \ast \ast  $p < 0.01$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

The observed negative correlation between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing underscores the potential detrimental impact of alcohol on spiritual and psychological health. A moderate to strong correlation ( $r = -0.62$ ) suggests that alcohol consumption does not just have a minor effect, but rather a substantial association with reduced wellbeing. This aligns with religious and psychological perspectives that emphasize the detrimental effects of excessive alcohol intake on mental clarity, self-control, and spiritual fulfillment. While moderate alcohol consumption might not significantly impair wellbeing, higher levels of consumption appear to have notable consequences. This could be due to the way alcohol affects cognitive awareness, emotional regulation, and moral decision-making—all crucial aspects of spiritual life. Further, seminarians may experience guilt or inner conflict when alcohol consumption contradicts their faith-based values, further reducing their psycho-spiritual wellbeing. These findings indicate that pastoral care efforts should include awareness programs on responsible alcohol use, promoting both physical health and spiritual vitality.

### DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

#### Relation between Alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing of seminarians in selected formation houses

Analysis of seminarians' alcohol use and psycho-spiritual wellbeing revealed information on their lifestyle, mental health, and spiritual well-being. A low to moderate degree of alcohol use was indicated by the mean score of 2.5. Nonetheless, differences in drinking patterns were noted, with some people abstaining or consuming very little. A high degree of wellbeing was indicated by the mean psycho-spiritual wellbeing score of 6.8. Some seminarians suffered changes as a result of personal challenges, external pressures, or differing levels of dedication to their spiritual activities, even though many reported good psycho-spiritual wellness. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing. The results indicated a moderate to strong negative correlation ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the two variables. This suggested that as alcohol consumption increased, psycho-spiritual wellbeing tended to decrease. The observed negative correlation between alcohol consumption and psycho-spiritual wellbeing underscored the potential detrimental impact of alcohol on spiritual and psychological health. A moderate to strong correlation ( $r = -0.62$ ) suggested that alcohol consumption did not just have a minor effect but rather a substantial association with reduced wellbeing. This aligned with religious and psychological perspectives emphasizing the detrimental effects of excessive alcohol intake on mental clarity, self-control, and spiritual fulfillment. While moderate alcohol consumption might not have significantly impaired wellbeing, higher levels of consumption appeared to have notable consequences. This could have been due to the way alcohol affected cognitive awareness, emotional regulation, and moral decision-making all crucial aspects of spiritual life.

### Conclusion

According to the survey, alcohol usage was present in formation houses for a significant number of seminarians, indicating risky drinking habits. The study emphasised the necessity of organised interventions to encourage moderation in alcohol use and avoid dependence. Alcohol use was shown to have a moderate to strong correlation with psycho-spiritual health, with higher alcohol use being substantially linked to poorer levels of psychological and spiritual wellness.

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