

Hidden in plain sight

**Bartending and alcohol
consumption, an investigation**

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Executive summary

Purpose

This purpose of this research paper is to explore work related alcohol consumption from a cocktail bartenders perspective and establish if working in this role in the hospitality industry can be connected to excessive alcohol consumption. It was intended that a comparison be drawn, between a bartender working in both an independently owned bar and a chain environment, with this comparison hoping to identify if either of these environments could encourage or deter the consumption of alcohol and if so, establish the potential reasons for this.

Methodology

A literature review was conducted to uncover previous research in the subject area of the hospitality industry, bartenders and alcohol consumption. Primary research was carried out using four semi-structured interviews, with the interviews selected using a purposive sample aiming to capture bartenders from both a chain and independent environment. Three of the interviewees were bartenders with the fourth being a hospitality substance misuse professional based in London, this fourth interview was conducted with the intent of creating triangulation and gathering useful information appropriate to the research area.

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Findings

The bartender working in a chain environment exhibited a lower level of alcohol consumption than those working in independents, with one interviewee from an independent environment displaying levels of possible alcoholism. This confirmed that working in a chain environment could lower levels of work related alcohol consumption due to discovered levels of social

control in the form of company policy.

Research limitations

Due to time constraints an adequate level of saturation was not reached with this study and the geographical scope was also restrictive, with the Sheffield bartenders not actually working in a city centre, rather on the outskirts and both noting this as a deterrent to alcohol consumption.

Value

Although potentially limited in scope, this research is of value as it highlights the potential issues connecting alcohol use and the role of a bartender.

With the majority of employers dismissing rather than offering support to those discovered to be abusing alcohol, this issue may be largely misunderstood.

It is hoped by the researcher that employer attitudes may change over time, with bartending becoming considered a high risk occupation for the reasons mentioned in this research.

Keywords: Bartender, Hospitality, Alcohol, Access.

Context, aim and objectives

Context

The last decade has seen the publication of memoirs from a variety of employees in the hospitality industry that have provided insight into the food and beverage underbelly, allowing outsiders to glimpse into the world of the hospitality worker. One of the biographies was Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential*, which speaks of widespread substance misuse and suggests a hospitality employee subculture attracting certain personality types.

With official statistics holding UK bartenders and cooks as having the highest alcohol related mortality rates out of all occupations (ONS 2007), it seems these highlight the common theme of alcohol misuse and the hospitality sector. This connection could be due to irregular working hours (Ghodse 2005, Ark 2012), whilst others say food and beverage is a stressful environment in which alcohol and other drugs are readily available as an immediate remedy (Sinha 2001). In *Behind Bars*, Ty Wenzel suggests observing others having a good time can be contagious and encourage bartenders to do the same, she also states being a bartender is like being a legal drug dealer, where you are responsible for the sale and distribution of a legal narcotic but rarely receive any training in self-preservation. Cecchini (2004) states that as a bartender, it is extremely tempting to join the party and claims his job to be two-fold; to sell alcohol and somehow facilitate camaraderie between guests and states he has "seen many bartenders implode from becoming the star player in the game they were meant to be refereeing" Cecchini (2004, p142).

In an interview broadcast to a hospitality trade press magazine in 2009, two star Michelin chef Philip Howard spoke openly about his ongoing recovery from drug and alcohol addiction and discussed what he described as a perfectionist personality type, stating that many of the perfectionist character traits found in top flight chefs are often found in those individuals with addictions. He goes onto say that the hospitality industry has a reputation for being an industry that has direct access to alcohol and sometimes other illegal drugs and that those working in the catering environment sometimes have a higher propensity toward developing issues with substances for a variety of reasons (Kay 2009).

Howard argues there is still a high level of stigma towards the view toward alcoholism and addiction as an illness or mental disease and agrees with the sometimes controversial disease model of alcoholism, as endorsed by the American medical association who define alcoholism as "a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations" (Morse and Flavin 1992, p1013). In support of this definition, the American medical association claim Alcoholism can develop in a variety of circumstances and is very much dependant on the individual's genes, psychological state and a variety of other potential environmental factors.

Aim

The aim of this research was to establish if working in a cocktail bar environment, where there is direct access to alcohol can lead to excessive alcohol consumption and / or alcoholism.

Objectives

- Conduct interviews and obtain opinions regarding work related alcohol consumption by bartenders working in cocktail bar environments.
- Explore existing data that links alcohol abuse with the hospitality sector and interview a hospitality substance misuse professional.
- Study literature surrounding organisational behaviour in the workplace and consider how organisational culture could affect consumption patterns.
- To establish if social control has any impact on alcohol consumption in the workplace, drawing comparison between bartenders working in a chain environment and an independent.

This research paper aimed to create triangulation as outlined by Bryman (2008) by cross referencing primary information obtained through interviews with that of pre existing data that was openly available, as illustrated in the following literature review.

Literature review

In the year 2007 the hospitality industry came under the spotlight when UK trade press magazine Caterer conducted a survey amongst hospitality employees. The 'be aware' campaign set out the help bring attention to the potential dangers of substance misuse by hospitality employees and this survey uncovered some startling results. This survey demonstrated that 97% of the people interviewed believed alcohol and drug misuse to be a problem in the industry and more than half of those interviewed had witnessed excessive alcohol consumption at work, with 40% of participants having witnessed illegal drug use in the workplace. Only 20% of managers had received any training at all in identifying and managing excessive work related substance issues, with 70% of managers interviewed stating that those discovered to be abusing alcohol and illegal drugs whilst at work would simply be dismissed for gross misconduct, with no offer of any support at all for the individual (Caterer 2007).

In August of the same year, BBC news reported that the office for national statistics ONS (2007) had published a report that claimed males working as bar staff in the United Kingdom were more at risk of dying from alcohol related illness than any other occupation (BBC 2007). ONS (2007) figures show that there were a total of 8,664 alcohol related deaths in the UK and the question could be asked, exactly what qualifies as an alcohol related death?

Further investigation established the Office for National Statistics refers to the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) as outlined below by the World Health Organisation:

International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10)

F10 Mental and behavioral disorders due to use of alcohol

G31.2 Degeneration of nervous system due to alcohol

G62.1 Alcoholic polyneuropathy

I42.6 Alcoholic cardiomyopathy

K29.2 Alcoholic gastritis

K70 Alcoholic liver disease

K73 Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified

K74 Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver

(Excluding K74.3–K74.5 – Biliary cirrhosis)

K86.0 Alcohol induced chronic pancreatitis

X45 Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

X65 Intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

Figure 1: ONS (2007)

Figure 2: WHO (2011)

Behavioural disorders whilst under the influence of alcohol directly leading to death should be included in this category, but sceptics claim thousands of deaths that should be present in these numbers are not (Eurocare 2012).

It is only if alcohol is the underlying cause of death then the mortality is added to these statistics under code F10, not if alcohol is mentioned as a complicating factor (WHO 2012). Suicides, death as a result of alcohol related road traffic accidents, careless acts and even murder or manslaughter committed whilst under the influence of alcohol are not included in the Tenth Revision (ICD-10) classification and therefore the UK statistics, there is suggestion that this skews the figures substantially, as potentially large amounts of mortalities directly attributable to the use of alcohol may not be included in the overall UK figures if alcohol is not directly attributable to the cause of death (Eurocare 2012).

So, if hospitality employees are some of those with the highest risk to health, what does this tell us about consumption levels within the industry and the potential reasons for this? People1st (2011) state that the hospitality sector provides 7% off all UK jobs, with those working in bars, pubs and nightclubs amounting to 18% of the overall sector figure, amounting to just under 0.4% of total UK employment. According to official statistics published by the Health and Safety Executive, alcohol is said to cause between 3 and 5% of all work related absences. This amounts to between 8 and 14 million lost working days in the each year attributed to alcohol (HSE 2009) and based on the figures provided by People1st (2011), the bars, pub and nightclub industry may lose between 320,000 - 480,000 days per year due to alcohol related

sickness. Combined with loss of working days, alcohol costs the UK economy in lost productivity. Ames and Bennet (2011) state this is caused by employees being at work whilst under the influence of alcohol or hungover from the night before, a concept referred to by the Ark foundation as presenteeism that is best described as a situation when employees are at work, but incapable of providing desired levels of productivity due to the effects, or after effects of alcohol consumption (Ark 2011).

The guide for employers on alcohol at work, published by the Health and Safety Executive (2009) suggests the following consumption levels to be safe:

- No more than three or four units of alcohol per day for men
- No more than two to three units per day for women

The suggested unit intake listed above is deemed safe and will cause no significant risk to health, anything beyond that increases risk and can be deemed excessive (Directgovuk 2012).

Source: Drinkaware (2012)

Figure 3: Source: Drinkaware (2012)

Zhu et al (2011) tested various hypothesis surrounding potential theories of what factors could be tied to excessive alcohol consumption in the hospitality sector with the idea that mindful self-selection into the hospitality industry for those with existing problematic consumption (high levels of use), or the potential for future substance abuse being presented and although this idea is under researched, Corsun and Young (1998) state the hospitality industry has a reputation as having a connection with high substance use and it is suggested that individuals whose substance abuse is higher may self select into the industry, that is seek out employment in industries where there may be high levels of alcohol or drug use. This theory supported by Judge and Cable (1997) who claim it is desirable for people to work in environments where they can express personal values and beliefs, so in the context of this research if an individual is already engaging in high levels of alcohol use, they may seek employment in environments where others are doing the same. It is also suggested if an individual is working as a bartender, then they may engage in higher levels of alcohol use due to direct access to alcohol, as those who have direct access to alcohol may exhibit greater use than those who do not, this argument is based on the availability theory – whereby greater availability could lead to greater consumption (Trinkoff 1999). The receipt of tips could also be an influence in daily consumption as having non budgeted expendable income is said to increase to likelihood for the purchasing of products for immediate enjoyment, in the bartender context this could be after work drinks or other illicit substances (Wertenbroch, Soman and Nunes 2002).

Another consideration in work related alcohol consumption is work related stress, as it is argued stress is common and could be driving factor in work related alcohol consumption (HSE 1995). Stress can occur when people are placed under pressure or demand from which they are unable to cope and according to Hogan et al (2003), an individual could also engage in the consumption of alcohol to alleviate emotional pain experienced in a work environment. Research around the area of stress relief and alcohol use has been ambiguous, with some demonstrating of positive effects on well-being, some research has demonstrated no direct effect, whilst other research demonstrated adverse effects with alcohol consumption actually increasing stress and tension (Lovallo 2005).

In terms of alcohol consumption in the workplace, drinking culture in the hospitality industry may vary from one place of employment to the next, with an employers culture and social norms effecting employee consumption (Zhu et al 2011, Corsun and Young 1998). Social norms and organisational culture are closely connected, with organisational culture including taken for granted assumptions and behaviours that can make up unwritten rules about how employees should act, these can manifest in agreed upon behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that can give employees a shared understanding of the workplace and their role in it (Cooke and Rousseau 1988, Johnson et al 2011). This could relate to what is seen to be acceptable behaviour in terms of alcohol consumption in the workplace; how much and how often; if any at all.

Kjaerhim and Mykletun (1995) demonstrated that liberal alcohol policies in hospitality establishments increased the likelihood of problematic employee drinking, this was supported by Frone (2003), who claims strong social control lowered substance misuse in a work related context. Social control can influence potential consumption and can be made up of mechanisms that can include written rules regarding substance use, sometimes including a set drug and alcohol policy combined with disciplinary and treatment procedures if problems were to arise in the workplace due to excessive consumption (Amez and Bennet 2011). A lack of social control or a presence of liberal alcohol policies could lead to excessive consumption, which could in turn progress into problematic consumption if repeated over a period of time, but often be dependant on the individual on their circumstances (Mulder 2002).

According to Ghodse (2005), there are certain personality characteristics may be more predisposed to excessive alcohol consumption and potential substance misuse. These can include individuals who have a history of anti social behaviour, lack of self-discipline, self-control and low self-worth although Mulder (2002) reported anti social behaviour to be the only positively connectable personality trait and even this connection could be somewhat premature. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (2012) claim that individuals with a history of antisocial behaviour can seek employment in unskilled sectors where there are low barriers to entry for employment and it could be argued these low barriers for employment are relevant to the role of a bartender. People1st (2011) state although the UK hospitality sector supports many skilled and managerial roles, the role of bartending is often referred to

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as unskilled and this could suggest that more individuals with a history of antisocial behaviour could be employed in unskilled roles such as a bartending and be predisposed to alcoholism. The managing of excessive alcohol consumption in the workplace could call for tact and discretion and in reference to the caterer research, it was noted that 68% of employers would dismiss employees found to be misusing alcohol. However, HSE (2009) state that when dealing with an employee who may have an alcohol problem, this person has the same rights to support and confidentiality as if they had any other medical or physiological condition.

Drug and alcohol policies can help provide guidelines for the management of such issues with these policies outlined by Ghodse (2005), who not only states having a strong drug and alcohol policy present can benefit any business, but also reduce financial loss due to absenteeism, loss of productivity, theft and staff turnover. HSE (2009) state work related alcohol problems have the potential to affect the productivity of a business and can arise from employees drinking during work hours, whilst on breaks or before coming to work and also if employees are engaging in regular heavy drinking outside of the workplace.

The document leads onto state that severe disciplinary action should be the last resort, as a court may find the dismissal unfair if there has been no attempt of helping an employee whose work problems are stemming from excessive alcohol consumption. Also, the cost of replacing and training someone new can often out weigh the cost of allowing someone the time off to obtain expert help (Lashley 2001).

The concept of alcoholic addiction is complex and surrounded by many theoretical models, although one phenomenon that may be easier to agree upon is that of habit. The existence of habit seems uncontroversial and according to West (2006) habits are behavioural patterns that become routine through repetition so that they become partly or full automatic, habit can occur without conscious intent. The assumption could be made that if a habit is formed over time with repeated high levels of consumption, then an 'at risk' personality type, similar to that previously mentioned in this paper could form an addiction as a result of habit (Ghodse 2005), what could separate habit from addiction is the notion that once the user desires to reduce their consumption levels or practise abstinence, they are for one reason or another unable to manage or moderate their consumption (National Institute of Drug Abuse 2010). This may be a result of neurochemical changes in the brain that can happen with repeated use of any mood or mind altering substance, with altered behavioural patterns and thought processes occurring as a consequence of repeated use (Carlucci, Ganley and Hanson 2009) .

Although American in origin, the following manual is referred to by the WHO Tenth Revision (ICD-10) mortality chart mentioned earlier in this paper and is therefore deemed both relevant and credible for this research.

The American Psychiatric Association, The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-T)R* requires three of the following traits to be present for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence:

1. Increased tolerance, meaning that a person becomes accustomed to consuming alcohol and must increase the amount in order to obtain the desired effect.
2. Withdrawal, meaning that a person experiences unpleasant physical and psychological symptoms when he or she does not drink alcohol.
3. The tendency to drink more alcohol than one intends; being unable to avoid drinking or stop drinking once started.
4. Devoting large blocks of time to acquiring and consuming alcohol.
5. Unsuccessful attempts to reduce or stop alcohol use.
6. Choosing to use alcohol at the expense of other important tasks or activities such as work or family obligations.
7. Drinking despite evidence of negative effects on one's physical and/or mental health.

Figure 4: Source: Psychiatryonline (2012)

If a user of alcohol discovers their work related alcohol use becomes problematic, then it may be advisable for the individual to seek support and the Ark foundation state that available employer resources are usually dependant on the host organisation, varying from one company to the next. The Ark foundation was formed in the UK in 2000 and helps bring awareness to the potential hazards of substance misuse in the hospitality sector, there is also an arm of the foundation that helps write drug and alcohol policy for employers with this information being delivered to students, employees and employers through seminars and business consultancy. The Ark state around 10% of the work force will experience substance addiction and highlight that if you are an employer of people, then you could benefit from having an adequate drug and alcohol policy in place for the correct management of these issues (Ark 2011).

In 2004, three star Michelin chef Heston Blumenthal and TV personality and restaurant entrepreneur Jamie Oliver became honorary vice-chairmen of the Ark and 2011 saw Heston Blumenthal become the principle patron of the Ark, claiming the work the Ark did with this industry “Imperative” Caterer (2011) and Jamie Oliver stating previously:

“I was proud to be asked to become Honorary Vice Chairman of The Ark, as I have seen first hand the benefits and effects it has on my students. Although never a part of my life, I have experienced chefs whose careers have faltered and failed simply because the problem was not addressed. The Ark addresses the issue. The educational seminar on drugs and alcohol was absolutely brilliant, funny, informative and tragically sad in some places” (Ark 2012).

The Ark foundation was established by Michael Quinn MBE, an acclaimed and respected Chef whom whilst at the top of his career worked as Chef de Cuisine at The Ritz Hotel in London. Due to the pressures of work, stress and unsociable hours, Mr Quinn turned to alcohol and gradually lost everything. Now a recovering alcoholic, Mr Quinn wanted to give something back to the industry that had provided him with a living for so many years and the Ark foundation was formed (Ark 2012). With research showing that direct access to alcohol having the potential to effect consumption and there may be a strong connection between the hospitality sector and alcohol misuse, the Ark state that there is a gradual shift toward hospitality employers beginning to understand the importance of having mechanisms in place to help, rather than dismiss both employees and managers who may find themselves struggling with alcohol related issues.

Method of investigation

Outline

This research was conducted with the purpose of establishing the opinions and habits surrounding work related alcohol consumption in the hospitality industry; the data was obtained from a cocktail bartenders perspective.

Key drivers in the selection of this profession in particular included the fact that cocktail bartenders have direct access to alcohol and sometimes taste or 'straw' cocktails prior serving them.

From the various potential areas of interest in this area, some of the key points of investigation were:

- Organisational culture and how this may effect alcohol consumption.
- Social control and to what extent this may act as a deterrent to alcohol consumption in the workplace.
- Perceptions of the connection between the hospitality industry and alcohol consumption.
- To determine if work related stress and irregular hours were driving factors in personal work related consumption.

In order to do this, purposeful sampling was used in the research, with the individuals selected based on age and current working environment.

Due to pre existing research conducted by Zhu et al (2011), potential age limitations in this previous study were overcome by seeking out bartenders

over the age of 25, this was based on the literature stating that habits can be formed over long periods of time (West 2006) and that sometimes 'time served' in the hospitality industry could also influence consumption levels (Zhu et al 2011).

It was intended that a comparison be drawn between two bartenders working in separate environments, with one hailing from a chain environment and the other an independent. Although finding a definition seemed somewhat ambiguous, Technomic (2012) define a service industry chain to be an operator with ten or more outlets all operating under the same name, regardless if some of those businesses are franchises, this definition seemed adequate and in this research, anything less than this chain definition will be classified as independent.

Approach

Due to the nature of the issues to be addressed in this paper, a covert ethnographical approach could have proven beneficial due to the potential 'insiders view' that can be achieved with such studies (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, Lugosi 2006). However, due to time constraints in this undergraduate research project combined with potential informed consent ethical issues with covert observation, an ethnographical approach seemed unrealistic at this stage and a semi structure interview approach was decided upon.

The research pool consisted of three cocktail bartenders and one substance misuse professional working for the Ark foundation. It was decided that semi structured interviews would be developed for the collection of the data, with the relevant work experience of the researcher in this field potentially allowing to secure and then build rapport with the interviewees, this opportunity for building rapport is stated as being one of the benefits of the implementation of a semi structured interview approach (Hart 2000).

The researcher used personal industry contacts to gain introductions to the two of the bartenders, with the third being someone connected to the researcher in a professional context, due to these two individuals having competed against each other in a cocktail competition. This third participant was selected due to his working location as the participant hails from London and for the purpose of the research it was desirable to gain insight from someone working in another city, the researcher held no pre existing lifestyle knowledge of any of the participants.

The industry misuse professional was approached as a result of Internet research and the interview secured further to contact initiated by the researcher with this connection aiming to create triangulation, defined by Bryman (2008, p700) to be "The use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross checked".

The researchers personal experience in the hospitality industry was of benefit, allowing him to see through the participants eyes with this connection positively influencing the research, Bryman (2008) claims this connection to be invaluable in the researcher being able to connect with the research subject area and the participants involved. To the contrary, Creswell (2012) warns that sometimes this connection this can lead to over involvement on behalf of the researcher, as the researcher can share their own experience with the area being studied, this can be termed 'going native' and there was an awareness of this theory carried it into the interviews. It was sought that the researcher avoid bias wherever possible and attempted not to ask leading questions, double barrelled questions and questions that included negatives with Bryman (2008) stating these types of questions all have potential to negatively influence qualitative research.

Some of the criticisms of the qualitative approach included that the research could have problems with generalisation due to the results potential being location specific and there was an attempt to overcome this generalisation by broadening the geographical scope of the participant pool.

A selection of interviews were transcribed and coded, with these methods approved by Creswell (2012) and Bryman (2008) in order to process the findings and establish connections between the interviews and the literature.

Ethics

All conducted research complied with the Sheffield Hallam University's ethical / health and safety guidelines and appropriate risk assessments were carried out and signed off by the assigned project supervisor.

Participants were made aware their anonymity would remain intact, as pseudonyms would be used in the processing of the information. No participants names were stored on hard drives, identifier codes were stored in a separate area and participants names were withheld on transcripts, using the identifier codes as a substitute.

All participants interviewed were initially presented with an outlining introductory letter prior to the interview taking place, this stated the intention and objectives of the research and the participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. This ensured informed consent was provided for the research and these conditions were re stated prior to the interviews commencing, supported by signed consent forms, with these signed by all involved participants. The three bartenders were willing for pseudonyms to be used in the findings of the research, with Ken Crosland of the Ark foundation in London stating he was accepting of his real name to be published combined with any quotes obtained from the conducted interview.

Findings

From the three bartenders interviewed two were from the city of Sheffield and one from London.

Name

(Pseudonym)

Age Years

experience

Job title City

Andy

P - 1

38 20 years General

Manager

Sheffield

James

P - 2

29 11 years Master

Bartender

Sheffield

Rick

P - 3

42 24 years Bar owner London

Average participant age 36.3 years old

Average years in industry 18.3 years

Of those interviewed, all participants were over the age of 25 and all had been involved in and witnessed excessive work related alcohol consumption, with two out of three admitting to witnessing illegal drug use in the workplace, this

coincided with the research conducted by Caterer (2007).

Rick and Andy considered alcohol consumption to be problematic in the industry with James stating although he had witnessed excessive consumption in the past, there is no drinking allowed in his current role, where he has worked for a major American themed diner and cocktail bar for seven years, James explains drinking is simply not allowed on the job, when asked if he consumed alcohol at work he replied:

“No, no we’re not allowed, if I was stood on the bar and my GM saw me drink a shot, say I had a Jaeger on the bar, I’d get a disciplinary from the company”

– James, 29, Sheffield

This form of social control seems apparent and the organisational culture of his current workplace doesn't allow drinking, therefore James seems to comply and follows the rules, this is in line with Ames and Bennet (2011) who discuss strong social control to involve procedures and disciplinaries with Frone (2003) stating that strong social control can lower alcohol consumption. In the same context James spoke of being at work in Greece and what his response would be if a guest offered to buy him a drink:

"Well in Greece it was like.. yes I'll have a drink, and I'll have a sambuca too"
– James, 29, Sheffield

He went onto say as a young man he had the chance to work in Greece for four summer seasons where drinking at work was almost seen as part of his job, speaking of being a bartender in this environment he said:

"I mean you see some people come and just do the one season or two and burn out from too much partying" – James, 29, Sheffield

These two examples of past positions in James's working life illustrate that social norms can influence consumption with taken for granted assumptions effecting the behaviours of employees in the workplace as indicated by Cooke and Rousseau (1988); Johnson et al (2011).

All participants spoke of experiences of drinking on the job either past of present, with Rick and Andy both explicitly speaking of an alcohol and drug culture in roles that they had worked in.

Rick spoke of an alcohol and drug habit that has seen him spend a period of time in a rehab aged 34 and stated that he is planning an exit strategy from the industry, this due to constantly being surrounded by alcohol and other drugs and people using them on a regular basis.

“I mean some of the places I’ve worked at over the years, the bosses used to come in and line up shots and give the bartenders coke (cocaine), it was normal, and in our industry you just think that is how everyone operates, I’ve always worked for guys like that and it was one of the things that drew me deeper into the industry, it wasn’t until I got into my 30’s that I realised I had a serious problem, I don’t think you can ever get away from it in this job, it’s everywhere” – Rick, 42, London

This was supported by Ken Crosland from the Ark, who stated he had encountered people who have had issues in the past, but continue working in the industry, sometimes with great difficulty.

This statement characterises the availability theory as outlined by Trinkoff (1999) and was supported by Andy, who said his consumption was ‘habitual’ but when he had previously taken a career break for 6 months had experienced a substantial reduction in his own personal alcohol consumption levels. All three complained of irregular working hours, finishing late at night and using alcohol to wind down after a busy shift.

Both James and Andy spoke of the anti social working hours and not being able to go straight to sleep when getting in from a busy night. This highlighted the unsociable hours of the bartending industry with the participants stating they consumed alcohol so they could get to sleep earlier rather than later, so they could get up at a reasonable hour the following day and live a semi normal life.

This issue of unsociable hours was also highlighted by Ken Crosland, who said,

“We talk about why the industry is high risk, you know the long anti social hours, the work pressures and also the fact that alcohol is everywhere”. Ken Crosland, the Ark foundation, London

Rick and Andy talked of drinking whilst at work to create an atmosphere with Andy expressing that he felt it necessary to get on the same level as the guests and somehow generate an atmosphere in the establishment he manages, he stated:

“I mean we’re getting paid to do what the customers are paying to do, if the customers see us having a good time behind the bar, then it makes them have a better night out” Andy, 38, Sheffield

Both Andy and Rick work in environments where drinking is allowed and both tend to drink most nights they work, with Rick stating that he’s constantly trying to moderate his intake. Andy and Rick hail from environments where there are liberal alcohol policies and are constantly trying to manage their respective intakes, the being in line with Kjaerhim and Mykletun (1995) who stated liberal policies may lead to excessive consumption.

“I try not to drink till 11pm when I’m down at the bar, sometimes I’m not able to because I feel under pressure to please my guests and socialise with them, in fact I know that for the sake my own health, I want to stop drinking all together” Rick, 42, London

Ken Crosland from the Ark said the Ark tries to reach students, employees and employers to help bring awareness to these issues. A recovering alcoholic himself, Ken works the Ark running seminars and writes policies for

companies and claimed some companies could find themselves in trouble without a good policy and stated:

“I guess most companies will say we’ve got something in the handbook, but people don’t see the staff handbook, they do the week they join, and then it disappears”

“What tends to be in the handbook is a couple of lines that state if you break these, we will fire you” – Ken Crosland, Ark foundation, London

This statement is aligned with the caterer (2007) study that stated almost 70% of managers would simply fire staff if they were discovered to be abusing alcohol whilst at work, but there is literature suggesting this problem should be approached in a more sensitive manner and having an effective alcohol policy in place could help enforce social control and act as a safeguard for those that find themselves in trouble with alcohol misuse.

Mr Crosland spoke of an employer culture that is gradually becoming more accepting of the fact that the industry is high risk and are beginning to approach these issues in a more proactive manner. Mr Crosland points out that is not just the lower level staff who are at risk, but senior managers who are also working long hours and can experience high amounts of pressure. He spoke of what changes in the workplace that might need to happen if an employee does admit to having an alcohol problem:

“The depth of understanding within the organisation about the level of support that may be needed enable that person to recover may be lacking, because having a conversation with me once a week over the phone, if they are still being asked to do 5 split shifts per week and there is no time for them to get to an AA meeting or go and see a counsellor, then that’s a problem because there may need to be adjustments made on the part of the employer to help

*manage this persons workload or reduce it so they can get help” - Ken
Crosland, Ark foundation, London*

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Summary, conclusions and recommendations

In this section the findings of this research will be summarised by an overview of each of the participants involved, followed by the research projects original objectives; with consideration to if these were achieved and to what extent.

Participant 1 - Andy

Andy claimed that he had not always worked in an independent environment and in the past whilst working in more of a chain environment had not conformed to the social control of the company, regularly drinking covertly with his colleagues and covering his tracks with a myriad of methods.

He spoke of how he trusts his bartenders working under him in his current role to self regulate their intake, and seemed uncertain about current laws regarding the health and safety implications of drinking on the job.

He also spoke of how driving to work and parking issues may have an influence over his consumption and how when living in another city, his lifestyle was very different with regards to his use of alcohol. When asked about what he may consume in any one given shift, Andy stated he would consume somewhere in the region of 8 – 10 units, this being well above the safe recommended amounts mentioned in this paper.

Participant 2 - James

James demonstrated personal discipline surrounding deviant consumption stemming from a strong socially controlled work environment, where it could be argued his employers already provided the atmosphere for the guests so he had no need to.

James also spoke of family commitments, openly stating how it would be extremely undesirable to either lose his job due to breaking the rules, or / and his license due to breaking the law by drinking and driving. He claimed it was easy for him to go from one working environment where he was able to drink at work over to a new position where he wasn't and motivated by his career, James conformed to the social norms and control of his new employer.

Although regularly consuming alcohol outside of the work context to wind down after a night at work, James did not consider his consumption levels excessive, although did speak of a bartender he worked with in the past who he alleged had died from excessive alcohol consumption.

Participant 3 - Rick

Rick spoke of personal trauma due to alcohol misuse and potential alcoholism and indicated grave concerns about his own ability to moderate personal consumption and expressed openly his desire to leave the industry, but how current financial investment in the business he runs are preventing this. Rick displayed excessive levels of alcohol use and was a user of other drugs, something he stated he would like to stop, along with alcohol consumption in its totality.

Rick talked of how his tolerance had increased gradually and how he had unsuccessfully tried to moderate his consumption, this participant displayed levels of alcoholic addiction, as outlined previously in *figure 4*.

Rick had always been employed in an independent environment and had worked for 8 years as the bar manager at a famous London table dancing establishment, an environment where there was a prominent culture of drinking and drug taking amongst employees.

Objectives revisited

1. To conduct interviews and obtain opinions regarding work related alcohol consumption by bartenders working in cocktail bar environments:

All participants had witnessed and engaged in excessive work related alcohol consumption and all used alcohol to alleviate work related stress.

When asked to summarise the connection between the hospitality industry and alcohol consumption in one word they stated:

- P1 - Andy: Habitual
- P2 - James: Environmental
- P3 - Rick: Automatic

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2. To explore existing data that links alcohol abuse with the hospitality sector and interview a hospitality substance misuse professional:

An array of literature surrounding these connections was uncovered in the research as noted in the literature review, these were supported by facts and opinions stated by Ken Crosland of the Ark foundation.

3. To study literature surrounding organisational behaviour in the workplace

and how organisational culture could affect consumption patterns:

A definite connection has been established in this research on how taken for granted assumptions can affect work related consumption. This study has demonstrated that if bartenders can drink on the job, they probably will, and they will tend to follow suit with those around them even if these rules are unwritten and unspoken.

4. To consider if social control has any impact on alcohol consumption in the workplace, drawing comparison between bartenders working in a chain environment and an independent.

It can be concluded that social control had a definite impact on work related consumption on James in the context of this study, with this bartender working

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in a chain environment consuming less alcohol than those working in independently owned bartending environments.

Andy stated however that when he worked in a similar environment, he had covertly not followed the rules of his employer regarding alcohol consumption; therefore the theory of social control based on this research is inconclusive.

Limitations

Although providing insight into lives of those working in the subject area, time restraints prevented a level of saturation being reached in the research and therefore the data sample was somewhat limited. It is also noted that the geographical elements of the research were restrictive, with both Sheffield bartenders (Andy and James) regularly driving to work and both noting this as a deterrent in the consumption of alcohol. Both the Sheffield bartenders worked in establishments slightly away from Sheffield city centre, with this also having the potential to effect consumption due to a lack of social

interaction with other bartenders from other establishments for after work drinks.

The London interviewee (Rick) lived in the city centre and didn't drive to work, he also lived in a city with a higher general population and worked in an area densely populated with other bars and restaurants, with this potentially creating a different after work drinking culture than that experienced by the Sheffield interviewees.

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Further research

Although having uncovered vital information surrounding the lifestyle habits of cocktail bartenders, further research is desirable in this project to gain further insight into the research area. More qualitative research could be conducted with bartenders working in both chain and independent environments and could allow for a richer pool of information to be used in the findings, increasing overall validity and this data could be supported by quantitative research using structured questionnaires; with these being distributed and collected via electronic channels, potentially cutting down time requirements for building a wealth of research data.

More radically, this research could also benefit from an ethnological approach, produced by the infiltration of a hospitality environment in both a chain and independent environment. Even though potentially somewhat unethical, this approach could allow the researcher to provide valid and trustworthy information (Lugosi 2006) and also substantiate information uncovered from various other methods of investigation, this allowing for a deeper understanding of alcohol use in the hospitality sector to be developed.

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Appendix

Introductory letter

Shane Murphy

Level 6

Hospitality business management & culinary arts

Sheffield Hallam University

A9022992@my.shu.ac.uk / 07772 816168

Dear fellow bartender,

My name is Shane Murphy and I am a mature student studying hospitality business management at Sheffield Hallam University, I am a hospitality employee with 14 years of experience bartending at varying positions in an array of environments, both here in the UK and also overseas.

I am currently seeking participants to give their views and opinions on work related alcohol consumption in the hospitality industry, my intention in this research is to gather information on how cocktail bartending can influence alcohol consumption.

I aim to achieve this by conducting interviews and hope for these to be more of a free flowing conversation around the subject area.

I envisage these interviews will last no more than one hour and can assure you the information provided in the interview will be kept private and in confidence. I intend on recording the interview for my use only, this is for me to reflect and extract information from and is normal practise, you will have access to this information and can withdraw from the research at any time.

All interviewee's identities will remain anonymous, as I will use pseudonyms for all participants of this research.

I am seeking to gain insight from people who have bartended for a minimum

of five years, but this could be either part time or full time and will be inclusive of employees working at all levels, including those who have moved on to work in management.

I hope you can participate in this research, your views and opinions are very important to this subject area and I look forward to hearing from you in due course. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me immediately on the information provided,

Yours sincerely,

Shane Murphy

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Confirmation letter

Shane Murphy

Level 6

Hospitality business management & culinary arts

Sheffield Hallam University

A9022992@my.shu.ac.uk / 07772 816168

Dear participant,

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my research, I value you taking the time to give your views and opinions on the subject of work related alcohol consumption in the hospitality industry.

My intention in this research is to gather information around alcohol use in the hospitality sector and I will achieve this by conducting interviews, I anticipate these interviews to last no more than one hour.

I can assure you the information provided in the interview will be kept private and in confidence. I intend on recording the interview for my use only, this is for me to reflect and extract information from. Only I will have access to this

information and you will be asked to sign a consent form, this being normal practise.

You have the right to withhold information and can withdraw from the interview at any time if you wish.

All interviewee's identities will remain anonymous, as I will use pseudonyms for all participants of this research.

If requested I may send you a transcript of the interview, for you to confirm it's accuracy and finally I am willing to inform you of when the final piece of work is complete and will send you a copy on your request.

With your agreement the interview will be carried out in a private room or office and I may need your help in arranging this. This should allow for the interview to take place in quiet surroundings, so that the maximum flow of conversation can be achieved.

Thank you again in advance for being willing to participate in this research, should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me on the above information,

Best wishes

Shane Murphy

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Interview schedule

Interview schedule – Interviewee number

Section A – Introduction

Check receipt of letter, any questions regarding this?

Any concerns regarding the interview

Reminder of confidentiality / reassurance:

I can **confirm your anonymity will be maintained** as a result of any written

work resulting as a part of this interview, pseudonyms will be used for all those who participate in this research.

Only I will have access to this data, it will be kept secure and you can withdraw your willingness to participate in this research at any time.

I may wish to use quotations from this interview in my research study project and maybe future academic work and may need to attach your job title, I trust this is acceptable for you?

I will make you aware once the research is completed

Reminder of use of digital recorder / gain permission

Sign consent form

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Section B - Background

How long have you worked in the hospitality industry?

What was your first job title and what were your reasons for taking up this employment?

What is your current job title?

Does this role involve the tasting of alcoholic products?

What is the context of this tasting process / what are some of the reasons for this?

Could you please give me your views and opinions on work related alcohol consumption in the hospitality sector?

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Finally is there anything you would like to add about the subject of work related alcohol consumption on the hospitality sector?

Thank you for participating in this research,

If you had to summarise the connection between work related alcohol consumption and the hospitality industry in one word what would it be?

May I ask you to confirm your

Age:

Sex:

Thank you once again

Close

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Consent form

Consent Form

Alcohol use in the hospitality sector

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES

NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? YES NO

At any time? YES NO

Without giving a reason for your withdrawal? YES NO

Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed.

Do you give permission for members of the research team to have access to your anonymised responses? YES NO

Do you agree to take part in this study? YES NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:..... **Date:**.....

Name (block letters):.....

Signature of investigator:..... **Date:**.....

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

(Name, address, contact number of investigator.)