

**Comparative Study**

## **A Comparative Study on Rorschach Profiles of Regular Drinkers, Occasional Drinkers, and Non-Drinkers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Research evidences a close link between alcohol abuse and problems that are taxing to the physical, mental as well as social wellbeing of the individual and in the long run, causing a threat to her/his dignity in general. The present study was designed to examine the differences in personality and perceptual styles of persons from three different levels of alcohol consumption, i.e., regular drinkers, occasional drinkers and, non-drinkers, by analyzing their Rorschach profiles. A purposive sample of 45 male subjects (aged 16-52 years), with an equal number of 15 regular drinkers, occasional drinkers, and non-drinkers were administered the Rorschach Inkblot Test (Rorschach, 1921). The responses were scored according to Beck's scoring system (Beck, 1961). One-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to examine the differences among the groups with respect to their responses. Analyses revealed significant differences among the three groups only in terms of s, A% and, H responses suggesting that the groups differ from each other with respect to oppositional level, awareness of the environment, capacity to form interpersonal relationships. Results of Bonferroni's post-hoc tests suggest that the occasional drinkers were found to be showing significantly more uncooperative behavior (s) than the regular drinkers, but not the non-drinkers. The non-drinkers have a significantly higher level of environmental awareness (A%) and higher level of concern for a healthy, peaceful society which regular drinkers do not show. The regular drinkers were found to be significantly better at making interpersonal relations (H) in comparison to the other two groups. On all other categories of responses, the three groups were found to be comparable with each other.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Personality, Alcohol, Rorschach*

**A**lcohol use is an established determinant of disability and death globally. Literature suggests that people are starting to consume alcohol and drugs to cope with their mental health issues like stress, anxiety and, depression on a regular basis because they lack more adaptive types of coping mechanisms (Dombeck, 2006). At the same time, alcohol abuse is believed to be taxing the physical and mental health of the abuser in addition to creating a number of psychological, financial, and social problems.

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Psychological Stress is defined as a life situation “appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding her/his resources and endangering her/his well-being” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). It is strongly associated with poor physical as well as mental health (Cohen et al., 2007; Slavich et al., 2010). However, people use various strategies to cope with stressful situations. But all these strategies are not equally effective in reducing the harmful effects of stress. Rather, some of them can have more dangerous results in the short and/or long run. To put in other words, some coping strategies are adaptive, while others are maladaptive. One such maladaptive way of coping with the stress is trying to escape from the realities of the impacts of stressors through the use of alcohol and/or drugs. Research literature supports this model as avoidant coping strategies are consistently associated with both heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems (Britton, 2004; Evans & Dunn, 1995; Karwacki & Bradley, 1996; Rafnsson, Jonsson, & Windle, 2006; Corbin, Farmer, & Hoekesma, 2013).

The Role of stress in addiction processes is two-fold. People start to use drugs to cope with stress on a daily basis because they do not see other options. On the other hand, stress promotes the use of drugs and reduces the motivation to quit drug use. There are different perspectives to interpret patterns of substance use and abuse. From a cognitive-behavioral perspective model of stress-coping appraised (Wills & Shiffman, 1985) and proposed that people, in the absence of effective and adaptive coping strategies (Wagner, Myers, & McIninch, 1999; Hasking et al, 2011), often use alcohol as a coping response to stress, where it is used to improve positive affect or reduction uncomfortable feelings. Within this context, the use of alcohol as a coping response may be seen as adaptive and successful in the short term; however consuming alcohol to cope with chronic stress or persistent negative mood is generally considered to be a maladaptive response (Kassel, Bornovalova, & Mehta, 2006) and limited in its long-term effectiveness. Long-term alcohol use may lead to a number of serious physiological as well as psychological pathological conditions like hepatic encephalopathy, depression, anxiety, difficulties in concentrating, memory, even a more serious condition, Korsakoff’s syndrome (Carlson & Melissa, 2017; Paschall, Freisthler, & Lipton, 2005; Rui, et. al., 2000).

While researchers are unanimous regarding the harmful effects of long-term alcohol use, the question now arises about “why a person becomes alcoholic while others do not?” There have been several causal factors identified by the researchers like genetic influence (Coleman, 1981), socio-cultural factors (Sudhinaraset, Wigglesworth, & Takeuchi, 2016), in addition to psychological factors like stress, tension (Sinha et al., 2009), and family-related causes like marital conflict (Gilbertson, Prather, & Nixon, 2008). Research also evidenced some sort of psychological vulnerabilities among alcoholics. Under conditions of stress, all of us don’t resort to alcohol use; but some people, instead of using other defense turn to alcohol to adjust with or overcome the stress. Personality studies of alcoholics show that they are emotionally immature, they need a lot of praise, appreciation, and attention from others and they are feeling much hurt and disturbed by failures and frustrations. They feel insecure and inferior and have low frustration tolerance. They way out to alcohol use to cover their feelings of inadequacy and achieve a sense of masculinity and competency (Winokur et al., 1970).

However, in most of the studies cited above, the negative effects of alcohol have been studied from the client's point of view. Since the person who usually does not get social support, is likely to rate himself or his problems in socially desirable manner. Hence, from

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the findings of studies using data obtained through self-report measures, no definite conclusions can be drawn. Therefore, the present study plans to study the personality profile of alcoholics, collecting data using a projective measure, namely, the Rorschach Inkblot test, so that the social desirability effect can be kept at minimum level.

Of course, there have been some studies which compared the Rorschach profiles of alcohol addicts with non-addicts. For example, Khalily (2009) compared the personality characteristics of addicts and non-addicts by administering Rorschach Inkblot Test. The result revealed distinct personality characteristics compared to non-addicts, the former showing a cluster of characteristics, like lack of motivation, poor self-concept, inability to concentrate, lack of intellectual control and clarity in associative processes, unresponsive conventional concept, low sociability, lack of spontaneity, difficulty in intellectual functioning, lack of attention, impulsivity, emotional instability, poor interpersonal relationships, a strong tendency for immediate gratification, lack of insight to their own motives, narrow range of interests, dependency, disturbed adjustment, and oppositional tendency.

Voura, Papanikolaou, & Angelidis (2010) obtained clear alcoholic 'signs' from the Rorschach profiles of alcohol dependent patients, together with responses indicating greater interest in other people combined with ambivalence, feelings of aggression, withdrawal or isolation from social interaction and dependency needs. They also suggest a characteristic alcoholic perceptual style in these patients.

While reviewing the literature it has also been found out that several studies have been conducted by using regular drinkers and non-drinkers categories to find out self-perceptions, personality characteristics, religious traditions, quality of life, drinking behavior, risk of mortality etc.; but no study has been conducted using occasional drinkers category. The alcoholics who drink regularly have no sense of responsibility, personality, perception, and emotion while drinking. They forget their environmental condition which affect others due to drinking. Sometimes the educated people of this group behave like uneducated and that affect their families and friends to a large extent. There is no co-ordination between their action and version while drinking. On the other hand, the occasional drinkers have little bit different behavior than the alcoholics. They show negative attitude, perception, emotion, and personality only when they consume alcohol. In other times they show their normal behavior as well. So far as the non-drinkers who refrain totally from drinking are concerned, they are completely different from the other two groups. They have a good sense of responsibility, personality, emotion, and attitude with respect to all the activities as well. Such people can take a quick decision in a problematic situation in order to tackle the situation. Therefore, the authors of the present study have decided to conduct research on a sample comprising the above three levels of alcohol consumption with the specific objective being to compare the Rorschach profiles of people belonging to three different states of alcohol consumption, i.e., regular drinkers, occasional drinkers and non-drinkers.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Design***

For the present research, a single factorial design was adopted (One-way Analysis of Variance). The only factor to be studied was state of alcohol consumption having three levels namely, Regular Drinkers, Occasional Drinkers, and Non-Drinkers respectively.

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### ***Sample***

The sample for this study consisted of 45 male subjects consisting of an equal number of regular drinkers (15), occasional drinkers (15), and non-drinkers (15) by using the purposive sampling technique. The subjects for regular drinkers' category were collected from two drug de-addiction centers, namely, Sankalpa in Bhubaneswar and Nisha Mukti Kendra in Cuttack. Only those drinkers who were not taking any other drugs and whom any psychological therapy was yet to be started were selected for the study. The sample for the other two categories such as occasional drinkers and non-drinkers was selected on the basis of their self-disclosure regarding their drinking status indicated in a personal data sheet. The age range of the subjects ranged from 16 to 52 years with the duration of alcohol use ranging from 1 to 17 years. So far as the occasional drinkers' category is concerned, they consume alcohol only on some festivals or occasions like marriage party, function celebration, birthday celebration etc. and also viewed that they do not face any kind of problems related to their family, friends or even in job sectors due to consumption of alcohol. In the third category, as the name suggests (non-drinkers), they not at all consume alcohol till today from the beginning and they viewed that they have also not faced any problem in their family, peer group, and related to their job without consumption of alcohol. The regular drinkers were having some psychological complaints like confusion and depression as mentioned in their intake form of the respective de-addiction centers.

### ***Instruments***

#### ***Rorschach Inkblot Test.***

The Rorschach Inkblot Test developed by Harman Rorschach (1884-1992) is a popular projective technique widely used as a tool to assess the deep-rooted emotional conflicts, the unconscious feelings, desires, self-perceptions as well as the overall personality of persons with psychological pathology as well as those not having them. The test is used to assess and diagnosis of different types of mental disorders and measures several personality traits which are directly linked with mental health. The test is its 'unstructured' in nature. The test consists of ten plates 17 x 24 centimeters in size each of which contains one bisymmetrical inkblots. In the series of ten plates, five are achromatic (I, IV, V, VI, VII), two are black & red (II, III), and the remaining three are polychromatic (VIII, IX, X) respectively. The test is administered in two phases, such as free association phase and inquiry phase. In the free association phase, the subject tells whatever comes to his / her mind by observing the cards. And in the inquiry phase, the subject is asked to indicate the location of her/his perception and the determinant of his response. Since the test is projective in nature, it is believed that the test-taker reveals all her/his undesirable and unacceptable ideas, thoughts, feelings and impulses to other without any social desirability effect.

The relevant information of the regular drinkers' subjects related to their age, duration of alcohol use, years of education, occupation, income (per month), marital status, and other physical and psychological complaints were collected from their intake form. And the same information for the other two groups were collected in a personal data sheet.

### ***Procedure***

The data from the subjects belonging to regular drinkers' category were collected from two drug de-addiction centres namely, Sankalpa and Nisha Mukti Kendra situated in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack of Odisha respectively. After obtaining the permission from the concerned de-addiction centres, those alcohol addicts who were not taking any other drug and who were not yet given any psychotherapeutic intervention were administered the

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Rorschach Inkblot Test. The subjects belonging to the other two categories such as, occasional drinkers and non-drinkers were selected from different localities in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack respectively on the basis of their responses in the personal data sheet. These two groups were also administered the Rorschach test. Before starting to administer the Rorschach, rapport was established adequately with the subjects. Then the researcher clearly gave the instructions regarding the test and addressed all the possible doubts and queries of the subjects. Scoring of responses were done according to Beck's scoring system. The time for giving initial response (RT1) and the response time in total (RTT), card positions are also recorded using stopwatch at the same point in time. After that the location, determinant, content, and popularity of responses were determined following which indices like total number of responses, number of whole response (W), common detail (D), rare detail (Dd), white space (S), percentage of good form (F+), number of black and white response (Y), vista response (V), colour response (C), movement response (M), popular response (P), animal response (A), animal detail response (Ad), human response (H), human detail response (Hd), anatomy response (An), and texture response (T) are calculated. All the ethical guidelines were followed during data collection.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were statistically analyzed with the help of one-way ANOVA in order to find out whether the three groups significantly differ from each other. Wherever significant differences were obtained, post-hoc tests were conducted following the Bonferroni's method in order to know which group is significantly different from which other group.

Table 1 presents the group means and standard deviations of the three groups, namely the regular drinkers, occasional drinkers and non-drinkers, with respect to the different Rorschach indices. variables following which the summary of the one-way ANOVA with respect to these variables are presented in Table 2, 3, and 5 respectively.

**Table 1: Group means and standard deviations of regular drinkers, occasional drinkers and non-drinkers (n=15 in each group) with respect to all the variables**

Variables		Regular drinkers	Occasional drinkers	Non-drinkers
<b>Response Time</b>	Mean	1.53	1.22	1.34
	SD	0.72	0.39	0.57
<b>Total no. of Responses (Productivity)</b>	Mean	33.00	33.87	28.53
	SD	11.23	4.94	12.15
<b>Whole Responses (Abstract Thinking)</b>	Mean	5.73	5.60	5.67
	SD	3.55	1.92	1.79
<b>Common Detail Responses (Concrete Thinking)</b>	Mean	22.93	23.53	19.40
	SD	8.40	4.92	10.84
<b>Rare Detail Responses (Anxiety)</b>	Mean	3.07	2.60	2.00
	SD	3.28	2.19	3.22
<b>White Space Percentages (Oppositional Thinking)</b>	Mean	5.33	9.40	7.00
	SD	2.69	4.80	4.66
<b>Good Form Responses (Ego Strength)</b>	Mean	50.27	53.67	56.60
	SD	7.95	21.87	19.77
<b>Black &amp; White Responses (Sadness)</b>	Mean	2.67	4.00	3.60
	SD	2.16	2.47	1.45

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<b>Vista Responses</b> (Inferiority Complex)	Mean	0.87	0.07	0.40
	SD	1.76	0.25	0.91
<b>Colour Responses</b> (Impulsivity)	Mean	2.27	3.33	2.73
	SD	2.01	1.39	1.87
<b>Human Action Responses</b> (Creativity)	Mean	2.40	1.87	2.47
	SD	2.50	1.59	2.03
<b>Popular Responses</b> (Conformity to group norms)	Mean	14.07	12.80	13.07
	SD	4.39	3.02	5.24
<b>Animal Percentages</b> (Awareness of the Environment)	Mean	37.00	47.87	50.67
	SD	14.88	13.40	10.56
<b>Human Responses</b> (Capacity to form interpersonal relationships)	Mean	4.00	1.40	0.87
	SD	3.42	1.50	0.91
<b>Anatomy Responses</b> (Somatization)	Mean	2.93	1.53	1.87
	SD	2.18	1.24	1.80

One-way analyses of variance were conducted for response time, total no. of responses, whole responses, common detail and rare detail, the summary of which are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2: Summary of one-way ANOVA with respect to response time and scores on location variables*

Variable	Source	Ss	df	Ms	F	P
<b>Response Time</b>	Group	.742	2	.371	1.091	.345
	Error	14.289	42	.340		
	Total	15.032	44			
<b>Total no. of Responses</b>	Group	245.733	2	122.867	1.235	.301
	Error	4177.467	42	99.463		
	Total	4423.200	44			
<b>Whole Responses (W)</b>	Group	.133	2	.067	.010	.990
	Error	273.867	42	6.521		
	Total	274.000	45			
<b>Common Detail Responses (D)</b>	Group	149.644	2	74.822	1.057	.357
	Error	2974.267	42	70.816		
	Total	3123.911	44			
<b>Rare Detail Responses (Dd)</b>	Group	8.578	2	4.289	.494	.614
	Error	364.533	42	8.679		
	Total	373.111	44			
<b>White Space (s)</b>	Group	125.378	2	62.689	3.612	.036
	Error	728.933	42	17.356		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>854.311</b>	<b>44</b>			

It can be noticed in Table 2 that the F values for neither the Reaction Time nor the location variables except for white space (s) are statistically significant. It implies that the 3 groups are significantly different from each other only with respect to oppositional thinking. Bonferroni's Post-hoc tests were conducted in order to find out the difference between each pairs of groups, results of which are present in Table 3.

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**Table 3: Bonferroni Multiple Comparisons (Post-hoc Test) of the Regular drinkers, Occasional drinkers, and Non-drinkers with respect to White Space Percent (Oppositional Level)**

(I) States of alcohol consumption	(J) States of alcohol consumption	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Regular Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	-4.07*	1.521	.032
	Non-drinkers	-1.67	1.521	.838
Occasional Drinkers	Regular drinkers	4.07*	1.521	.032
	Non-drinkers	2.40	1.521	.366
Non-drinkers	Regular Drinkers	1.67	1.521	.838
	Occasional Drinkers	-2.40	1.521	.366

An ‘s’ response in Rorschach test, according to Beck’s scoring system represents oppositional thought or lack of cooperation. The findings suggest that the occasional drinkers obtained significantly higher score on ‘s’ in comparison to their regular drinker counterparts. The occasional drinkers showed significantly higher level of uncooperative behavior than the regular drinkers, but not from non-drinkers. Of course, many researchers assert that ‘s’ responses instead of oppositionality and hostility, are reflective of cognitive differentiation and autonomous strivings (Tegtmeier & Gordon, 1983).

One-way ANOVA were conducted on the scores related to various determinants of the Rorschach responses such as Good Form, achromatic (black and white) responses, chromatic (colour) responses and vista responses. The summaries of the ANOVA are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Summary of One-Way ANOVA on the determinants like good form responses, achromatic, chromatic (colour), vista and human action responses**

Variable	Source	Ss	Df	Ms	F	p
<b>Good Form Responses</b>	Group	301.378	2	150.689	.485	.619
	Error	13059.867	42	310.949		
	Total	13361.244	44			
<b>Black &amp; White Responses</b>	Group	14.044	2	7.022	1.630	.208
	Error	180.933	42	4.308		
	Total	194.978	44			
<b>Colour Responses</b>	Group	8.578	2	4.289	1.352	.270
	Error	133.200	42	3.171		
	Total	141.778	44			
<b>Vista Responses</b>	Group	4.844	2	2.422	1.808	.177
	Error	56.267	42	1.340		
	Total	61.111	44			
<b>Human Action Responses (M)</b>	Group	3.244	2	1.622	.376	.689
	Error	181.067	42	4.311		
	Total	184.311	44			

Table 4 reveals significant differences among the regular and occasional drinkers and non-drinkers with respect to none of the determinant scores.

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Scores obtained by the three levels of drinking groups on the human action (movement) response, popular response, and various content categories of responses were subjected to one-way ANOVA. In the area of content only three categories of contents namely Human (H), Animal (A), and Anatomy (An) were included in the present study. The summaries of these ANOVA are given in Table 5.

**Table 5: Summary of One-Way ANOVA on the popular response, and various content categories of responses of the regular drinkers, occasional drinkers, and non-drinkers**

Variable	Source	Ss	Df	Ms	F	p
<b>Popular Responses</b>	Group	13.378	2	6.689	.358	.701
	Error	784.267	42	18.673		
	Total	797.644	44			
<b>Animal Responses</b>	Group	1563.511	2	781.756	4.575	.016
	Error	7177.067	42	170.883		
	Total	8740.578	44			
<b>Human Responses</b>	Group	84.311	2	42.156	8.540	.001
	Error	207.333	42	4.937		
	Total	291.644	44			
<b>Anatomy Responses</b>	Group	16.044	2	8.022	2.507	.094
	Error	134.400	42	3.200		
	Total	150.444	44			

It can be noticed in Table 5 that the F values for neither the human action nor popular response variables are significant. However, so far as the content categories of responses are concerned, significant F values were obtained for the animal (A%) and human response (H%). Results of multiple comparisons by Bonferroni method with respect to these animal (A%) and human (H%) responses are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Multiple Comparisons (Post-hoc Test) of the regular drinkers, occasional drinkers, and non-drinkers with respect to animal and human responses**

(I) States of alcohol consumption	(J) States of alcohol consumption	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
<b>Animal responses</b>				
Regular Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	-10.87	4.773	.084
	Non-drinkers	-13.67*	4.773	.020
Occasional Drinkers	Regular Drinkers	10.87	4.773	.084
	Non-drinkers	-2.80	4.773	1.000
Non-drinkers	Regular Drinkers	13.67*	4.773	.020
	Occasional Drinkers	2.80	4.773	1.000
<b>Human responses</b>				
Regular Drinkers	Occasional Drinkers	2.60*	.811	.008
	Non-drinkers	3.13*	.811	.001
Occasional Drinkers	Regular Drinkers	-2.60*	.811	.008
	Non-drinkers	.53	.811	1.000
Non-drinkers	Regular Drinkers	-3.13*	.811	.001
	Occasional Drinkers	-.53	.811	1.000



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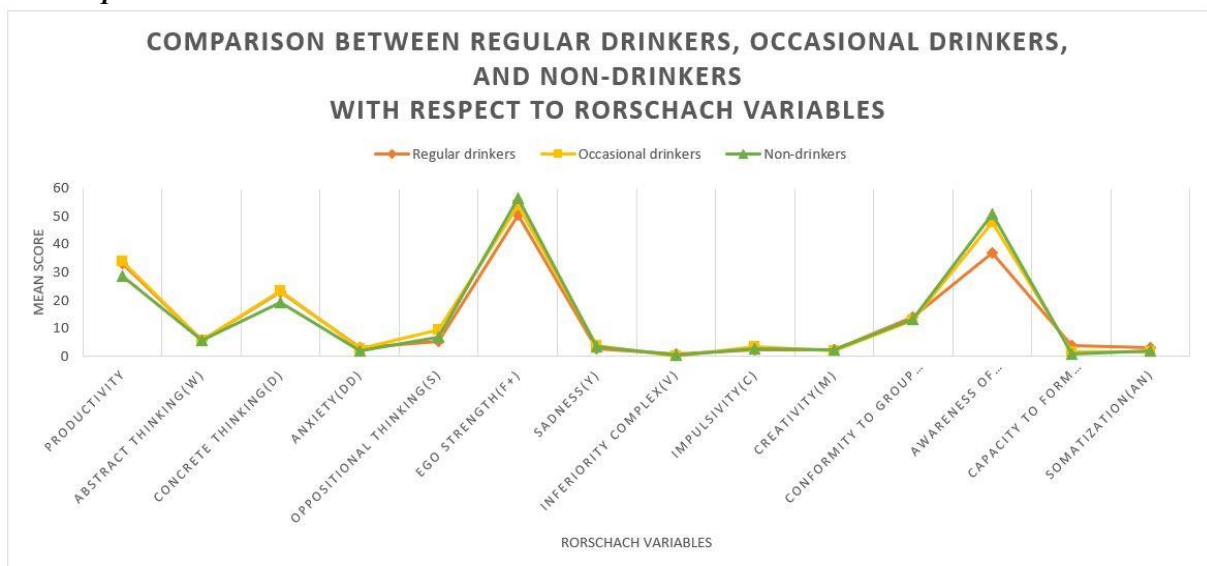
An A% response in Rorschach test, according to Beck's scoring system represents how much a person is aware regarding the environment and its surroundings. The findings suggest that the non-drinkers while found to be comparable with the occasional drinkers, gave significantly higher animal responses than the regular drinkers suggesting higher level of environmental awareness.

Environmental awareness essentially serves as an educational tool, helping people around the world understand the economic, aesthetic and biological importance of preserving resources and reducing or eliminating the harmful impacts of man-made alterations etc. The non-drinkers are assumed to have good sense of responsibility, attitude, and personality in compared to occasional drinkers and regular drinkers' category. They are more aware regarding the environment. They are more concerned for keeping the society healthy and peaceful sustainable for the future.

The human (H) response in Rorschach test, according to Beck's scoring system represents one's capacity and ability to form interpersonal relationships. The relationship might be with family members, peer groups, teachers etc. The findings revealed in table 6 suggest that the Regular drinkers gave significantly more number of human (H) responses than their occasional and non-drinker counterparts. The regular drinkers showed significantly higher level of capacity to form interpersonal relationships than the two other groups.

The findings indicate that regular drinkers have better skills/ability to make social and interpersonal relationships with themselves and in the friend circle to a large extent. An interpersonal relationship is a strong, deep, or close association or acquaintance between two or more people that may range in duration from brief to enduring. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences. Alcoholics, usually, are more susceptible to peer pressures, particularly in the matters of drinking. So, it is not unusual to find that they are in good relationship with their peers.

**Figure 1: Comparison between Regular Drinkers, Occasional Drinkers, and Non-drinkers with respect to Rorschach Variables**



## CONCLUSION

Thus, from the present study, it can be concluded that.

- The non-drinkers have a significantly higher level of environmental awareness and higher level of concern for a healthy, peaceful society which regular drinkers do not show.
- The occasional drinkers show a lower level of cooperative behavior, a lack of agreeableness in comparison to the regular drinkers.
- Regular drinkers were found to have significantly higher level of interpersonal skills.
- Non-drinkers were also found to have significantly higher level of capacity to form interpersonal relationships to the other counterparts.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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