

# The Gender in the Glass: Female Drinking Behavior and “Moral Dilemmas”

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## Abstract

From its inception, bars have been predominantly male-dominated spaces. The moment women step into bars reflects the changes in their own drinking behavior and the updated societal perception of women’s roles. The drinking habits, attitudes, and the impact of gender perception on drinking behaviors of bar consumers are mainly explored. The survey utilizes convenience sampling and snowball sampling, and the data undergo reliability analysis and visualization research. The Kruskal-Wallis test for multiple independent samples is employed to analyze the impact of gender cognition on drinking behavior. Empirical analysis reveals that different genders exhibit varying responses regarding drinking habits, attitudes towards drinking, and behavior towards being persuaded to drink. It is also found that the attitudes of bar consumers towards women drinking determine their different views on women’s drinking. The act of raising a glass in bars is no longer considered merely an adjunct practice in male-dominated culture but is recognized as a practical platform for reconstructing female identity and public presence in an evolving social context.

## Keywords

Bar Drinking, Drinking Behavior, Female Consumption, Cross-Tabulation Analysis

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## 1. Introduction

Bars, as leisure venues, are distinguished from restaurants and other food-service establishments by the fact that they serve alcohol rather than meals. Their hallmark characteristics are a full complement of beverages, specialised glassware for different drinks, and the essential equipment and tools required for bartending (Feng, 2023). Because of their specific historical development, bars have played

varying roles in Western societies. During the U.S. Prohibition era (1920-1933), for example, they became emblems of underground culture and key sites for resisting official regulation while fostering informal sociality. Yet a historical review shows that, owing to their relative seclusion and unruly ambience, bars have been male-dominated social spaces from the outset. Although the feminist movements that gathered momentum in the late twentieth century enabled ever-larger numbers of women to enter bars and drink, men still occupy the dominant position within these venues.

As social spaces, bars perform multiple functions that render them important cultural sites. First, they provide an environment for relaxation and interaction in which distinctions of social status, age, and gender are temporarily bracketed, and alcohol serves as a medium for transcending ordinary social barriers. Second, the inclusion of music, dancing, games, and other forms of entertainment augments patrons' enjoyment and overall experiential engagement. Finally, bars serve as arenas for the pursuit of identity affirmation and social belonging. Because individual bars cultivate distinct cultural atmospheres, patrons select venues that align with their own preferences, thereby constructing and experiencing a sense of affiliation.

The moment a woman crosses the threshold of a bar signals not merely a shift in her personal drinking practices; it also mirrors evolving social understandings of women's roles and ongoing progress toward gender equality. Throughout this process—irrespective of whether she drinks, what she drinks, or how much she drinks—prevailing societal perceptions shape her drinking behaviour. At the same time, women's drinking practices feed back into those perceptions, generating further change. Accordingly, by treating bar patrons as subjects of observation and inquiry, researchers can discern how both men and women conceptualise female drinking. Such insights, in turn, provide a valuable window onto the dynamics of gender equality within bar culture.

## 2. Literature Review

Alcohol occupies a pivotal place in the everyday lives of Chinese people. Earlier scholarship on drinking culture focused largely on the practices of ethnic minorities and on the rich symbolism of alcohol in classical poetry. Because alcoholic beverages were scarce in pre-modern societies, their production and distribution were monopolised by the elite; hence the capacity to manufacture, choose, or purchase high-quality liquor signified both wealth and power (Chrzan, 2013; Huang, 2024).

More recently, researchers have turned to gender as an analytic lens through which to interrogate the meanings embedded in alcohol culture. Cross-cultural studies have shown that differences in drinking practices—and in the consequences those practices entail—are themselves culturally produced (Wilsnack, Wilsnack, & Obot, 2005). In the ancient societies of Western Asia, for example, alcoholic beverages were not only sources of nutrition but also played integral roles in social and

political structures, including the construction and regulation of gender roles (Joffe, 1998). Contemporary research similarly documents gendered disparities in the social and health outcomes of alcohol use, underscoring the normative force of drinking practices in shaping gender expectations (Warner, 1997).

Within this body of work, the bar has emerged as a central site of inquiry. Historically, bars began as leisure spaces for society's lower strata; they later served as venues for intellectual gatherings and finally became mainstream consumer spaces. Lloyd (2005) has shown how young adults' drinking practices in urban bars are mediated by gender and class, illuminating the relationship between social space and gender relations. Griffin and Nott (2005) review the literature on gender and drinking behaviour, tracing the formation and impact of gender distinctions within bar culture.

Introduced into China as a foreign cultural form, the bar has from the outset functioned domestically as a distinctive arena whose evolution is anchored in symbolic associations with freedom, indulgence, and transgression (Huang & Liu, 2021). Adopting a consumption-culture perspective, Bao (2006) shows that Shanghai residents' bar consumption displays a pronounced consumerist orientation: the bar becomes a hybrid space where globalising trends fuse with local particularities and where an "other-culture imagination" is enacted. From the vantage point of cultural sociology, Li (2014) conceptualises the bar both as a "community habitat" and as a locus of "paradoxical carnival."

Focusing on young patrons, Wang and Shi (2009) identify patterns of "deviant consumption" within bars and call for the cultivation of healthier consumption ideals among urban youth. Working within a society-of-the-spectacle framework, Liu and Huang (2021) introduce the intertwined concepts of the gendered spectacle and mutual spectacle: gender-themed décor and gendered practices act as spectacles for one another, mutually reinforcing and jointly constructing the bar's gendered landscape. Employing the notion of liminal space, they further show how young women negotiate between older and newer gender norms in order to balance pleasure, desire, and dignity within this highly gendered consumption setting. Huang (2024) subsequently characterises the gender politics embodied in such leisure practices as an "individualised practice lacking feminist consciousness."

Finally, drawing on theories of consumer society and the spectacle, Feng (2023) analyses the motives behind young women's bar consumption. She argues that women's spatial and bodily practices oscillate between actively consuming bars—and one another's bodies—as symbolic resources and being shaped or disciplined by the bar environment itself, thereby generating a consumption mode that is simultaneously agentic and constraining.

### 3. Research Design

This study employed a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling to recruit patrons who consume alcohol in bars. The survey was designed to

elicit respondents' drinking habits and motivations, to compare male and female drinking behaviours and attitudes within the bar setting, and to gauge how different drinker groups perceive the practice of *quanjiu* (pressuring others to drink) and whether such social pressure affects their own drinking routines. On this basis, the analysis examines how women comport themselves in a traditionally male-dominated venue and assesses the extent to which notions of gender equality are being accepted and enacted in practice.

Guided by the study objectives and informed by a review of the relevant literature, the questionnaire was refined through a pilot test, after which wording and item order were adjusted to produce the final survey instrument. Based on the survey objectives and by reviewing relevant literature, the questionnaire was adjusted according to the pre-survey results to form the final survey questionnaire. The sampling frame for this survey was limited to bar-goers, and the questionnaire was distributed online. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used to select participants. The question on the "frequency of drinking in bars" was set to screen the participants, and a minimum time of 3 minutes was required to answer the questionnaire in order to control sampling errors. A total of 334 questionnaires were collected. After applying screening items and data-quality checks, 45 responses were deemed invalid and removed, yielding 289 valid cases. All analyses reported below are based on these 289 valid questionnaires.

## **4. Questionnaire Data Analysis**

### **4.1. Pilot Investigation Data Analysis and Questionnaire Refinement**

To enhance the effectiveness and rationality of the questionnaire, a Pilot investigation was initially conducted among the survey participants prior to the Formal investigation. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed, and 45 valid ones were recovered, with an Effective Recovery Rate of 90%. Subsequently, reliability and Validity Analysis were performed on the survey results. It was found that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was 0.691, suggesting that the reliability of the questionnaire was acceptable. In the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure was 0.629, and the P-value was less than 0.05, indicating that the questionnaire was marginally suitable for Factor Analysis, and the structural design of the questionnaire was satisfactory. Therefore, in order to improve the effectiveness of the questionnaire, modifications were made to it.

Since it's inevitable to come across respondents who have never visited a bar, the option "Never been" was added to the question "How often do you drink at a bar per month?" Considering that some individuals may opt for non-alcoholic beverages at a bar, the question "Do you choose non-alcoholic drinks when at a bar?" was added to the section on drinking habits.

### **4.2. Processing and Analysis of Formal Investigation Data**

#### **4.2.1. Data Processing and Inspection**

A total of 334 questionnaires were distributed in this survey, and 289 valid ques-

tionnaires were retrieved. The Effective Recovery Rate was 86.53%. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, reliability and Validity Analysis were performed on these 289 questionnaires.

As shown in **Table 1** and **Table 2**, the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient is 0.771, which indicates that the questionnaire is highly reliable. The questionnaire is well-designed. Meanwhile, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure is 0.790, and the P-value is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is correlation among the variables, and the selected variables are suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 1.** The reliability analysis table of Formal investigation.

Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficient	Standardized Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficient	Number of items
0.771	0.782	10

**Table 2.** The validity analysis table of Formal investigation.

Item	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	0.790
Approximate Chi-Square of Bartlett’s Sphericity Test	952.062
Degrees of freedom	45
Statistical significance	0.000

#### 4.2.2. Descriptive Analysis of the Bar-Drinking Population

As shown in **Table 3**, among the 289 valid questionnaires, 40.8% are from males and 59.2% are from females, suggesting that the sample data is relatively stable. Secondly, 73% of the sample are aged between 18 and 30, and 17.6% are between 30 and 40, indicating that the main target audience of the bar-drinking population is young people aged 18 to 40. Among the surveyed group, students and enterprise employees make up a relatively large proportion, accounting for a total of 65.4%, followed by public servants. As a result, the reasons could be roughly inferred: The openness and inclusiveness of the youth group make them more willing to experience new things, and their physical condition and real-life situation also make them more suitable for drinking in bars. Moreover, students account for a relatively high proportion. Firstly, they have plenty of free time and most of their living expenses are covered by their families. Secondly, they are bold enough to try new things. Thirdly, they are easily influenced by the herd mentality.

**Table 3.** Basic characteristics of the people who drink in bars.

Population characteristics	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentages
Gender	Male	118	40.8%	40.8%
	Female	171	59.2%	100.0%

## Continued

Age	Under 18	10	3.5%	3.5%
	18 - 30	211	73.0%	76.5%
	30 - 40	51	17.6%	94.1%
	Over 40	17	5.9%	100.0%
Education	High school or below	37	12.8%	12.8%
	Bachelor's and associate degrees	207	71.6%	84.4%
	Postgraduate degree and above	45	15.6%	100.0%
Occupation	Student	98	33.9%	33.9%
	Civil servant	45	15.6%	49.5%
	Corporate employee	91	31.5%	81.0%
	Freelancer	54	18.7%	99.7%
	Others	1	0.3%	100.0%

#### 4.2.3. Drinking Habits of the Bar-Drinking Population

Fernández Rodríguez et al. (2019) studied the similarities and differences among adolescents and young adults in Asturias regarding drinking patterns, alcohol abuse behaviors, and the social meanings they ascribe to these behaviors. The results indicated that gender and age variables interact in the process of learning about drinking, motivation formation, and expectation construction. Specifically, women gradually regain control over their bodies and behaviors, tend to drink moderately, and reflect on their past risky behaviors. Pinar, Ekebas-Turedi and Basfirinci (2021) investigated whether American millennials have gender stereotypes when classifying drinks as “masculine”, “feminine”, or “neutral”, and analyzed the consumption intentions of millennial men and women towards gender-stereotyped drinks. It was found that the gender impression of beverages indeed exists. For instance, drinks like Diet Coke and fruit juice are regarded as “feminine”, whereas protein drinks, energy drinks, and whiskey are considered “masculine”. Secondly, consumption intention is associated with gender impression. Men are more likely to consume “masculine” beverages, while women are more prone to choose “feminine” ones. Finally, consumers tend to select products that match their gender identity, which also validates the “self-consistency theory”.

To understand the drinking habits of bar-goers, cross-tabulation analysis and the chi-square test will be used to explore the differences among consumers of different genders in terms of drinking frequency at bars, the most commonly consumed drinks in bars and the amount of alcohol consumed per occasion. In this way, within the context of the current bar-drinking culture, whether drinking habits are influenced by gender can be determined.

As can be seen from Table 4, the *P*-values of the chi-square test for the fre-

quency and amount of alcohol consumption in bars are both less than 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, they indicate that gender has a significant impact on the above two drinking habits, and there are obvious differences in the frequency and amount of alcohol consumption in bars between genders.

**Table 4.** Influence of gender on the frequency and amount of alcohol consumption.

Gender	Q5-1	Q5-2	Q5-3	Q7-1	Q7-2	Q7-3	Q7-4	Q7-5
Male	35.81%	59.02%	38.46%	26.36%	46.08%	67.35%	57.24%	0%
Female	64.19%	40.98%	61.54%	73.64%	53.92%	32.65%	42.86%	100%
P-value		0.005				0.000		

Note: Q5-1: 1 - 3 times; Q5-2: 3 - 6 times; Q5-3: More than 6 times; Q7-1: As long as there are no discomfort symptoms; Q7-2: As long as one feels dizzy and unsteady on feet; Q7-3: Symptoms such as nausea and vomiting occur; Q7-4: Memory blackout the next day after drinking; Q7-5: Others.

According to the survey, among consumers who visit bars 1 - 3 times and more than 6 times a month, women account for 64.186% and 61.538% respectively. Among those who go 3 - 6 times a month, women make up 40.984%. This indicates that currently, regardless of gender, people visit bars quite often. Meanwhile, regarding the amount of alcohol consumed, most women prefer to drink as much as they like, while most men stop drinking only after experiencing symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. However, a small number of women stop when they encounter physical abnormalities (such as allergies). This is similar to the research findings of María Aránzazu Fernández Rodríguez and others. Most women have good control over their bodies and behaviors, and their drinking habits also tend to be moderate.

From **Table 5**, the *P*-value of the chi-square test for the influence of gender on the type of alcohol consumed is less than 0.05. Therefore, there are significant differences in the types of drinks consumed in bars among different genders. According to the survey, women in bars tend to choose cocktails and low-alcohol drinks. Some women choose not to drink and instead opt for non-alcoholic beverages. In contrast, men are more inclined to choose beer and cocktails, and a small number of them choose Chinese liquor in bars. Meanwhile, 75.087% of consumers choose non-alcoholic beverages, with a higher proportion being female consumers. This is quite similar to the research conclusions of Musa Pinar, Ceren Ekebas-Turedi and others. Most women choose more “feminine” low-alcohol drinks and non-alcoholic beverages, while men prefer “masculine” drinks such as beer and Chinese liquor.

#### 4.2.4. Drinking Attitudes of People Who Drink in Bars

Alcohol is a stimulant for most people. According to the survey, among those who go to bars to drink, 67.474% of consumers believe that drinking is beneficial to health, 16.263% think it's neither beneficial nor harmful, and 16.263% believe it's harmful to health. Additionally, we'll analyze the reasons why consumers go to bars and the factors that influence their choice to drink in bars in the follow-

ing text.

**Table 5.** Influence of gender on drinking varieties.

Gender	Q6-1	Q6-2	Q6-3	Q6-4	Q6-5	Q6-6	Q6-7	P-value
Female	19.88%	32.16%	56.73%	47.37%	56.73%	12.28%	2.92%	0.009
Male	27.97%	49.15%	58.47%	37.29%	33.90%	14.41%	1.70%	

Note: Q6-1: Red wine; Q6-2: Beer; Q6-3: Cocktails/mixed drinks; Q6-4: Low-alcohol drinks (e.g., Rio); Q6-5: Fruit wines (e.g., plum wine); Q6-6: Western spirits such as whiskey; Q6-7: Others.

From **Table 6**, the P-value of the chi-square test is less than 0.05. Therefore, there's a significant difference between gender and the reasons why consumers choose to drink in bars. That is, consumers of different genders have different reasons for choosing to drink in bars. According to the survey, women are more likely to drink in bars during friend get-togethers, stress relief, and festival celebrations, while men are more likely to drink in bars during stress relief, friend get-togethers, and work-related social events.

**Table 6.** Reasons for consumers to drink in bars.

Gender	Q8-1	Q8-2	Q8-3	Q8-4	Q8-5	Q8-6	Q8-7	P-value
Female	15.21%	69.01%	67.25%	35.6%	46.78%	13.45%	0.59%	0.001
Male	32.20%	55.93%	67.80%	30.51%	27.97%	4.24%	0.85%	

Note: Q8-1: Business entertainment; Q8-2: Gathering with friends; Q8-3: Relaxation and stress relief; Q8-4: Festival celebration; Q8-5: Entertainment; Q8-6: Curiosity; Q8-7: Others.

Nyakweba et al. (2015) conducted a survey on the bars in the CBD area of Kisii Town, Kenya, and analyzed the factors influencing consumers' visits to bars. The results showed that the main factors influencing consumers' choice of bars include drink prices, service quality, bar environment, geographical location, and entertainment facilities.

From **Table 7**, the P-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, gender has no impact on the factors influencing consumers' choice of bars for drinking. According to the survey, consumers pay more attention to the service quality, safety, atmosphere, infrastructure, and geographical location when choosing a bar.

**Table 7.** Factors influencing consumers' choice of bars for drinking.

Gender	Q11-1	Q11-2	Q11-3	Q11-4	Q11-5	Q11-6	Q11-7	Q11-8	P-value
Female	45.61%	50.88%	61.99%	68.42%	55.56%	40.35%	31.58%	11.70%	0.214
Male	39.83%	50.00%	59.32%	43.22%	44.92%	26.27%	17.80%	5.08%	

Note: Q11-1: Geographical location of the bar; Q11-2: Infrastructure of the bar; Q11-3: Service quality of the bar; Q11-4: Safety of the bar; Q11-5: Atmosphere of the bar; Q11-6: Consumption situation of the bar; Q11-7: Attention to the taste and grade of the wine; Q11-8: Consumer group.

### 4.3. The Influence of Gender Cognition on Drinking Behavior

Scholar Huang (2024) argues that the status of women in modern society has been transformed by neoliberalism, consumerism, and individualism. We should re-examine the practices and reflections of women at the micro-level in consumer culture to understand the changes and development of gender roles and gender awareness in different social and cultural contexts. Meanwhile, thanks to the long-standing cultivation of the equality concept by state feminism, the one-child policy, and the development of the market economy, young women in contemporary China have little obvious gender bias during their early personality-forming stage. They also embrace the individualistic values that emphasize personal desires and choices at an early age. However, precisely for this reason, young women who frequent bars actually possess “advanced” gender awareness and engage in subversive and reflective practices and reflections regarding gender. Nevertheless, these discussions generally lack awareness of male-centered culture (Huang, 2024). So, we will use the Kruskal-Wallis test for multiple independent samples to analyze the relationships among different attitudes towards women’s drinking.

#### 4.3.1. Test for normality

From Table 8, all the *P*-values are less than 0.05, indicating that the data do not follow a normal distribution, and the Kruskal-Wallis test for multiple independent samples can be performed.

Table 8. Results of normality test.

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	S-W test	K-S test
Gender Cognition on Drinking Behavior (Mainly focusing on the different attitudes of different genders toward women drinking in bars)	Opinions on women drinking in bars A				
	Opinions on men drinking in bars A1	3.799	1.011	0.000	0.000
	Whether women’s drinking in bars will damage their image A2	3.253	0.929	0.000	0.000
	Whether the mainstream society has misunderstandings or prejudices against women who drink in bars A3	3.869	1.046	0.000	0.000
	Whether women’s drinking in bars is a manifestation of independence and confidence A4	3.457	1.166	0.000	0.000

#### 4.3.2. Kruskal-Wallis Test

In conclusion, the data for the gender perception variable do not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used for significance testing, with the main criteria for judgment being the *p*-value and Cohen’s *f*-value.

As can be seen from Table 9, the *P*-values of A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 are all less than 0.05, indicating a significant influence. Moreover, according to the Cohen’s *f*-values, there are slight differences in all cases. It shows that the views of bar consumers on women’s drinking determine that women will be looked at differently

in bars. 72.9% of men and 60.2% of women think it's quite normal for men to drink in bars, and 55.1% of men and 53.2% of women think it's also normal for women to do so. Although the data suggests that most people consider women's drinking in bars as normal as men's, 65.3% of men and 78.4% of women think that mainstream society has more or less misunderstandings or prejudices against women who drink in bars. 61.4% of women and 28.8% of men think that women's drinking in bars will more or less damage their image, while 14% of women and 34.7% of men think it won't damage their image at all and may even enhance it.

**Table 9.** Analysis table of test results.

	Classification	Male	Female	Chi-square Test P-value	P-value	Cohen's f-value
A1	Disagree	8.5%	7.6%	0.038	0.001	0.119
	Neutral	18.6%	32.2%			
	Agree	72.9%	60.2%			
A	Disagree	15.3%	9.4%	0.188		
	Neutral	29.7%	37.4%			
	Agree	55.1%	53.2%			
A2	Disagree	34.7%	14.0%	0.000	0.000	0.063
	Neutral	36.4%	24.6%			
	Agree	28.8%	61.4%			
A3	Disagree	14.4%	8.2%	0.045	0.000	0.108
	Neutral	20.3%	13.5%			
	Agree	65.3%	78.4%			
A4	Disagree	19.5%	17.5%	0.915	0.000	0.094
	Neutral	31.4%	32.2%			
	Agree	49.2%	50.3%			
A5	Disagree	10.2%	10.5%	0.993	0.003	0.06
	Neutral	23.7%	24.0%			
	Agree	66.1%	65.5%			

In the open-ended questions at the end of questionnaire, we also received responses expressing views that embody the concepts of equality, freedom, and independence, such as "Drink whenever you like. As long as you're happy" and "All beings are equal, and everyone is free to act." Among these responses, there are also reflections and rhetorical questions about the research question and social phenomenon, like "Why discuss women's drinking behavior in bars but not men's?" and "This is just an ordinary thing. When this issue is specifically brought

up for discussion, it indicates that the general public doesn't have a correct view of women drinking in bars. However, women do need to consider more safety issues than men. It is hoped that there will be more bars exclusively for women." To some extent, these responses reflect how young women re-experience, perceive, and engage in the formation of gender roles through the negotiation between hedonism and risk, desire and dignity. Their negotiation of the "moral self" is the most profound manifestation of these changes in people's subjective experiences (Huang, 2024).

#### 4.4. The act of urging others to drink

The act of urging others to drink is quite common in Chinese dining-table culture, and people have diverse views on it. The saying "If you're really close, down the drink in one go" often pops up at the dinner table. 32.872% of people take a neutral stance, 32.526% disagree, and 34.602% agree. The following will analyze the toast-pressing behavior from the perspective of gender, mainly including two aspects: whether one was persuaded to drink and the gender of the people who pressured one to drink.

As shown in Table 10, the *P*-value of the chi-square test is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, men and women have different experiences when it comes to being urged to drink. Men are more likely to be pressured into drinking, while women only encounter such situations occasionally.

**Table 10.** Statistics on the experience of being urged to drink among different genders.

	Options	Gender		<i>P</i> -value
		Male	Female	
Whether one was persuaded to drink	Never	15.56%	84.44%	0.000
	Occasionally	35.00%	65.00%	
	Sometimes	50.52%	49.48%	
	Often	61.11%	38.89%	
	Always	45.45%	54.54%	

As can be seen from Table 11, the *P*-value of the chi-square test is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that one's behavior is affected by the gender of the people around who persuade others to drink. When most of the people around who persuade others to drink are women, the frequency of persuading others to drink is actually higher than when all of them are men. It believes that in the context of opposite-sex interaction, especially when women actively participate in drinking, men may be more inclined to demonstrate their masculinity, such as being a heavy drinker, generous, or "in control of the

situation”, by persuading others to drink. This kind of performance aimed at female audiences emphasizes the gender-related temperamental advantages that men demonstrate in public social settings. In traditional wine-table culture, it’s mostly men who initiate the practice of persuading others to drink. When women get involved, the power structure of the interaction changes, and individual behaviors are then readjusted according to gender dynamics. This also reflects that drinking is a social practice influenced by gender scenarios. In general, when elders or superiors urge someone to drink, it often carries an implicit power dynamic, aiming to pressure the individual through social status or familial hierarchy based on age. If one refuses to drink, they are typically accused of “losing face”. At this point, regardless of whether the person is male or female, they may drink even if they are unwilling to do so.

**Table 11.** Statistics on the experience of persuading others to drink alcohol by different genders.

Options	Experience of persuading others to drink alcohol			<i>P</i> -value	
	Never	Sometimes	Often		
The gender of the people who persuade one to drink	Male	41.2%	47.8%	11.0%	0.001
	Female	12.1%	68.2%	19.7%	
	Both	35.6%	52.9%	11.5%	

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study focuses on the social construction of women’s drinking behavior in contemporary urban bar spaces, attempting to explore the significance of this behavior in terms of gender identity, social norms, and cultural reflection. Through questionnaire surveys and statistical analysis, it aims to reveal the social interaction patterns and gender role transformations of women in public drinking situations. Compared with previous qualitative studies on bars and women’s drinking, this paper uses a quantitative research approach, placing greater emphasis on the behavioral differences between genders in bars and the different attitudes towards women’s drinking in bars, supported by relevant data.

Research indicates that there are significant differences between genders regarding the frequency of drinking in bars, the quantity of alcohol consumed, the types of beverages, and the reasons for drinking. The act of raising a glass in bars is no longer merely a subordinate practice in male-dominated culture. Instead, in the constantly evolving social context, it has become a practical platform for reconstructing women’s identities and public presence. In the process of promoting gender equality, understanding the social implications of women’s drinking behavior can assist in formulating more inclusive policies, thereby avoiding excessive regulation or stereotypical management.

Most women mentioned “moderation” and “safety” in the final open-ended question. Although many female respondents stated that drinking in bars is a very

common activity unrelated to gender, according to the questionnaire results, 85.6% of the respondents believed that the social mainstream has more or less misunderstandings or prejudices against women who drink in bars. Moreover, 45% of men hold a negative attitude towards women drinking in bars. Compared with men, women are more likely to be judged by others' looks when drinking in bars, and their drinking behavior still entails moral evaluation and gender stereotypes in most cases. Regarding the question of whether women's drinking in bars is a sign of independence and confidence, 81.66% of the respondents either basically agreed or held a more positive view. Although women's drinking behavior in bars remains in a challenging situation, the individual-level reflection on and resistance to traditional gender culture "serendipitously" points to a political possibility that integrates life politics and emancipatory politics. Taking into account how to choose a better lifestyle along with grand issues like freedom and equality precisely aligns with what post-modern feminism aspires to.

The liminal space created by bars is a product of traditional gender-power relations and new consumer culture. Thus, it can also be regarded as a laboratory for the evolution of gender culture during the market transformation period (Huang, 2024). As the wine glasses sway and the wine sloshes, young people of different genders jointly face, experience, and participate in the formation of gender roles. Their perspectives on gender roles and drinking behavior also accumulate gradually. Eventually, they become the hands capable of holding the wine glasses and start to enjoy and wield the power to clink glasses. Drinking alcohol is not only a reflection of physiological or psychological needs but also an important way for female subjects to re-establish themselves in urban culture. While promoting the safe development of bar culture, it is important to consider strengthening bar safety measures for female consumers, such as providing a more privacy-protective social environment, establishing clear anti-sexual harassment policies, and encouraging bar managers to regularly train staff to ensure that all customers can enjoy their social time in a safe and respectful environment.

Although this study obtained first-hand data through questionnaires, as the sample was still concentrated on young women in big cities and did not cover a wider age range and social backgrounds, it's difficult to generalize the drinking experiences of all women.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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