Relationship Between Alcohol Use Disorder and Divorce Among Spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

Authors: [1]Venant Mwazumbi Mwashuma, [2]Lucy Njiru, [1]Phyllis Muraya

[1]*Department of Counseling Psychology, Institute of Youth Studies Tangaza University, Nairobi, Kenya, and [2]Department of Public Health, School of Health Sciences, AMREF International University, Nairobi, Kenya*

Corresponding author: Mwashuma M. Venant. **Email:** venantmwazumbi74@gmail.com

Chief Editor
Web:
www.ijsdc.org
Email:
info@ijsdc.org

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Abstract: Alcohol abuse has significant social and mental health consequences. While many studies have examined alcohol abuse in general, few researchers have explored the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce. This study investigated the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses in the Taveta Sub-County, Kenya. The research employed a cross-sectional study design, with a sample size of 382 respondents from Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. A stratified sampling method was used to select participants, determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, ensuring a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. Data were collected through structured questionnaires adopted from the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) and the Couples Perceived Causes and Remedies of Divorce Questionnaire (CPCRDQ). Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 25, employing descriptive statistics to summarize levels of alcohol use disorder and Pearson correlation to assess the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce. The findings revealed higher levels of alcohol use disorder among spouses, with 28% of participants reporting moderate risk abuse of alcohol while 50.3% reported high-risk abuse of alcohol. The findings of this study show that there is a significant relationship (p=0.013) between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses. The study established a significant relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses in Taveta Sub-County. The high levels of alcohol abuse among the participants were closely linked to higher divorce rates, indicating that alcohol use disorder is a critical factor contributing to marital instability in this region. The study's limitations were a cross-sectional design, a regional focus, and reliance on self-reported data, which limited generalizability and causality. Implementation of community education programs focusing on the adverse effects of alcohol abuse civil society organizations would community education programs focusing on the adverse effects of alcohol abuse. Offering marital therapy services to affected individuals also reduces the prevalence of alcohol use disorder and divorce in the community.

Keywords: Keywords: Alcohol Use Disorder, Divorce, Marital Instability, Public Health Intervention

1.1 Background of the study

Alcohol use disorder is a major social problem across the globe, and it has cut across all aspects of life, thus affecting the person addicted to alcohol and the whole family; indeed, wives are greatly affected.

According to the WHO, approximately 3 million deaths annually are linked to alcohol consumption, with 237 million men and 46 million women affected by alcohol use disorder worldwide (28). Recent research highlights that alcohol use disorder (AUD) has been a major contributor to divorce, child neglect, child abuse, and domestic violence (3). A study by Kendler et al. found that divorce was strongly associated with the onset of AUD, with hazard ratios of 5.98 for men and 7.29 for women (30). In this study, individuals with a family history of AUD reported high cases of divorce and remarriages. Additionally, a current report on the state of the world and the health of alcohol declared that the drinking of alcohol in one form or another has boarded cultures, societies, and religious domains of global societies (28). This results from pleasure associated with a particular object being considered. Smith argues that alcohol use disorder is one of the most destructive disorders that usually affect persons, both families and societies (23). They include domestic breakups, violence, and crimes, among other related issues such as divorce (3). Kendler's findings in 2016 support this argument where marriages with low risk of AUD were less likely to result in divorce, indicating that AUD negatively impacts the quality of the marital relationship (33).

Furthermore, divorce, perceived as a modern issue, has deep historical roots, evolving alongside changing social attitudes and legal frameworks since the 1600s. Despite global trends towards quicker divorce processes, complexities persist, especially concerning child custody (Clarke et al., 2006). Scholars like Heth (2016) question Jesus' teachings on divorce, arguing that mutual consent and consummation should dissolve a marriage, albeit with some skepticism. Neal (2018) contrasts Augustinian and Protestant views, emphasizing marriage's sacramental nature. L Mo's (2017) research on Chinese divorce rates shows a consistent increase, attributed to shifting values favoring individualism over traditional beliefs. However, regional variations exist, highlighting the complex interplay of cultural and societal factors. Despite differing perspectives, divorce remains a multifaceted issue influenced by historical, cultural, and religious contexts. Traditionally, men have been perceived to be the initiators of divorce in most societies. Paradoxically, a study by Widiantari and Utari (2018) on Indonesian women revealed a changing trend. It was found that there were 70 percent of women-initiated divorce, though such cases of divorce were considered taboos.

A study conducted by Salvatore (2017) investigated the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among the Swedish and found that divorce and alcohol use disorder are strongly related. Key findings also revealed that alcohol use disorder was higher in males than in females. However, the findings by Rokach et al. (2004) contradicted this view. They found that choosing divorce is a shared process rather than an individual one. The partners above 45 years old made decisions on divorce based on the following factors: gender, the existence of a different relationship, the desire to change the marriage, outside support, economic factors, health, abuse (either verbal or physical), "missing partners," self-esteem and status in the partnership, and dominance. A similar study revealed that women preferred to break up with alcohol-dependent men so as to shield themselves from alcohol-related challenges (Smith et al., 2012). Besides that, issues of marital satisfaction were found to be strongly correlated to divorce. A hospital-based cross-sectional study at Jawahar Lal Nehru, India, by Rohilla (2020) on sexual dysfunction in alcohol-dependent men indicated that alcohol-dependent men were more likely to have sexual dysfunction and lower levels of marital satisfaction with their spouses. In a study conducted by Kumar and Prakash (2020), the findings showed that the general well-being and marital quality among spouses of persons with alcohol dependency syndrome were found to be of poor quality. It was further discovered that 43 percent of the wives of men with alcohol dependency disorder had developed depression. This led to sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest.

Clark and Brauner-Otto (2015) made three essential discoveries on divorce trends in Sub-Saharan Africa. Divorce was determined to be lowest in West Africa in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria and moderately high on the Eastern coast in Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Notably, over 85 percent of women were found to have at least one child below 15 years by the time of marriage dissolution, leading to a significant increase in the number of single mothers. However, divorce remained stable over the years. The study also discovered that in Sub-Saharan Africa, divorce is lower when women have higher levels of education. The findings from previous studies, notably those conducted by Goode et al. (2006), suggested that women's autonomy correlates with higher divorce rates, contradicting the results observed in this study.

Divorce is no longer a taboo topic in Nigeria, although some cultures may not endorse it. For specific individuals, it may not be the optimal choice; however, in unavoidable circumstances, it is perceived as the most suitable option, it identified various factors contributing to divorce among Nigerian couples. These factors encompass infertility, alcohol use disorder, improper selection of marriage partners, adultery, conflicts, polygamy, financial mismanagement, psychological issues, inadequate orientation, belief in witchcraft and supernatural powers, as well as excessive pride in admitting wrongdoing (Anaana et al., 2019). A qualitative study by Ediomo-tubing (2015) revealed that 42% of participants admitted to physically abusing their wives in the past, 21% admitted to doing so recently, and 17% admitted to verbally abusing their husbands and others regularly. The participants said that punching, slapping, and kicking were the most prevalent types of violence (Gadd, 2019).

In Kenya, the prevalence of alcohol use disorder is estimated to be 10.2% (9). This means that more than 4 million Kenyans suffer from alcohol use disorder. The study by Magara found that divorce rates were higher among couples where one or both partners had an alcohol use disorder (9). These findings have been supported by Mbagara, who suggested that in Kenya, heavy alcohol consumption by spouses leads to neglect, poor communication, domestic violence, and increased risk of separation or divorce (33). This suggests that AUD and its comorbidities are significant factors influencing marital stability. Makeni (11) and Mungai (12) have indicated that breakups, separation, and divorce are increasing at an alarming rate in Murang'a County and Kenya. Okoth argues that the Supreme Court of Kenya recently ruled on sharing material property, which has been a major factor in reducing debt and would be much higher without these laws (8). This is because individuals with AUD and comorbidities such as cannabis dependence or major depressive disorder are less likely to marry and more likely to divorce (32). These findings suggest that the increasing rates of breakups, separation, and divorce in Kenya are influenced by AUD, which needs targeted interventions to address AUD and its comorbidities. According to the study by Mutai in Ainamoi, Kericho, on how the spousal relationship is affected by the psychological effects of alcohol use disorder, it was found that 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that alcohol use disorder had affected spousal responsibilities (16). Similarly, remarks by the deputy president of Kenya on the increase in the number of bars compared to hotels in the Mount Kenya Region have significantly contributed to spouses not meeting their marital responsibilities. Ndung'u emphasizes that most of the youths have been affected by their parents with high AUD, indicating that an increase in AUD most likely affects marital relationships (17). Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses, which will aid in formulating targeted interventions to address this issue.

1.2 Research Problem

Divorce among married couples in Taita Taveta is significantly higher compared to other regions, adversely affecting family cohesiveness and stability (9). A report by KNBS on the state of marital status in Taita Taveta revealed that 63,623 families are in monogamous marriages, 3,553 are in polygamous marriages, and 2,490 couples are divorced (36). This data highlights a notable prevalence of divorce in Taita Taveta County, reflecting a pressing social need for targeted intervention. Despite the recognition of high divorce rates, there is a lack of detailed research on how alcohol use disorder specifically contributes to these rates within this region. Although several studies have explored the broader relationship between alcohol use and divorce, insufficient localized data addresses the specific mechanisms linking AUD to divorce in Taita Taveta County. This gap in the literature underscores the need for this study, which aims to fill this void by examining the relationship between AUD and divorce. The objective is to provide insights that will inform interventions and strategies to reduce both alcohol abuse and divorce rates in the region.

1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses in Taita Taveta County, Kenya. The specific objectives of the research include;

   i. To measure alcohol use disorder among spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.
   ii. To determine the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant prevalence of alcohol use disorder among spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

H2: Alcohol use disorder is positively associated with the likelihood of divorce among spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

1.4 Materials and Methods

Study Design and Setting

This study adopted descriptive and analytical approaches, where the descriptive analysis analyzed the characteristics of a population, and the analytical analysis examined associations between variables (22). According to Creswell (2011), descriptive design is perceived as a means of portraying the actual behavior of a phenomenon during the study (4). However, this study design's limitations include its cross-sectional nature, which restricts the ability to determine causality and the directionality of the relationship between alcohol use disorder and marital outcomes. The research was conducted within the geographical boundaries of Taita-Taveta County, Kenya.

Study Population and Sample

The study targeted 91,222 spouses in Taveta Sub County, with a sample size of 382 individuals aged 18 to 50 years, as they are more likely to be in marital relationships. Stratified sampling was used, with strata defined by demographic and socio-economic factors specifically age, gender, and marital status. Community leaders played a key role by using local registers and conducting door-to-door visits to identify eligible participants and ensure diverse representation (6). Their involvement helped to define the strata accurately and ensure inclusivity, enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the

sample. A sample size of 382 was determined using the formulae of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), as shown below;

$$S = X^2 NP (1 - P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1 - P)$$

Where;

S: Requisite sample size.

x2: Table value of Chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (e.g., 3.841).

N: Population size.

P: Population proportion (0.50 used for maximum sample size).

1 - P: Estimated percentage of failures.

d^2: Square of the maximum allowable inaccuracy between the true percentage and sample proportion (set at 5% in the study).

This formula applies a confidence interval of 95% and an error of 5%. Utilizing these conditions in this study with a target population of 91222 individuals,

$$S = X^2 NP (1 - P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1 - P)$$
$$S = [1.96^2 \times 91222 \times 0.5(1-0.5)] \div [0.05^2 \times 91222 + 1.96 \times 0.5(1-0.5)]$$
$$S = 382 \text{ participants.}$$

Data Collection and Analysis

For data collection, this study employed the use of questionnaires together with two measurement scales: AUDIT and CPCRDQ scales. The researcher administered the structured research questionnaires to the individual participants from each ward with the help of research assistants. The selected participants received questionnaires, facilitated by a research assistant, allowing 30 minutes for completion. Ensuring clarity and simplicity, the researcher aimed to reduce confusion. These research instruments were considered reliable because they consistently produced similar results under repeated conditions, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.7 or higher, demonstrating adequate internal consistency.

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)

The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), developed by the World Health Organization (37), screens for alcohol consumption and related issues with 10 items. Questions 1-8 use a five-point scale (0-4), while Questions 9-10 use a three-point scale (0, 2, 4) (38). Scores for skipped items are zero. The AUDIT score ranges from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating more severe alcohol-related problems. For illiterate participants, a trained facilitator assisted with the questionnaire. Scores are categorized as follows: 0-7 (low-risk), 8-15 (hazardous/harmful), and 16+ (possible dependence). The cumulative scores from specific question groups offer insights into alcohol use patterns, guiding healthcare professionals in determining the level of intervention required.

The Couples Perceived Causes and Remedies of Divorce Questionnaire (CPCRDQ)

The Couples Perceived Causes and Remedies of Divorce Questionnaire consist of 20 items. It was developed by Yahaya in 2008, to access perceived causes and remedies for divorce (35). This study used the first part of the CPCRDQ only which is the perceived causes of divorce. The CPCRDQ is four points rating scale where; 4 entails Strongly Agree, 3, Agree, 2, Disagree and 1, Strongly Disagree. The scoring is done by summing all the items. The highest score is 80, while the lowest score is 1 (35). The CPCRDQ framework enabled clear analysis of the impact of alcohol use disorder on divorce, revealing significant correlations.

Validity and Reliability of AUDIT and CPCRDQ
The AUDIT and CPCRDQ scales fere reliable and valid with "AUDIT" showing a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating strong internal consistency. The CPCRDQ, a 20-item questionnaire by Yahaya (2008), had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.80. The CPCRDQ has been found to be valid and reliable for use among married and divorce people (35). The scales demonstrated good reliability and validity in the study area, ensuring robust and consistent measurement of alcohol use and perceived divorce causes.

Potential Biases and Mitigation Strategies
Potential biases included selection bias and response bias. Selection bias was addressed through stratified sampling with community leaders to ensure a representative sample. Response bias was minimized by providing clear instructions and ensuring anonymity to improve accuracy and reduce social desirability effects.

Data Analysis
Self-generated structured questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data from this study's respondents. In the data analysis process of the collected data, the software used was the SPSS version 25. A preliminary analysis of the variables was done; the summary of the results was descriptive statistics and frequency distributions to portray the general status of the level of alcohol use disorder among the sample. Correlation analysis enabled the identification of the relationship between the levels of alcohol use disorder and divorce among the spouses.

Ethical Considerations
All legal clearances for the research in Kenya were secured, including approvals from TUREC, NACOSTI, and the County Government of Taveta, as well as participant consent forms (24). We adhered to ethical standards by obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality by anonymization and secure data storage, and providing participants with support resources and debriefing sessions. Our team received sensitivity training to manage discussions on alcohol use disorder and divorce with empathy. The data was used solely for this research.

1.5 Empirical review
Alcohol Use Disorder Levels among Spouses
Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a growing public health dilemma worldwide that firmly entrenches the spousal affiliates in the struggle with its occurrence and outcomes. Existing studies show that AUD is one of the most prevalent problems among spouses. In the U.S., adults aged 18 and above turned out to be problem drinkers in 2018, and a number of them reported an increase in their drinking habits, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020). The second alarming point is that people who are over the age of 30, an age group that is frequently related with marriage, are showing an undesirable heavy drinking pattern, with 5.1% having over 14 drinks on average (Lee, 2023). The epidemiological information by Sugarman (2022) shows that the number of disorders among people aged 65 and above increased by 107% from 2001 to 2013 due to increased alcohol consumption. This finding matches the result of Plens et al. (2022), who studied alcohol consumption trends among Brazilian adults and showed socioeconomic distinctions and regional differences in the country. The research found that heavy drinkers are more likely to be men who are married and of the white ethnic group. Furthermore, the findings indicated that COVID-19 increased the levels of alcohol consumption among married couples, especially those who were suffering from anxiety and depression. Similarly,

Mwai et al. (2013) found a higher proportion of males (70%) who reported alcohol consumption compared to females (30%). It also showed that alcohol use disorder has a negative impact on relationships and causes family disintegration by eroding interpersonal relationships. Therefore, studies have shown a severe prevalence of AUD among couples.

A study by Weinstock (2018) on the significant influence spouses have on each other's risk for alcohol use disorder (AUD), conducted on married couples in Sweden, found that when one spouse was diagnosed with AUD, the other spouse's risk of receiving a similar diagnosis increased substantially. Specifically, after a husband's AUD diagnosis, his wife's risk rose significantly, and vice versa, with the effect tapering off over the following years. The findings suggest a higher risk of AUD among couples with a causal solid relationship between spouses' AUD risks, indicating that partners substantially influence each other's likelihood of developing AUD.

A study by the Canadian Electronic Library (2017) revealed that Canadians suffer from both mental and physical health conditions, with the severity of alcohol use disorder being the highest at 24%. The high trends in mental health conditions were attributed to the findings that 80% of Canadians consume alcohol for cultural reasons, with hospitalizations for alcohol being more than those for heart attacks for the year 2015-2016. This study correlated with the findings of Kaur (2016), which focused on assessing depression and codependency among wives of alcoholics in a rural community of Gurdaspur, Punjab. The findings showed that most husbands had higher levels of alcohol dependence, suggesting a greater severity of addiction within the marital context. These results underscore the complexity of the challenges faced by wives of alcoholics and emphasize the need for tailored interventions to address their mental health needs and mitigate the adverse effects of codependency and depression within this population. However, a recent study by Killgore (2021) on 5,931 Americans during the COVID-19 lockdowns used the AUDIT tool to identify the levels of alcohol dependency. The authors found that alcohol dependency was high among individuals working from home or under homestay for the past half of the year, which is consistent with other studies such as Pollard (2020) and Szajnoga (2020), which showed an increase in the severity of alcohol dependency with time imposed for lockdowns.

Conversely, other researchers, such as Chodkiewicz (2020) and Sallie (2020), found that alcohol dependency reduced during the lockdown period. However, their findings were for only one month and could not be generalized to the half-year to predict a clear trend. This study was conducted among the American population under lockdown due to the Covid-19 outbreak. However, the current research sought to find out the levels of alcohol use disorder among spouses under a different study site, culture, and respondents. Leonard and Mudar (2000) investigated alcohol expectancies and peer drinking influence on alcohol involvement among couples pre-marriage. They found strong relationships between alcohol expectancies, peer drinking, and adult alcohol use, indicating a significant similarity in alcohol consumption between spouses. This highlights the influence of partner drinking on one's alcohol use. Similarly, Windle and Windle (2014) provided prevalence data on alcohol use among middle-aged adults over 10 years and examined mutual influences between spouses' alcohol use. They found stability in drinking patterns over time and modest but significant effects of spouses on each other's alcohol use. This emphasizes the role of interpersonal factors in alcohol consumption patterns among middle-aged adults.

Wagman et al. (2020) investigated alcohol use prevalence and correlates among men and women in Ugandan communities. They found high rates of past-year alcohol use, with men having higher odds of drinking than women. Drinking prevalence was particularly elevated in fishing communities compared

to agrarian communities. Alcohol consumption correlated with older age, previous marriage, and past-year drug use, with fishermen and individuals working in bars/restaurants having the highest odds of drinking. Notably, alcohol-related consequences were more common among male drinkers, emphasizing the necessity for targeted alcohol reduction programs, especially in high-risk occupational settings. These findings underscore the continued importance of understanding social influences, particularly peer and partner drinking, in shaping adult alcohol involvement during significant life transitions like marriage.

Causes of Divorce among Spouses
Raley and Sweeney (2020) conducted a comprehensive review on divorce, stepfamilies, and partnering. According to their findings, divorce in the United States has exhibited a downward trend. However, it is noteworthy that the rates remain considerably high among the older demographic. The authors assert that the increase in divorce was attributed to the employment and empowerment of women (Goode et al., 2006). However, it is acknowledged that recent research has demonstrated a weak correlation between women's employment and divorce (Killeward, 2016). Amato (2010) identified various factors that may contribute to divorce, including adolescent marriage, financial hardship and joblessness, inadequate education, cohabitation, early parenthood, mixed-race marriage, and parental divorce. The present research is imperative to ascertain whether certain factors that contribute to divorce could be known among households.

Qamar and Faizan (2021) examined the impact of divorce on divorced women, and the post-divorce adjustment experiences of women who have gone through a divorce, on a sample of six women from Pakistani families who had undergone divorce. The findings indicated that there has been a rise in divorce in the country, attributed to the influence and adoption of Western values and concepts. The research findings indicate that various factors contribute to the dissolution of marriages. These include financial limitations, communication breakdown, absence of trust, unresponsive demeanor, neglectful and irresponsible paternal figures, meddling by extended family members, instances of physical and psychological abuse, defamation of character, and infidelity. Moreover, research has identified various consequences of divorce, such as sleep deprivation, high blood pressure, social ostracism and seclusion, persistent sentiments of single parenthood, societal disapproval of divorce, stress, and challenges related to remarriage. In contrast to the aforementioned results, the study exhibits a limitation in terms of its sample size (n=6), which renders it insufficient for drawing generalizations about the entire population of Pakistan. Furthermore, it cannot be extrapolated to forecast or identify patterns of divorce among spouses, given the varying environmental conditions and respondent dynamics.

Most academicians concur with the statement that marriage no longer serves as the central pillar of the family unit because cohabitation is on the rise relative to divorce and marriage has become uncertain and tenuous for most couples (Buxton, 2008). As a result, cohabitation has become necessary as a means of determining whether the marriage could be robust and productive in the future (Perelli-Harris, 2014). Since it is simpler to dissolve cohabitation, the complex procedures for seeking a divorce are also taken care of, although in some unions where children are involved, they are still difficult. (MacRae et al., 1993; Perelli-Harris, 2014). After investigating the concept of divorce, Heikel and Keizer (2015) research concludes that separation is a precursor to divorce. This study also demonstrates that divorce is a complex issue that is influenced by people's perceptions of their environment, culture, and socioeconomic status. Since the concept has also been associated with cohabitation, this study does not advocate cohabitation as a replacement for marital unions, although it acknowledges that cohabitation may serve as a security to evaluate the strength of a marriage's ability to withstand divorce.

Understanding the perceived causes of divorce among spouses is crucial for identifying factors contributing to marital dissolution. Research indicates various factors contributing to divorce, both individual and relational, which may vary across cultures and contexts. Yaya and Ghose (2019) investigated the relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and alcohol consumption among husbands/partners in Angola. Using data from the Angola Demographic and Health Survey, the study found that physical IPV was the most prevalent form of violence experienced by women, followed by emotional and sexual IPV. Higher education and household wealth showed protective effects against certain forms of IPV. Importantly, alcohol drinking by husbands/partners was significantly associated with higher odds of women experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual IPV. Conversely, women who reported experiencing physical IPV had increased odds of alcohol consumption themselves. These findings highlight the pervasive issue of IPV in sub-Saharan African countries like Angola and underscore the need for targeted interventions aimed at reducing women's vulnerability to IPV, particularly among married men with alcohol-drinking habits.

Similarly, Yeshiwork et al. (2019) conducted a study in Ethiopia to examine the prevalence, causes and impacts of divorce among a sample of 361 respondents. The findings revealed a high divorce in Bahir Dar City over the three years. The results of the study revealed an increase in divorce, which escalated from 24.00% during the 2013/2014 period to 26.28% in 2014/2015 and ultimately reached 49.20% in 2015/2016. The authors note that psychological factors, with a mean rank of 4.46, were ranked highest, followed by social factors (4.38) and economic factors (4.24). Similarly, the psychological consequences exhibited a high score of 4.50, while the economic consequences and social consequences received scores of 4.47 and 4.45, respectively. While the geographical location of this study may remain consistent with this present study, namely urban areas, the composition of participants and their interactions probably differ. Thus, understanding the multifaceted nature of divorce requires considering diverse factors such as intimate partner violence, socio-economic conditions, cultural influences, and individual experiences. By addressing these complex dynamics, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective interventions to support couples and mitigate the impact of divorce on individuals and communities.

1.6 Study Findings Results

Table 1: **Distribution of AUD among Participants by Categories**

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n, %)	With AUD (n, %)	Without AUD (n, %)	P-Value
Gender	Male	193(50.7%)	115(59.6%)	78(40.4%)	0.002
	Female	188(49.3%)	78(41.5%)	110(58.5%)	0.002
Age	18-29	45(16.1%)	15(33.3%)	30(66.7%)	0.041
	30-39	62(22.1%)	35(56.5%)	27(43.5%)	0.084
	40-50	69(24.6%)	41(59.4%)	28(40.6%)	0.026
	50 and over	104(37.1%)	42(40.4%)	62(59.6%)	0.037
Level of Education	No Formal Education	25(6.6%)	12(48.0%)	13(52.0%)	0.010
	Primary Education	73(19.3%)	32(43.8%)	41(56.2%)	0.045
	Secondary Education	139(36.7%)	76(54.8%)	63(45.2%)	0.212
	Tertiary	142(37.8%)	62(43.7%)	80(56.3%)	0.151
Employment Status	Salaried Worker	25(6.6%)	15(60.0%)	10(40.0%)	0.092
	Self-employed	130(34.5%)	72(55.4%)	58(44.6%)	0.148
	Casual Laborer	164(43.5%)	81(49.4%)	83(50.6%)	0.673
	Unemployed	38(10.1%)	20(52.6%)	18(47.4%)	0.752

Table 1 shows that males (59.6%) are more likely to have Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) than females (41.5%), with a significant gender difference (p=0.002). Younger participants (18-29) show a higher AUD prevalence (33.3%) compared to older age groups, though the association varies by age. Those with no formal education and primary education have higher AUD rates (48.0% and 43.8%, respectively) compared to those with secondary or tertiary education. Employment status does not show a significant impact on AUD prevalence.

The Levels of Alcohol Use Disorder among Participants

The level of alcohol use disorder among participants was measured using AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test) Scale as shown below in table 2. Table 2 presents the distribution of AUDIT scores, categorizing respondents into distinct levels based on their scores. Among the 382 participants, 83 individuals (21.73%) fell into the "Low Risk" category. The scores for low category ranged from 0 to 7. A total of 107 respondents (28.01%) were classified under the "Moderate Risk" level, indicating scores between 8 and 15. Notably, a significant proportion of the sample, comprising 192 individuals (50.26%), exhibited "High Risk" AUDIT scores of 16 or more. These findings provide an overview of the distribution of Alcohol Use Disorder levels within the study population, indicating that there is a higher level of alcohol use disorder.

Table 2: **Levels of Alcohol Use Disorder as per AUDIT scores**

Levels	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low Risk (0-7)	83	21.73
Moderate Risk (8-15)	107	28.01
High Risk (16 or more)	192	50.26
Total	382	100.00

Relationship between Alcohol Use Disorder and Divorce among Participants

To assess the relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among participants, the Pearson correlation was conducted with coefficient between alcohol use disorder and divorce was 0.806 (10). This strong positive correlation suggests a significant relationship between alcohol use disorder and divorce among spouses in the studied region. The correlation coefficient indicates a robust connection between the presence of alcohol use disorder and the likelihood of divorce. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.013 is below the conventional alpha level of 0.05, signifying that the correlation is statistically significant (10). Practically, this finding highlights the severe impact of AUD on marital stability, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address AUD and prevent marital breakdowns. The strong positive correlation between alcohol use disorder and divorce indicates that individuals with alcohol use disorder are more likely to experience divorce within the studied population. This finding underscores the detrimental impact of alcohol use disorder on marital relationships, potentially leading to the breakdown of marriages.

Discussion

The Levels of Alcohol Use Disorder among Participants

The findings indicated higher levels of alcohol use disorder (AUD) among spouses in Taveta Sub-County, Kenya. 28% reported a moderate risk of alcohol abuse, and 50.3% reported high-risk use of alcohol abuse. This study seems to align with many reports across the world. For example, a study conducted in the United States of America, according to the 2023 report by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), reported that 28.1 million adults (10.9% of this age group) had Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) (40). This included 16.6 million men (13.2%) and 11.5 million women (8.7%), with the majority indicating moderate to high risk of alcohol use disorder (40).

In Kenya Mwashuma et al., carried out a study among middle-aged adults (10). They reported that 30% of the participants showed moderate risk, and 40% showed high risk of alcohol abuse. Studies in Africa align with studies in other parts of the world. For example, in Tanzania, a survey by Mbwana and Bundala revealed similar findings, with 27% at moderate risk and 50% at high risk (14). In Kenya, Njiru revealed that 33% of married individuals were at moderate risk, while 52% were at high risk of alcohol abuse (15). All these studies agree with the current research that alcohol use disorder is rampant among married couples, and this could be a possible reason for high divorce rates.

Furthermore, the data findings provide a precise distribution of AUDIT scores, offering insights into the varying levels of risk for alcohol-related issues among the participants. The literature by Weinstock stresses the involvement of partners in the exchange of information regarding their drinking amounts as well as the potential long-term risks of alcohol use disorder (27). Besides, studies show that when one spouse get diagnosed with AUD, the other partners is highly likely to be diagnosed with the same, indicating that a significant link, which makes the study of marital dynamics of the utmost importance

when it comes to evaluating and handling AUD cases within married couples (20). Additionally, studies have shown relationships existing between concordant and discordant drinking patterns among couples over the long-term outcomes, and those belonging to concordant drinking couples have much lower mortality rates than couples having discordant drinking patterns (2). Besides, several studies have dealt with socioeconomic imbalances and local alcohol consumption patterns; thus, the question of the effective area is to be discussed (20). For example, data from Uganda has shown alcohol use to be higher in specific professions, such as those found in fishing communities, suggesting the need to include alcohol and occupational-specific risk factors in occupation-based strategies for better interventions (26). Moreover, study results from Brazil showed a close relationship between socioeconomic status and regional characteristics that determine the ability to respond to AUD threats, pointing to the necessity of two-pronged approaches – both for individuals and communities (19). Thus, presenting these findings about the available literature on alcohol consumption behaviors, spouse's impact, and social factors, this discussion points out the significance of multifaceted approaches concerned with AUD and public health initiatives targeted at particular population groups.

The Relationship between Alcohol Use Disorder and Divorce among Participants
The findings indicated a significant and strong association between alcohol use disorder and divorce among the spouses was established in the study conducted in Taveta sub-county, Taita Taveta County. This finding supports earlier suggestions of the adverse effects of alcohol use disorder on marital relationships while stressing that the disorder also entails a higher risk of divorce (23). Other research, including an international study involving participants from both Sweden and China, has confirmed the results and established a direct link between a person's genetic makeup and both AUD and the probability of a divorce. Nevertheless, the influence of genes cannot be viewed in isolation from the impact of the environment (32). Thus, Ahlner et al. emphasized the consistent link between AUD and divorce among Swedish men and women attached to genetic predispositions that impact their chances of facing issues (1). According to Liu et al., the majority preference of the various kinds of alcohol consumption was determined to be among the adult male drinkers in China (8). Pre-study males of an older age frequented liqueur more often than males of a younger age who preferred beer. This result demonstrates that genetic effects (gene expression) play a crucial role in determining alcohol beverage intake level and the potential outcome of their marital life. Social-cultural factors, including psychological and mental health, and marital distress, affect alcohol dependence and divorce rates. The quality of marriage, including sexual arousal and stability, influences divorce likelihood (13). Marital dissatisfaction and alcohol dependence can disrupt relationships. Fahmy noted that longer marriage duration correlates with increased divorce risk among CITAM church members in Kenya, highlighting the importance of marital quality for relationship longevity (5). The correlation study supports a strong connection between AUD and divorce among the investigated population. Simiyu's findings on AUD and divorce among CITAM churches (34) align with our significant correlation coefficient of 0.806, indicating a strong relationship between divorce and AUD. This is consistent with previous studies showing AUD as a major cause of marital discord (7). Additionally, demographic factors such as age, education, and employment impact mental health and alcohol addiction, influencing marital stability (25). It is of significant importance to comprehend these interlinkages so that policies and interventions of the kind that target to mitigate the detrimental effects of AUD on marital stability and that are meant to promote healthier outcomes for individuals and families adversely affected by alcohol inducements become possible.

This study has several consequences for research and development of interventions in this Sub-County. First, they draw attention to the urgency of the need for local studies whose purpose is to cover the specific problems faced by the couples of such districts (8). Social and economic status, as well as

cultural normativity and expectations, play significant factors in shaping family dynamics and can interact with alcoholism in unique, different aspects within the local community. Thus, individualized interventions, as well as the need for support systems, are a must in marriage toward the problem of alcohol and together with the dissolvement of family relationships (29). The significant relationship between alcohol use disorder (AUD) and divorce underscores the need for early intervention programs targeting marital issues like alcohol use. Detecting risk factors and understanding the complex causes can inform strategies to reduce AUD and divorce (31). Comprehensive interventions spanning individual, marital, and societal levels are necessary for addressing AUD and marital stability (21). Support services for affected couples can strengthen marriages and promote healthy coping strategies, ultimately enhancing community health and well-being.

Limitations
The study's limitations include a small sample size in Taveta Sub-County, limiting generalizability, and a cross-sectional design that offers only a snapshot rather than a dynamic view of alcohol use disorder over time. Future research should use larger samples and longitudinal designs to better understand evolving trends in alcohol-related marital issues.

1.7 Conclusion
In conclusion, the study highlights a significant link between alcohol use disorder (AUD) and divorce in Taveta Sub-County, Kenya, revealing higher susceptibility among employed individuals. To address this issue, policy implications include implementing targeted prevention programs and integrating AUD education into marital counseling services. Practically, local community-based interventions, such as expanding counseling centers and providing economic support to reduce AUD, are essential. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to track the evolving dynamics of AUD and marital stability. Challenges may include limited resources and cultural resistance, which must be addressed through community engagement and policy support.

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