

The Decline of Alcohol Consumption in Japan (1990-2024): An Analysis of Socio-cultural Changes in Japanese Society

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Abstract

Drinking alcohol is an inseparable habit from Japanese society because it is believed to strengthen social bonds. However, since the 1990s, the level of alcohol consumption in Japan has continued to decline, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in 2020. Using data from Ministry of Finance Japan, National Tax Agency Japan, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, National Police Agency, the news articles and related literature, this research examines how the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan began and further analyses whether the drinking culture commonly practiced by Japanese society has undergone changes. Through Talcott Parsons' structural functional theory, it is explained that the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan is a process towards a new equilibrium in Japan's drinking culture. As such, this research contributes to the study of the dynamics of alcohol consumption trends in Japan due to social change in Japanese society. The social change analysis documents the 'perception change' through three external factors that determine Japanese people's decision to change their alcohol consumption trend, which is characterized by a gradual decline in alcohol consumption in Japan. The change in Japanese society's view of alcohol consumption has led to a new dynamic in the current drinking culture, but it does not mean abandoning it altogether.

Keywords: alcohol consumption, Japanese society, lifestyle, social change, culture

1. Introduction

Japan tops the list as the country that consumes the most alcohol (Larsen, 2019). A study from The Leisure Development Research Center in Tokyo states that the rate of alcohol consumption in Japan has quadrupled since 1960 (Alexander, 2013). Alcoholic beverages have long been revered in Japan, where Japanese people still offer them to God and take part in ritual drinking to strengthen their bond with God (Kirin Holdings, 2023). One example is Japan's national alcoholic beverages *Sake*, which is used as an offering on altars for purification rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations because *Sake* is considered a medium to help build relationships between humans and God. With this belief, the Japanese have developed their relationship with alcohol and found value in more than just drinking it. In addition, the culture of drinking alcohol is regarded as a good meaning for some groups and as an integral part of Japanese culture because they see it to initiate and strengthen relationships, which is very common (Larsen, 2019).

Alcoholic beverages also play an important role in everyday life as well as the business and corporate environment in Japan known as *Nomikai* (飲み会). *Nomikai* is a development of the word *Nomination* (飲みニケーション) which means communicating while drinking together (Alexander, 2013). *Nomikai* activities are usually conducted after work and aim to instill loyalty and trust among Japanese workers (WeXpats, 2020). Other evidence of the importance of alcohol in Japan is the easy sale of alcoholic beverages in vending machines (自動販売機 = *Jidouhanbaiki*) as well as the many alcohol-only bar stands designed to resemble noodle shops to cater to workers who use them as a 'medium' to release the stresses of life.

The popularity of drinking culture in Japan can be seen in Figure 1, which shows that in 1989-1995 the adult population in Japan was proportional to the amount of alcohol consumption in Japan, even doubling. In the 2000s, there was a noticeable decline in Japan's alcohol consumption even though the adult population in Japan was increasing. The furthest gap between the adult population and the amount of alcohol consumed began to occur in 2014 when only 80 liters of alcohol were consumed by Japan's approximately 100 million adult population.

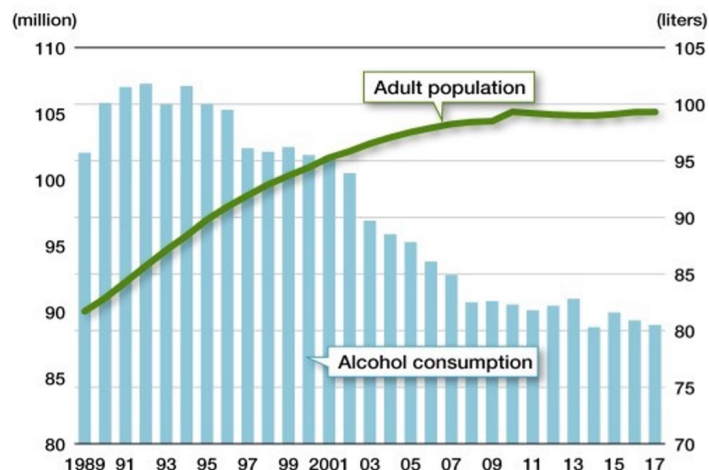


Figure 1 The amount of alcohol consumption in Japan between 1989-2017.

Source: nippon.com (2019)

Another data that can show a decline in alcohol consumption in Japan is a graph from the National Japan Agency published by nippon.com (2019). According a graph, it can be seen that in 1994 the amount of alcohol consumption in Japan was almost double the population of Japan at that time and at the same time this was the beginning of the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan. From 2004 to 2016, there began to be a significant change in that the increase in population in Japan was not proportional to the increase in alcohol consumption in Japan; rather, the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Japan was shrinking amidst a stable population.

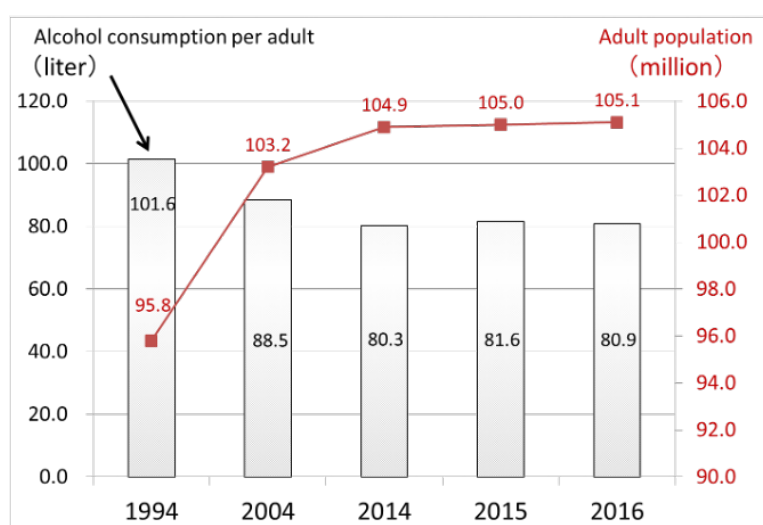


Figure 2 Comparison of Japan's population and alcohol consumption rate in different periods

Source: Matsuyama (2019)

The peak of the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in early 2020 triggered the entire world to move quickly to address the problem, and Japan was no exception. In April 2020, when the state of emergency was first declared, there was a 17.1% drop in alcohol consumption from the same time in the previous year; conversely, there was a year-on-year increase in household spending on alcohol as more people drank at home after the government asked people not to go out (nippon.com, 2021).

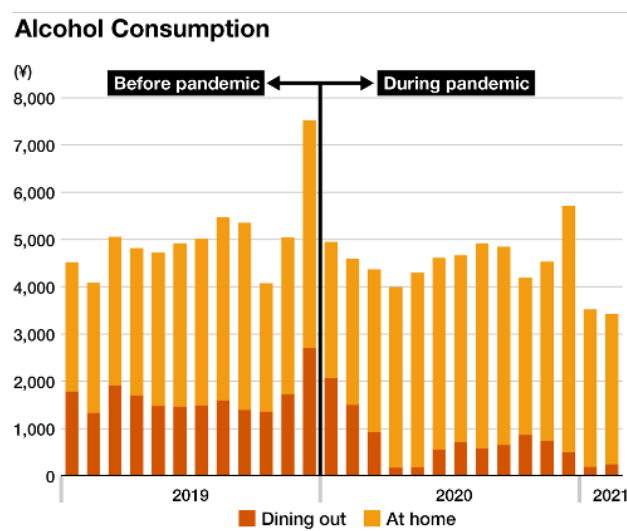


Figure 3 Total alcohol consumption in Japan before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: nippon.com (2021)

In a graph released by nippon.com in 2021, there is a change in the pattern of Japanese people consuming alcohol before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The table explains that before the COVID-19 pandemic, Japanese people preferred to drink alcohol outside the home (in restaurants or izakaya), and spending on it was still quite high. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the trend has shifted to drinking alcohol at home rather than outside due to the Japanese government's restrictions. The most surprising thing is that while household consumption has increased, spending on it has dropped dramatically.

The culmination of the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a shift in the meaning of *Nomikai* (飲み会) and it is feared that the culture may soon disappear due to changes in Japanese attitudes towards alcohol consumption. A survey conducted in 2021 found that for the first time, more Japanese employees were against *Nomikai* culture than in favor of it, with over 60% of respondents believing that workplace drinking

parties were no longer necessary (Richards, 2023). The popularity of *Nomikai* has declined recently, according to data from Nippon Life Assurance, especially among female employees who are concerned about sexual harassment and lack of time for childcare (Nishizawa, 2023).

Another alarming fact is *Sake*, which is one of Japan's iconic alcoholic beverages that is full of cultural values, has also experienced a significant decline in sales. Quoted from nippon.com (2024), the consumption level of *Sake* in 2022 is only 422,000 kilolitres, less than a third of the 1.57 million kilolitres in 1970. This statement is supported by a graph released by the National Tax Agency Japan (Figure 3), which shows that *Sake* consumption in Japan has fallen by 77% since 1973 (1.77 million kilolitres), the peak year for *Sake* consumption in Japan.

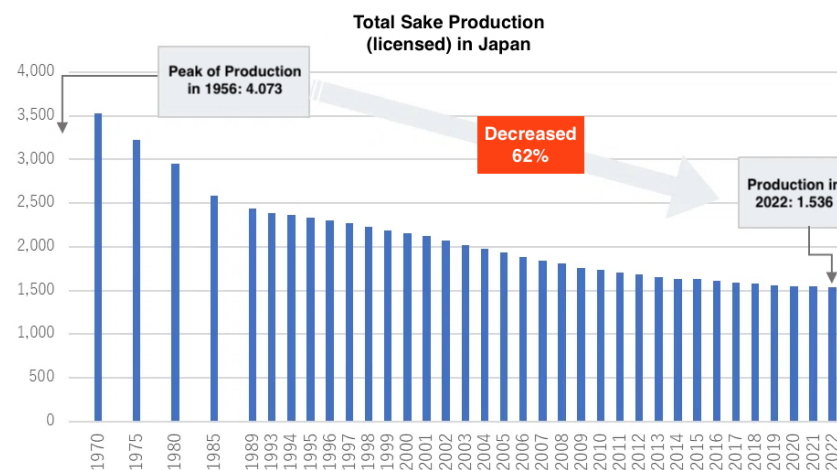


Figure 4 Annual Per Capita Consumption of *Sake* in Japan from 1970-2022.

Source: National Tax Agency Japan, published by Makiuchi (2024)

2. Purposes

Based on the background above, the authors are interested in raising the issue of socio-cultural changes in Japanese society by analyzing the phenomenon of declining alcohol consumption in Japan between 1990 until 2024. The reason we chose the 1990-2024 timeframe is because it shows how alcoholic beverages in Japan gained initial popularity in 1989, where alcohol consumption increased in 1990 and then peaked in 1994, and from 1994 to the present, alcohol consumption in Japan has been steadily declining. Through this research, the authors want to reveal what has changed in the culture of alcohol consumption in Japan, the factors that make Japanese people reduce their alcohol consumption habits, and the impact of declining alcohol consumption on the social changes of Japanese people in their daily lives.

3. Literature Review

The previous research that is referred to in this paper is research on changes in the culture of drinking alcohol in European countries, considering that in the case of East Asian countries, Japan is a country whose consumption continues to decline when compared to China (nippon.com, 2024) and South Korea (Jobst, 2024). Authors chose an article from Beccaria and Rolando (2016) entitled “*The more you know, the better you drink: The new drinking culture in Italian wine production areas.*” This paper discusses the decline in alcohol consumption in Italy in the last 10 years. The findings of this study are that there are interrelated factors in the decline of drinking, including industrialization and urbanization, shifts in alcohol consumption among young people, shifts in attitudes towards drunk people, and increased attention to physical health. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the decline in alcohol consumption in Italy is a slowly transforming socio-cultural change that has led to the importance of informal norms in regulating alcohol consumption at the local level (Beccaria & Rolando, 2016).

The discourse on the socio-cultural changes in Japanese society in consuming alcoholic beverages indicates a contradiction in Japanese social life, especially since Japanese people believe that the main key in social life is social interaction and uniformity. This can be seen from Japanese people who pay great attention to 調和 (*Chouwa*), which is harmony, balance, compatibility, and harmony in society (Nindya, 2017). Japanese people believe that harmony in society is very important and necessary to build stability, so Japanese society is often referred to as a group-oriented society. Takeo’s statement (in Choirunnisa, 2021) also validates the position of alcoholic beverages that have inspired many forms and ways of thinking of Japanese people in their daily lives, making the culture of drinking alcohol a matter of pride for the Japanese people.

4. Theoretical Framework

This paper uses the socio-cultural change approach as a ‘knife’ to analyze the problem formulation in this study. Social change is a phenomenon that has plagued humans throughout the history of human civilization, whose stages start from traditional primitive societies to reach complex modern levels (Handyka, 2023). In the context of cultural transformation, social change is a process in which social, economic, political, and cultural factors change the way people interact, think, and perceive the world around them, as well as the way they identify themselves in a cultural context (Rahayu & Syam, 2021).

The theoretical basis that the author uses is structural functionalism theory by Talcott Parsons. The main idea of structural functional theory is to view social reality as a relationship of community systems that are in balance, namely a unity consisting of interdependent parts, so that changes in one part are seen as causing other changes (Aprilia & Juniarti, 2022). Through this theory, Parsons offers the AGIL model, which is composed of four different subsystems, each of which has a function to solve problems that occur in society (Prasetya et al., 2021). Parsons claims that these four subsystems must exist in a society if it is to survive for a long time among them:

1. A (*Adaptation*) is a system that refers to so that people can survive, they must be able to adjust themselves.
2. G (*Goal attainment*) is a system that must be able to determine a goal that is achieved in accordance with what is designed.
3. I (*Integration*) is a system that must organize the relationship between the parts that are its components.
4. L (*Latency*) is a system that complements, maintains, and repairs both individual motivation and the cultural patterns that create and sustain motivation.

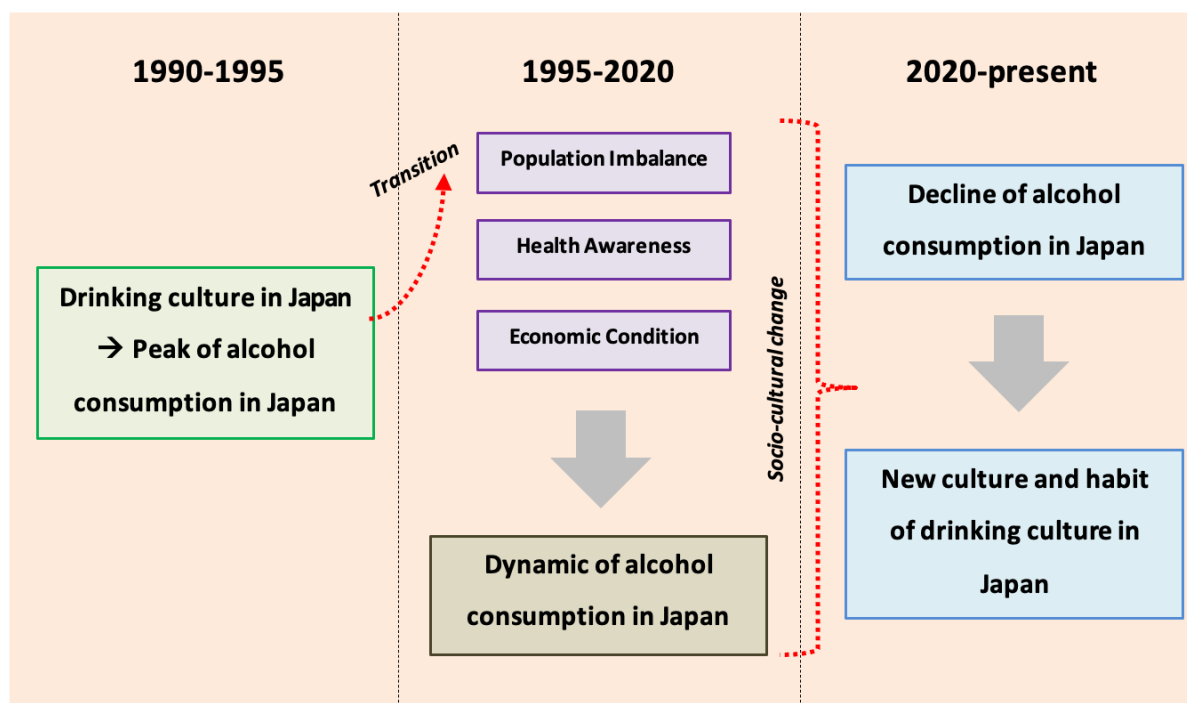


Figure 5 Theoretical Framework (data processed by authors)

Based on the concepts previously described, the theoretical framework used in analyzing this problem can be seen in Figure 5. In the graph, authors divide it into three periods, 1990-1995, when alcohol consumption in Japan was still high; 1995-2020, when there was a transition to a decrease in alcohol consumption in Japan; and 2020-present, when alcohol consumption in Japan is decreasing. The transition in the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Japan signifies socio-cultural changes caused by three factors such as population imbalance, health awareness, and economic condition, which gave rise to a new dynamic in alcohol consumption in Japan. These factors have implications for the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan.

As the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan becomes more evident, a new culture and habit of alcohol consumption is being created in Japan today. The emergence of a new Japanese culture and habit of consuming alcohol is one of the efforts to preserve the culture of drinking alcohol in Japan. This will be analyzed using the concept of structural functionalism theory by Talcott Parsons. Through Figure 6, it can be explained that the socio-cultural change in the case of declining alcohol consumption by Japanese people today is the result of AGIL (Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, and Latency), which are continuous with each other, creating a new balance in the form of ‘new Japanese drinking culture’.

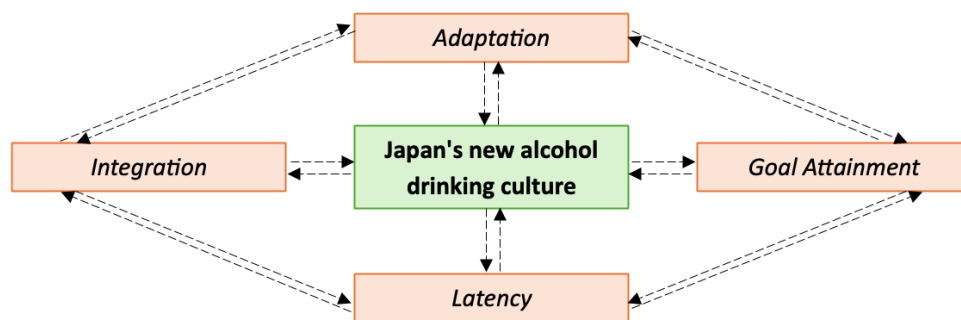


Figure 6 Structural Functional Theory for Japan's new alcohol drinking culture
(data processed by authors)

5. Research Method

This research was conducted using qualitative methods, based on the analysis of socio-cultural change proposed by Talcott Parsons. Qualitative research allows authors to explore little-known areas, gain access to thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences, and observe social processes so that authors gain a deeper and more complete understanding of the human

social world (Kottmann & Reiher, 2020). This paper uses a phenomenological approach with the aim of exploring, understanding, and interpreting the meaning of phenomena, events, and their relationships with people in certain situations (Yusuf, 2014). Regarding the source of research data, authors used the literature study method by utilizing data from Ministry data such as Ministry of Finance Japan, National Tax Agency Japan, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, National Police Agency, the as primer data and then books, scientific articles, and news sites as secondary data. Due to time and cost constraints, authors utilized interviews from news sites as supporting data. The literature study method was chosen because it can provide a comprehensive picture of Japanese people's behaviour in the culture of drinking alcohol from various time periods.

6. Results

In this section, we will discuss the findings related to the factors that led to the change in Japanese people's habit of consuming alcohol and analyze the change in Japanese people's habit of consuming alcohol based on structural functionalism theory by Talcott Parsons.

6.1 Factors contributing to Japan's declining alcohol consumption rate

The findings reveal what has contributed to the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan. In terms of the changes that have occurred over the period 1995-2020, the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan has been influenced by three main factors.

1. Population Imbalance in Japan

The current population of Japan has brought the country to a condition referred to as a super aging nation, which is characterized by a very large composition of elderly residents, leading to various problems, including threats to Japan's economic vitality (Iskandar, 2020). Although the number of people aged 65 and over in Japan is growing, it is not comparable to the number of people aged 15-64 in Japan, who, although their numbers are declining, outnumber the population aged 65 and over. Evidence of this is the graph obtained from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (published by nippon.com) in 2024 that illustrates the population imbalance in Japan, where the number of people aged 65 and above, marked in red, is less than the number of people aged 15-64, marked in orange.

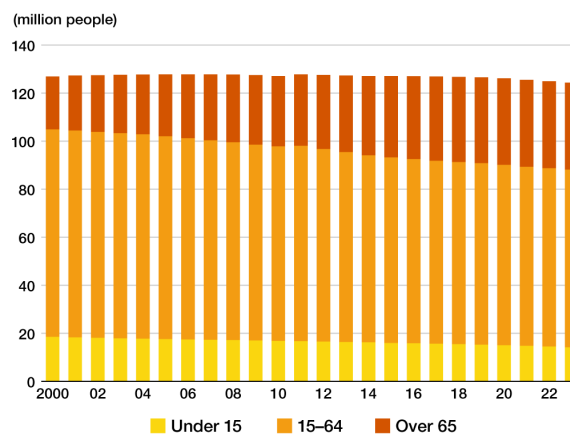


Figure 7 Population Change for Three Key Age Groups in Japan

Source: nippon.com (2024)

The stagnant and even declining population of Japan indirectly affects the consumption of alcoholic beverages in Japan. The increasing number of young people who are starting to avoid alcoholic beverages has led to this activity being followed only by older adults (aged 40 and above). Most Japanese residents aged 40 and above consume alcohol due to work-related needs. This is shown by research from Morikawa et al. (2014), which explains that Japanese residents aged 40-49 consume alcohol to cope with work-related stress. With higher employee mobility than ever before, the traditional Japanese lifetime employment system is experiencing fluctuations. Japan's economic downturn has accelerated employee turnover. Moreover, the old methods commonly practiced in the work environment of Japanese companies are starting to be abandoned by the new generation. Most young employees—and those not so young—disagree with overtime and drinking with their bosses (Manning, 2024). Japanese millennials not only experience a drastic decline in alcohol consumption, but they are also unafraid to state that they avoid alcohol (Schreiber, 2020). Despite these changes, drinking alcohol remains an important part of social and business culture in Japan. However, there is an increasing acceptance of individual choices and a more balanced approach to alcohol consumption (Martin, 2020).

2. Increased Health Awareness

The increasing health consciousness of the Japanese public is characterized by the decreasing frequency of drinking alcohol itself. A graph released by Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in 2016 (Figure 8) shows that the number of alcohol drinkers in Japan is only about 42.1% in various drinking durations, which means that more than 50% of Japanese people rarely or even do not drink alcohol anymore.

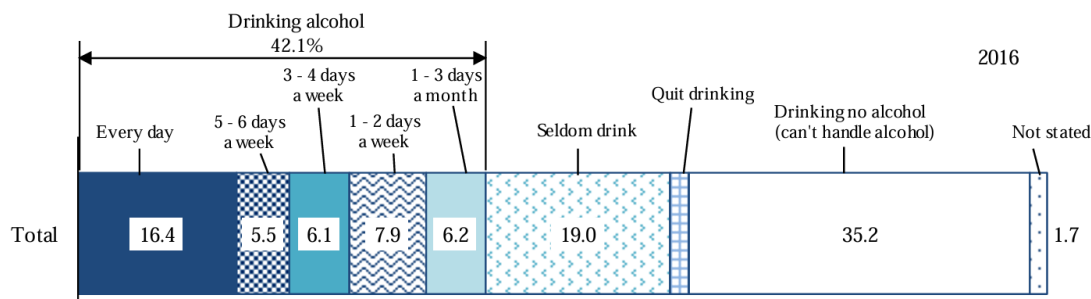


Figure 8 Comparison of the number of alcohol drinkers and non-drinkers in Japan

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2016)

The next supporting data is the number of alcohol drinkers in terms of age. Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare released a comparison of the number of alcohol drinkers by age group (male and female) in 1989 and 2019. As a result, for both men and women, the number of alcohol drinkers in the 20-29 age group (red bar graph) has decreased significantly compared to other age groups.

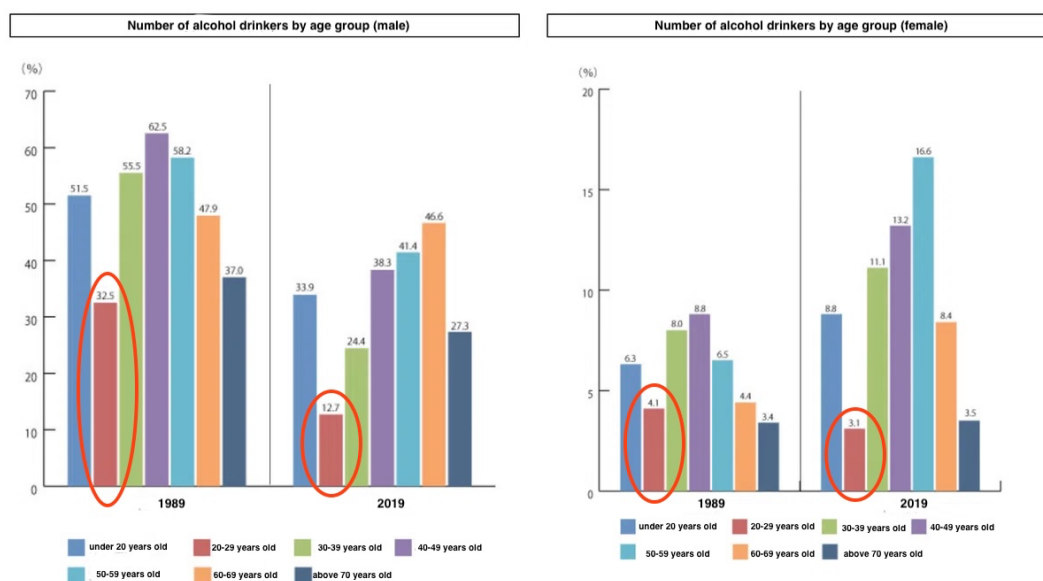


Figure 9 Number of alcohol drinkers by age – Male and Female

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2022)

The habit of Japanese people, especially young people, drinking less alcohol can be attributed to the trend among young people to reduce alcohol consumption and switch to

a healthier, alcohol-free lifestyle (Movendi International, 2020). This has led to the rise in popularity of both low- and non-alcoholic beverages. Suntory's website (2023) explains that 40% of Japanese people they surveyed now prefer low- or non-alcoholic beverages due to better taste and health awareness. Although alcohol is deeply embedded in people's lives through tradition and culture, inappropriate consumption of alcoholic beverages can lead to health problems (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare Japan, 2024). Taking into account health awareness and the desire to choose more sensible beverages, Japanese consumers are seeing an increasing interest in low-alcohol beverages. The increasing use of low-alcohol beverages indicates a significant shift from conventional drinking habits to choosing beverages with low or no alcohol content (Manning, 2024). Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare responded to the phenomenon of increased focus on health trends in society by issuing alcohol consumption guidelines that prioritize health and encourage responsible alcohol consumption in response to Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. The guidelines are expected to assist people in determining the appropriate amount to drink and the drinking behaviour that suits their individual circumstances.

3. Economic Condition in Japan

Indirectly, the economic conditions that prevailed in Japan for more than two decades contributed to Japanese people's interest in consuming alcohol. There are two main concerns regarding the influence of Japan's economic conditions on the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan. The first is the Japan Economic Bubble phenomenon, a condition where the Japanese economy entered a period of severe recession as a result of excessive capital investment during the bubble period and the heating up of the real estate sector (Ministry of Finance Japan, 2012). Tsuru Tsuyoshi (in Nakagawa interview, 2024) explained that in the 1960s, almost the entire Japanese population of working age consumed alcoholic beverages until it reached its peak in 1990 and slowly experienced a decline in the population of Japanese people who drank alcohol, shrinking by 30%. The phenomenon of the Japan Economic Bubble in the late 1990s indirectly played a major role in the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan. This phenomenon had a major impact on the income of the Japanese people at that time, and in order for the needs of the Japanese people to be met amid economic difficulties, there were costs that needed to be cut, one of which was the cost of alcoholic beverages, which had an impact on the decline in the consumption and sales of alcohol in Japan. Second is the tax on alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverage tax is one of the sources of economic

revenue in Japan, which began to be imposed in 1901 (just before the Russo-Japanese War) on the grounds that these drinks are considered luxury goods that are not consumed at home but are provided in entertainment venues (Nikkei Japan, 2021). However, in 1999 alcoholic beverage tax revenues began to decline as the volume of taxable liquor had also declined (National Tax Agency, 2022). With the current popularity of non- and low-alcoholic beverages, National Tax Agency of Japan created a new alcoholic beverage tax policy called the unification tax that will be gradually implemented starting in 2020. With this policy, it is expected that the tax on alcoholic beverages and non/low-alcoholic beverages will be unified since alcoholic beverages currently face competition from non/low-alcoholic beverages. As shown in Figure 10, the tax on alcoholic beverages (beer) will gradually decrease while the tax on third beer (non-low-alcoholic beverages) will slowly increase until finally both types of beverages have the same tax.

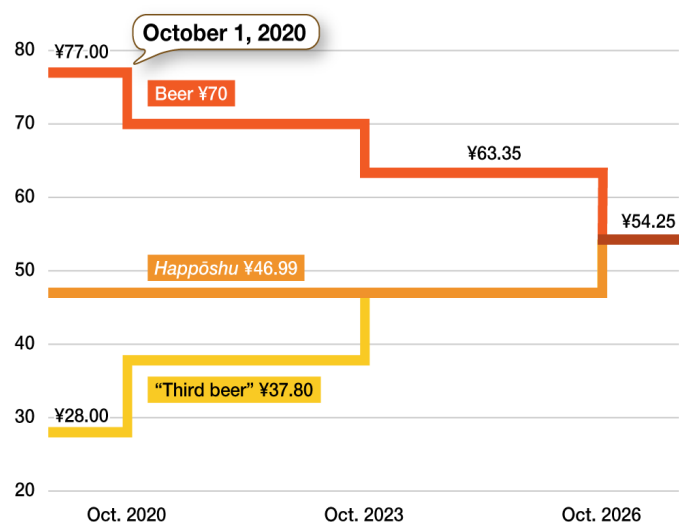


Figure 10 Tax Rate Unification for Alcohol Beverages

Source: nippon.com (2020)

The decline in alcohol consumption in Japan has resulted in socio-cultural changes that can be seen in the following matrix.

Matrix of Socio-Cultural Change of Japanese Society towards declining alcohol consumption in Japan

No.	Aspects of Change	Socio-cultural Change	
		Before	After
1.	Population Imbalance in Japan	Although Japan's old and young populations have become more balanced, both age groups still drink alcohol.	Currently, the young (productive) population in Japan is avoiding drinking alcohol due to several considerations, including social and health considerations.
2.	Increase Health Awareness	Both the old and the young drink alcohol regularly for various lengths of time.	As young people in Japan are avoiding alcohol for health reasons, the popularity of non-alcoholic drinks is increasing.
3.	Economic Condition in Japan	The economy was in collapse at the time, with fluctuating incomes causing people to rethink drinking alcohol due to high prices and taxes.	With the popularity of non/low-alcohol drinks, Japan's NTA is now issuing a tax rate where drinks with normal alcohol content are taxed progressively lower, while non/low-alcohol drinks are taxed progressively higher.

Through the matrix above, we can see the cause-and-effect relationship of the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan. As a result of the continuous decline in alcohol consumption in Japan, the culture of drinking alcohol in Japan has been transformed, and Japanese people are slowly discovering a new, more humane drinking culture. This indicates that the drinking culture in Japan is not something that can be eliminated, as it is seen as something that enriches people's lives and a good communication tool between individuals (Asahi Beer, 2016).

6.2 The Decline of Alcohol Consumptions in Japan from the Perspective of Talcott Parsons' Structural Functional Theory

The decline in alcohol consumption in Japan has been proven to have changed the old order of drinking culture that Japanese people used to follow. This change in habits, when viewed in a socio-cultural scope, can be seen holistically through an analysis of social change that emphasizes elements of stability, function, integrity, coordination, and consensus (Rohati et al., 2021). According to this view, the community system consists of many interrelated components, is symbiotic-mutualistic in nature, and tends towards balance but remains dynamic. In detail, this section analyzes the chronology of the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan

to create a new culture of drinking alcohol in Japan from the perspective of structural functional theory initiated by Talcott Parsons. Based on this theory, society is a social system that consists of parts or elements that are interrelated and united in balance. Changes that occur in one part will also bring changes to other parts (Rohati et al., 2021). Parsons considered that to create an orderly society, it can be analyzed through an action known as the AGIL scheme (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, Latency). The AGIL system offered by Talcott Parsons can explain if the changing culture of drinking alcohol in Japan is due to the continuous cause-and-effect relationship between various elements that slowly create a new culture without leaving its original identity, which is in accordance with the AGIL concept offered by Parsons.

1. A (*Adaptation*)

The decline in alcohol consumption in Japan, which has led to the formation of a new drinking culture in Japan, is one example of the adaptation process of Japanese people's character in following the drinking culture. The adaptation of Japanese character that is evident in the new drinking culture in Japan can be seen in two ways. The first is in terms of the type of alcohol they drink. In the past, Japanese people used to drink high levels of alcohol, but nowadays Japanese people prefer non-alcoholic or low-alcohol drinks. This indicates that Japanese people have begun to adopt a healthy lifestyle but want to maintain their inherent drinking culture. The second thing is the duration of drinking alcohol. In the past, Japanese people could consume alcohol more than once a day, but nowadays Japanese people tend to limit the duration of their drinking. This is because Japanese people are increasingly aware of the dangers of excessive drinking, so they are wiser in consuming alcohol.

2. G (*Goal Attainment*)

The decline in alcohol consumption in Japan and the emergence of a new drinking culture in Japan are closely related to the achievement of the goals that Japanese society aims to attain. Basically, human behaviour always has a certain purpose. However, sometimes individual goals do not always align with the larger social environment's goals. Therefore, individuals must adapt to the greater interests of groups or society (Rohati et al., 2021). When Japanese society has begun to adapt to new habits in the drinking culture in Japan, there is certainly a larger goal that is indirectly accumulating within each individual. It cannot be denied that the goal of the Japanese people wanting to live healthier is clearly visible from the chronology of the decline in alcohol consumption in Japan to the formation of a new drinking culture in Japan. But the main focus of the creation of the new drinking culture in Japan is that the Japanese

people want the alcohol-drinking culture to be preserved, but the effects of alcohol should not harm those around them. Therefore, the essence of the alcohol-drinking culture in Japan today is not merely gathering to drink as much alcohol as possible, but rather that the alcohol-drinking culture serves as a means to strengthen relationships among individuals, whether they are drinkers or non-drinkers. Everyone is entitled to experience the positive essence of this culture.

3. I (*Integration*)

The process of changing the drinking culture in Japan is an integration effort made by the actors involved to create a harmonized order regarding the drinking culture in Japan. Integration is needed to coordinate relationships between members to strengthen social solidarity. The integration process will run well if the components in the AGL element are connected, but if these components are not united, social solidarity will be destroyed if each component of a system shows individual interests (Rohati et al., 2021). This is in line with Parsons' statement, which explains that the key to maintaining integrity is internalization and socialization (Sulistiawati & Nasution, 2022). Thus, the process of changing the culture of drinking alcohol in Japan is not the result of the hard work of a group of individuals alone, but this phenomenon is the result of integration between Japanese society, the Japanese government, and Japanese alcohol companies that continue to work together to reduce the negative impact of alcohol in Japan with various policies. Although the culture of drinking alcohol is highly valued in Japan, in order to make it more acceptable to everyone in Japan, all three parties must work together to reduce negative stereotypes about the culture of drinking alcohol. Even if it means sacrificing the amount of consumption and sales of alcohol, at least the negative stereotypes of drinking culture can be minimized in Japan, and the process of achieving balance will become easier.

4. L (*Latency*)

The process of changing the drinking culture in Japan is an attempt to achieve balance. For this balance to be realized, a system is needed that can enhance, complement, and maintain the cultural patterns in each element. In Japan, the culture of drinking alcohol is considered something that must be maintained because drinking alcohol is not only about culinary matters but also plays a social role in strengthening relationships between people and is considered a sacred drink (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare Japan, 2022). Therefore, the Japanese society, government, and alcohol industry continue to work on preservation so that the new drinking culture in Japan can quickly reach its balance in the following ways:

- a. From the government side, several ministries have issued various appeals to the public in the form of posters and even passed laws that regulate drinking levels. For example, the National Police Agency released posters on the dangers of drunk driving (National Police Agency Japan, 2017), and the Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare passed the Basic Law on Measures to Combat Alcohol-Related Health Hazards (Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare Japan, 2024).
- b. In terms of the Japanese alcohol industry, some Japanese beer companies created campaigns on healthy and humane drinking. One of the most famous drinking campaigns in Japan is from Asahi Beer, which carries the theme *Sumadori* (スマドリ) which means a new lifestyle where everyone can freely choose their drink according to the mood and occasion of the day (Asahi Beer, 2021).

Through the explanation of AGIL aspects above, we can analyze that the decline of alcohol consumption in Japan that slowly changes the culture of drinking alcohol in Japan is a journey of Japanese people finding a new balance in the culture of drinking alcohol. The process towards a new balance in Japan's drinking culture indicates that there is an effort between the actors involved (Japanese society, the Japanese government, and Japanese alcohol companies) indirectly cooperating with each other in an effort to preserve the culture of drinking alcohol that has become a hereditary culture in Japan. Supported by social change factors such as population inequality, health awareness, crime prevention, and economic conditions in Japan, these conditions influence the actions of the actors involved in the phenomenon. Indirectly, social change and the actors involved in this phenomenon transform each other and synergize in shaping a new drinking culture in Japan according to the situation and conditions that occur in the country.

7. Conclusion

The decline in alcohol consumption between 1990 and 2024 has led to a change in the drinking culture (*Nomikai*) in Japan. Today, Japan's drinking culture is evolving with the dynamics of the country. Although the balance of the new drinking culture in Japan has not yet reached its peak, what is certain is that the old drinking culture is no longer relevant in Japan. With the current living conditions in Japan, Japanese society will continue to find ways and innovations to make the current drinking culture enjoyable for all and not bring any significant harm to everyone.

8. Further Consideration

8.1 Limitations of this study

This research is inseparable from several limitations that need to be recognized, including

1. The object of research is general.

Our research is general in nature, which means that not all areas in Japan have experienced changes in drinking culture. Through this research, the majority of the changes in drinking culture occurred in major cities in Japan, which means that it is possible that in rural areas drinking culture is still popular, and this requires further research.

2. Limited data sources

Due to limited time and funding, our research mostly utilized secondary data sources such as books, journals, and news articles as our research materials. We also tried to collect data from ministries in Japan, but we were unable to complete the whole process. In order for our research to be academically accountable, we took data from the ministry in Japan as primary data and elaborated on it with the secondary data that had been obtained so that the results of the research that we conveyed were tested for validity.

3. Limited knowledge of Japanese.

It cannot be denied that the author's intermediate level of Japanese language ability is an obstacle in translating data sources written in Japanese. Therefore, in addition to utilizing the translator application, we also translate independently, and if we find difficulties in translating, we will discuss and interpret the data sources together.

8.2 Suggestions for Future Research

This research can be further developed in various aspects. First, research on changes in drinking culture can be conducted specifically in rural Japan to analyze whether people in rural Japan are experiencing changes in their drinking culture. Second, research on changes in drinking culture can be analyzed in other aspects, such as gender. Research can be developed by analyzing whether all women in Japan now avoid alcohol or only certain groups and whether the percentage of women avoiding alcohol more than men is the same in all regions or only certain regions. Finally, this research can be conducted using a mixed-method approach, i.e., through questionnaires, and the results of questionnaires can be elaborated with the results of literature studies so that the results of the data obtained are clearer and more detailed.

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