


10-19-2011

Drinking motives and influences among college students

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DRINKING MOTIVES AND INFLUENCES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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A Thesis

Submitted to the

Department of Special Education Services/Instruction

College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of School Psychology

Master of Arts

at

Rowan University

May 2011

Thesis Chair: John Klanderman, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

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DRINKING MOTIVES AND INFLUENCES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS
2010/11
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Master of Arts in School Psychology

The purpose of this study was to examine to identify what influences college students to consume alcohol. Specifically, the research was susceptibility to social pressure and social expectations play the central role and are a major influence in college students drinking behaviors. Twenty-eight undergraduate students from various universities completed the Psycho-social Drinking Inventory. This is a scale from the College Drinking Influences Survey. Descriptive statistics were run on the scores reported on the survey to find the greatest mean score. Results yielded that social influence had the greatest impact on college students drinking behaviors. Results from the study, limitations, and future directions were discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to College Drinking

College drinking is on the rise by both underage and of age college students. An estimated 80% to 90% of all underage college students drink alcohol (Fisher, Fried, & Anushko 2007). Alcohol consumption by college students is becoming widely recognized as a problem for many college campuses and on many campuses harmful drinking occurs. Drinking is viewed by many college students, as a part of the college experience and life on their own. The environment of college has an impact on the student. It appears to be turning into a social norm for many college students. Binge drinking and other levels of drinking have increased drastically over the years. Headlines of college drinking are in the media in all areas. College drinking can result in injury, crimes, risky behaviors and even death. Many college communities are working to reduce underage drinking and alcohol related problems that effect college students. Previous research studies indicated that students drink for many different reasons. Researchers have sought to understand why college students drink in excessive quantities, despite the considerable risks to self and others (Fisher, Fried, & Anushko 2007).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify what influences college students to drink despite the negative impacts the drinking may cause. Misperceptions about campus drinking norms are widespread and influence students' drinking choices (Fisher, Fried, & Anushko 2007). An individual's reasons for drinking can vary from each circumstance and vary among individuals. These reasons may change over time and with each episode of college drinking that an individual takes part in. Stress and social induced drinking may lead college students do engage in drinking. Drinking becomes a part of the college student's life and college experience. The purpose of this study is to try to determine the psychosocial influences that lead so many college students to drink.

1.3 Hypothesis

Susceptibility to social pressure and social expectations play the central role and are a major influence in college students drinking behaviors.

1.4 Background

Numerous surveys are given to college students across the country and on various college campuses. A number of national surveys on college student health behaviors and instruments targeting on alcohol consumption behaviors and attitudes have significantly contributed to the identification of factors contributing to college drinking choices (Fisher, Fried, & Anushko 2007). Many of the surveys are used by

universities generally to find a solution to the problems of college students drinking and many are used to implement a strategy to control the drinking. Many are aimed at creating alcohol prevention programs. Fischer, Fried and Anushko 2007 developed and validated measures of college drinking expectations, psychosocial influences, and values.

1.5 Theories

Social impact theory is based on the fact that other people influence behaviors and actions of others. It suggests that influence from other people is a result of social pressures. Depending on one's social status, they may have greater impact on influencing another person. Many people are socially influenced by the people that are closest to them. The closer they are, the greater probability that they will conform to the social influences. Social impact theory assumes that as strength and immediacy increase within a group, conformity among the group will also increase. Members within a close group are more susceptible to the social pressure of the other members. "As social influence is pronounced in college, the principles of Social Impact Theory may contribute to differences between assessments performed individually and those completed when surrounded by members of one's salient reference group" (Pedersen et al, p. 552). Social influences are ever present during the college years. Concerns of being pressured and compared to others influence their decisions to behave in certain

ways. "Social Impact Theory suggests that an individual's feelings, attitudes, and behavior can be influenced by the presence of others" (Pedersen et al., p. 553).

Normative social influence is based on the need for people to belong to social groups. In society, people need to live and work together. To live together people need to agree on common beliefs and behaviors. When people view other people behaving a certain way or making certain decisions, they observe and follow in the same actions. This is more apparent when an individual is in a new situation and among new people. They do not want to stand out, they want to fit in and be a part of the group, so they conform to the actions and behaviors of the others around. Families and friends can have a great impact on social influences. Normative influence can be seen as peer pressure that works because of the need to belong to a group.

1.6 Definitions

CDIS-the College Drinking Influences Scale and will be used for this research.

PDI-Psycho-social Drinking Inventory.

1.7 Assumptions

The results of this study, with participants from one university, can be compared equally to other college students on different campuses. The population being used from one campus can be used to represent other college students. The results can be generalized to the college population. This study will be able to use the results to show the influences of drinking and college students from this university to the majority of

college students on various college and university campuses. College drinking on campus and off campus happens regardless of what institution a student is enrolled in and attending.

1.8 Limitations

The findings of this study through the questionnaire will be limited to the honesty of the participants and their willingness to complete the questionnaire. This can be generalized to multiple students enrolled in college. It will not be representative of other adults.

1.9 Summary

In this study, there will be a questionnaire given to undergraduate college students to be completed to try to identify what influences them to drink. Hopefully the results of the study will give light to the reasons that college students consume alcohol. The results will be analyzed to determine if social influences are higher than other motivating factors to drink. In Chapter two there will be an extensive literature review of numerous studies completed that relate to college drinking and the influences that lead to such high level of alcohol consumption among college students. In chapter three, the design of this study will be addressed, including participants, research design, measures and procedures. Chapter four will discuss the results that were found from the survey. Lastly in chapter five, a discussion of the findings and implications of the study will be addressed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The study, “Compelled to Consume”, Ostafin and Palfai examined the validity of the alcohol IAT, implicit association test, among high risk drinking college students. “89 Hazardous-drinking college students completed measures of drinking behavior, an explicit measure of alcohol motivation, and an IAT that assessed alcohol-motivation associations” (Ostafin and Palfai, 2006). Ostafin and Palfai designed this study to replicate their previous study from 2003 and modifications were made to create more validity. This study measured several factors including: hazardous drinking, alcohol use, alcohol problems, cue reactivity, explicit measure of alcohol motivation, and implicit measure of alcohol motivation. According to Ostafin and Palfai 2006, the results suggest that the IAT scores represent motivational response to the presence of alcohol cues (e.g., sight of an alcoholic beverage) and other factors (e.g., social influence) may be involved in initial decisions to drink. It was suggested that behavior was influenced by both motivation and opportunity.

2.1 Stress-motivated Drinking

In “Stress-Motivated Drinking in Collegiate and Post Collegiate Young Adulthood, H. Wesley Perkins created a study to examine stress motivated drinking. “This study gives special attention to the potential problems and unique patterns of one type of alcohol consumption-drinking motivated by the desire to relieve or reduce

stress" (Perkins, 1997). Prior studies have shown that students who drink for these reasons have been found to drink more than other students. It has also been shown that the college environment, where drinking is a major part of social life, contributes to the levels of college student drinking. Perkins 1997 suggested, "that stress related drinking may become an even more prominent part of one's drinking habits when the college social scene that may have previously determined much of one's drinking is no longer a salient factor."

This data from this study was collected from three surveys given in 1982, 1987, and 1991 given to undergraduate students. Data was also drawn from post collegiate students. Each survey contained questions regarding alcohol use, drinking attitudes and motivations, and consequences of consumption. In the survey students were asked to indicate their individual reasons for drinking. "There were 15 items to choose from of their reasons to drink: to facilitate study, to feel more relaxed with friends and acquaintances, to feel more relaxed with the opposite sex, to relieve academic/work pressures, for a sense of well-being, to reduce inhibitions, as an aid to in forgetting disappointments, to improve sexual performance, to get high, to get drunk, to gain attention, to break the ice, to relieve anxieties, nothing better to do and to celebrate" (Perkins, 1997). Results showed that as students enter post collegiate life, many acknowledge stress related motivations as the primary reasons to drink. Stress related

drinking was more common among undergraduate students. These reasons coincide with other reasons that contribute to the college drinking life.

In the study *College Student Employment and Drinking*, the relationship between work stress and alcohol were compared. Researchers believed that working while attending school could lead to heavy levels of alcohol consumption. Many believe that work creates additional stress and that students drink alcohol to reduce this stress. It was found that on days students worked more, they drank more as well.

2.2 Social Motivated Drinking

“Examining the Role of Drinking Motives in College Student Alcohol Use and Problems”, replicated and extended Cooper, Frone, Russell, and Mudar’s motivational model of alcohol involvement. This model was extended by adding social motivating factors to the questionnaires. The present study, examined enhancement, coping, and social reinforcement motives behind college drinking. Read, Wood, Kahler, Maddock, and Palfai 2003 suggested that, social factors have been shown to play a central role in college drinking and they hypothesized that social reinforcement motives would be positively associated with social influence factors and would mediate relations between social influence factors and alcohol use and problems. Several measures that lead to college drinking were assessed including: emotional stimulation or enhancement motives, social lubrication outcome expectancies, impulsivity-sensation seeking, negative emotion or coping motives, negative affect, tension-reduction alcohol

expectancies, social facilitation or social reinforcement motives, alcohol offers, and perceived peer drinking environment.

Read, Wood, Kahler, Maddock, and Palfai 2003 sought to examine whether Cooper et al.s' (1995) motivational model of alcohol use would generalize to a college sample, to extend this model to include social factors, and to test this extended model in a longitudinal sample. This was a three wave longitudinal study conducted among college students. Consistent with other studies, the results underscored the importance of social factors to alcohol consumption among this population of college students. "In particular the role of social reinforcement's motives was equivocal, with the significant associations between these motives and alcohol use and problems" (Read, Wood, Kahler, Maddock, and Palfai, 2003). Social reinforcement motives overlapped with enhancement motives for college students drinking motives. Positive and negative motives must be distinguished to understand the motives of students drinking behaviors. "These findings also underscore the complexity of associations between specific psychosocial antecedents and these motives in this population, for whom social milieu is somewhat unique from that of drinkers at other life stages" (Read, Wood, Kahler, Maddock, and Palfai, 2003).

2.3 Drinking for Self-Esteem

Neighbors, Larimer, Geisner, and Knee's "Feeling Controlled and Drinking Motives among College Students" presents an examination of college student drinking

motives from a self-determination perspective. Researchers suggest that in order to reduce excessive drinking among college students, it is important to understand the motives behind college students' drinking. "Drinking motives can be considered proximal antecedents of drinking behavior and have been shown to predict alcohol consumption and alcohol consequences" (Neighbors, Larimer, Geisner, and Knee, 2004).

This study was conducted with 204 undergraduate students. Neighbors, Larimer, Geisner, and Knee developed this research to evaluate the relationship between controlled orientation and specific drinking motives and to examine contingent self-esteem as a possible mechanism through which global motivation is associated with drinking motives. Several measures were tested including; controlled orientation, contingent self-esteem, drinking motives, alcohol consumption, and alcohol-related problems. Results showed that who wanted to match standards drank for a regulating affect, both positive and negative effects. Students with high self-esteem reported drinking for social reason, acceptance and rejection. The findings strongly support motivational approaches to understanding problem drinking among college students and are consistent with previous research in showing drinking motives to be a crucial determinant of college student drinking (Neighbors, Larimer, Geisner, and Knee, 2004).

2.4 Motivational Tendencies

““The Accessibility of Motivational Tendencies Toward Alcohol” study was designed to examine the extent to which alcohol cues automatically activate approach and avoidance motivational tendencies in college drinkers” (Ostafin, Palfai, and Wechsler 2003). Studies have described alcohol use as a being mediated by strong approach motivation, and that a variety cues both internal and external lead to higher alcohol use. In contrast, other studies described alcohol use as a being mediated by weak avoidance motivation. “Similarly, weak avoidance motivation in college students has been found to be associated with the consumption of high doses of alcohol and more alcohol related problems” (Ostafin, Palfai, and Wechsler 2003).

Participants consisted of 61 undergraduate students. Measures of alcohol consumption, young adult alcohol problems, impulsive sensation seeking scale, and motivational tendency task were tested in this study. “Models of problem drinking have proposed that disinhibited drinking may be a function of too much approach motivation toward the awarding effects of alcohol” (Ostafin, Palfai, and Wechsler 2003). Results showed less accessibility of avoidance motivation predicted more high risk drinking episodes. “Researchers have described substance use a function of two systems: liking the positive or pleasurable effects of use and the wanting to consume the substance” (Ostafin, Palfai, and Wechsler 2003). Weak alcohol avoidance motivation tends to predict problem drinking among college students.

2.5 Drinking Motives

The study, "Drinking Motive and College Students", was designed to examine the reliability and validity of a 4-factor model of the Drinking Motives Measure. The understanding drinking motives have led to a better understanding of why individuals choose to consume alcohol. "Research has demonstrated that large percentage of college students engage in "high risk" drinking and many college students experience significant negative consequences as a result of their alcohol use" (Martens, Rocha, Martin, and Serrao 2008). This study consisted of 441 participants. Drinking motives were assessed as social, enhancement, coping, and conformity. In addition to drinking motives, alcohol use and alcohol related problems were also measured. "Results of this study showed the positively reinforcing motives of Social and Enhancement had the strongest relationships with the measures of alcohol use, suggesting that being motivated to use alcohol for reasons such as enjoying a party, having a good time, or experiencing pleasant effects has a strong relationship with the actual amount of alcohol consumed" (Martens, Rocha, Martin, and Serrao 2008). Among all the measure coping motives showed the strongest relationship to alcohol related problems.

2.6 Drinking Environments

"Moving beyond the Keg Party" applied daily process methodology to determine the relationship between college student drinking in different contexts and daily social contacts and moods" (Mohr, Temple, Clark, Armeli, Todd and Carney

2005). It has been reported that college students drink for positive and negative reasons. "Daily process studies, in which participants record their moods, experiences, and health behaviors close to the time they occur, are ideally suited to examining drinking motivations" (Mohr, Temple, Clark, Armeli, Todd and Carney 2005). The goal of this study was to examine students reported motives for drinking. Research has suggested that peers may be the strongest influence on college drinking.

Undergraduate student participants logged onto a website for 21 days to report daily items. Results showed that when students consumed alcohol in the evening it was associated with both positive and negative events. "Weekday drinking may indeed be tension-reduction drinking, which would partly explain why it is associated with greater negative consequences, whereas weekend drinking may be primarily social and enhancement in nature" (Mohr, Temple, Clark, Armeli, Todd and Carney 2005).

Reasons for college students to consume alcohol are unique to the individual and the situations.

2.7 Life Goals

In the study "College Student Drinking and Meaning in the Pursuit of Life Goals", the association between risky alcohol use and life goals among college students was examined. "It has been suggested by investigators that hazardous drinking patterns may be understood in terms of motivations processes related to the pursuit of life goals" (Palfai and Weafer 2006). This study was conducted to examine whether the

dimensions of meaning and efficacy of life goal pursuit were associated with hazardous drinking. “Results showed that the level of meaning that college students experience in the pursuit of their daily life goals was associated with risky drinking behavior and students who found less meaning in their life goals were more likely to engage in binge drinking and reported alcohol related consequences” (Palfai and Weafer 2006).

2.8 Marijuana and Alcohol

Simons, Gaher, Correia, Hansen, and Christopher examined models of marijuana and alcohol problems. Their study, “An Affective-Motivational Model of Marijuana and Alcohol Problems among College Students”, measured substance use and problems, substance use motives, positive and negative affect, affect liability, negative mood regulation expectancies, and impulsivity. “This study examined two parallel affective motivational models of marijuana and alcohol related problems” (Simons, Gaher, Correia, Hansen, and Christopher 2005). Results showed that impulsivity was associated with both types of problems. Sensation seeking and negative affect were evident with alcohol use and positive affect was not present. “The results of the analyses indicate that individual differences in affective functioning are associated with concomitant substance related problems in unique way” (Simons, Gaher, Correia, Hansen, and Christopher 2005).

2.9 Drinking Norms

Various studies and research have been conducted on drinking norms, peer influences and the misperception of both, which lead to high levels of alcohol consumption among college students. "Socialization is highly predictive of college student alcohol use as it is often viewed as a way to make friends" (Wehterill and Fromme 2007). It has been shown that social motives have a positive association with student drinking. Many studies have shown that, college students overestimate the quantity and frequency of drinking of their peers. It has also been apparent that they underestimate the negative experiences and consequences related to alcohol consumption. Both of these factors lead to higher amounts of consumption of alcohol among college students. "These misperceptions of drinking norms are suggested as a cause of heavy drinking" (Lewis and Neighbors 2004). "On the basis of an extensive body of research documenting that college students tend to overestimate frequency, quantity, and approval of typical college student alcohol use many studies have focused on these misperception that lead to alcohol use" (Lee, Geisner, patrick and Neighbors 2010).

2.10 Peer Influence

According to Casey, Borsari, Carey, and Maisto 2006, "because of exaggerated perceptions of norms, students tend to rate their own behaviors and attitudes as less extreme than those of their peers." This predicts higher levels of alcohol consumption

among the college student population. "These exaggerated perceptions also lead to students' drinking patterns to be similar to their peers and may be elevated due to overestimating peer behavior" (Turrisi, Mastroleo, Mallett, Larimer, and Kilmer (2007). "Alcohol consumption is greatly impacted by peer influences and peer influence has often been cited as a factor in drinking decisions among college students" (Bourgeois and Bowen 2001). When students are part of a group, Bourgeois and Bowen 2001 stated, each group member engages in day-to-day communication with others, attitude change at the individual level leads to the emergence of patterns of beliefs at the larger group levels. Members of a group and peers of students have such a great impact on their decisions with alcohol consumption. Students become greatly influenced by their peers.

Including peers in brief motivational interventions also has also been identified as an effective way to reduce college drinking. "Having their peers involved in their mandated interventions led to success and a worthwhile experience for both" (Tevyaw, Borsari, Colby and Monti 2007). This study provided more evidence of the impact of peers on a college student. Borsari and Carey 2006, proposed that the quality of peer relationships enhance to influence of social reinforcement, modeling and cognitive processes of personal alcohol use. Peer relationships have been seen to have a great impact on drinking. Students tend to greatly identify with their peers. According to Yanovitzky, Stewart, and Lederman 2006 suggested that four different types of peer

groups may have an impact the peer cohort (same age students), the reference group (students in the cohort with whom the student identifies the most), the peer cluster (share similar values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors), and the dyad (Best friend pairs). It is not clear what groups have a bigger influence on the student but they all play a role.

Pedersen, LaBrie and Lac 2008, stated during college, “peers serve as a major means of support and guidance for most college students and can directly influence alcohol use both directly (i.e., pressuring a person to drink or offering them a drink) and indirectly (perceived norms).” Perceived norms are seen as a major part of much research with college student drinking.

2.11 Social Contexts

Other areas of research in college student drinking include studies of the environment of college and social contexts. Much literature has established the importance of college students’ social environment. The environments that college students are a part of are their choice. Students choose to be exposed to various environments which may affect them and lead to alcohol consumption. Kahler, Read Wood and Palfai stated, “the nature of the relationship between the individual and his or her social environment may be particularly relevant to the phenomenon of college drinking, as the college years are typically a time of increased alcohol consumption as well as increased social interaction.” In another study of the college environment,

Weitzman, Nelson and Weshler's results showed that college students who reported that they were exposed to "wet" environments were more likely to engage in binge drinking. "Wet environments included social, residential, and market surroundings in which drinking is prevalent and alcohol cheap and easily accessed" (Wetsman, Nelson, and Weschsler, 2003). The Findings of the study conducted by Senchak, Leonard, and Greene indicated that the typical social drinking context endorsed by college students is related to both their alcohol consumption and their individual characteristics.

2.12 Sororities/Fraternities

Affiliation with both sororities and fraternities, are associated with heavy drinking patterns among college students. It is evident that drinking is a part of life for members of these organizations. The heavy drinking levels associated with these organizations however, is limited to the college years. Once the members leave the college life, their levels of alcohol consumption lessens. Much of college drinking is influenced by socialization factors and social environments. "When viewed from a social control theory perspective, the most important determinants of heavy drinking are environmental or structural influences such as neighborhoods, family structure, and the availability of alcohol" (Bartholo et al., pg 624).

2.13 Social Anxiety

College students consume alcohol for many reasons dealing with social situations including social anxiety. Each student is unique in their reasons for drinking

and college students in general are unique when it involves drinking to ease social anxiety. During the college years, students encounter many unfamiliar social situations that they have not been a part of prior to the college experience. The availability of alcohol and the thought of reducing social anxiety may be a rationale for students to consume higher levels of alcohol. There is a multitude of studies that indicate the perceived drinking norms and social situations have a strong influence of college drinking. In the study conducted by Ham and Hope in 2006, results showed the social anxiety may have a positive outcome for the levels that college students drink. They concluded that social anxiety may be a preventative factor for problem drinking. Students drink in social contexts but the anxiety may hinder the high levels of alcohol consumption.

2.14 College Life

The years of college are seen as a period of high prevalence of alcohol use. National associations identify the excessive levels of drinking among college students as the “college effect”. There are beliefs and norms among college students that are apparent in every level of the college life. Alcohol use among students is seen as a part of the college life. The CLASS study, College Life Alcohol Salience Scale, was designed to see how beliefs about alcohol played a role in students’ college life. Researchers of this study, expected social and enhancement drinking motives to be the highest reasons for drinking and this was shown in the results. “Internalizing beliefs consistent with

the college drinking culture seem most strongly tied to the motive to use alcohol to increase social rewards and enhance positive moods” (Osberg et. al, 8).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In chapter one, the purpose of this study, significance of this study, and the major research questions were discussed. Chapter two was an extensive literature review on previous studies on college level drinking. In chapter three, the design of the study is discussed. Also addressed in chapter three, are the participants of the study, research design, procedures, measures, and analysis type are all discussed.

Fisher, Freid, and Anushko developed the College Drinking Influences Survey to measure several factors influencing college drinking. According to Fisher, Fried, and Anushko, college students often emphasize the positive benefits of drinking, including expectations that drinking relieves stress and enhances one's social network, romantic relationships, and illusion of personal control. The College Drinking Influences Scale is comprised of 3 scales: The College Drinking Expectations Scale, The Psychosocial Drinking Inventory, and The Drinking Values Scale.

The College Drinking Expectations Scale measures a student's expectations for drinking norms and consequences, which there are many misperceptions about. "High expectations of campus drinking are associated with high-risk drinking, even when these perceptions are erroneous" (Fisher, Fried, and Anushko, 2007). Students that observe college drinking among their peers gain social acceptance and tolerance for

college level drinking. The Psychosocial Drinking Inventory evaluates social influences, stress, and sensation seeking characteristics among college students. Fisher, Fried, and Anushko 2007, stated “susceptibility to social pressure, stress related coping responses, or a disposition of sensation seeking combined with the availability of alcohol on campus also influence student drinking choices.” The final scale, the Drinking Values Scale measures drinking decisions based on personal choice, social responsibility, and institutional obligation. Personal choices of college drinking are influenced by one’s morals. If students focus on institutional rules on college drinking this may reduce the likelihood to drink. The College Drinking Influences Survey was given to college freshman aged 18 or older. The results demonstrated validity and reliability of the scales. This survey created useful scales to identify factors leading to college drinking.

3.2 Design

The CDIS is comprised of 3 independent scales each measuring different influences. The first scale is the Psycho-social Drinking Inventory (PDI). This scale was used in the present study. Responses of this scale range from extremely unlikely to drink to extremely likely to drink. This scale is measured on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (extremely unlikely to drink) to 5 (extremely likely to drink).

3.3 Participants

For the current study, the CDIS was given to undergraduate students from the psychology subject pool. In addition to the psychology pool students, this was

administered to voluntary co-workers who are undergraduate students from various colleges. All students involved in the study were 18 years and older, any student under the age of 18 was not be able to participate. The sample size consisted of twenty-eight students. No information was gathered on gender or socio-economic background. All members of the studies remained anonymous.

3.4 Procedures

Students were recruited from the psychology subject pool through online sign up and voluntary co-workers. Participants were administered the CDIS, and they were asked how likely they are to drink in certain situations. Each scale is comprised of questions that pertain to 3 factors and each question is numbered 1-3 based on the factors. The first factor (1) is labeled for social influences, the second factor (2) is labeled for stress reduction, and the third factor (3) is labeled for sensation seeking. After the surveys were completed, each question was scaled 1-5 on the likert scale. For each survey, the scores were totaled for each of the 3 factors. Each participant had a total score for social factors, stress reduction, and sensation seeking based on their responses on the survey.

3.5 Analysis

Each survey was comprised of 3 total scores based on the responses from the questions. The scores were calculated based on a five point likert scale. Each individual survey was scored and then the scores from each survey were combined to

determine the mean scores for each category. The results were calculated with SPSS and descriptive statistics were run to find the mean score for each of the 3 categories. The highest score would be the highest influence to college drinking based on the responses and questions from the survey. The scores were then graphed for visual interpretation of the results.

In this chapter, the research design was discussed in detail. Responses to the questionnaires, provided by undergraduate students from various universities, will prove or disprove the hypotheses stated in chapter one. With the use of descriptive statistics, the data from the surveys will be analyzed. In the following chapter, the data analysis and results of the study will be described. In chapter five, findings and implications of the study will be discussed.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction and Restated Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to complete an in depth investigation of the motivations and influences that lead college students to drink. Specifically, if it was socially influenced drinking, stress reduction reasons to drink, or sensation seeking reasons to drink. There was one main hypothesis in this study. The hypothesis was that susceptibility to social pressure and social expectations play the central role and are a major influence in college students drinking behaviors.

The data collected from the Psycho-Social Drinking Inventory was analyzed with descriptive statistics. Mean scores were calculated for each of the 3 factors that were included in the PDI. The highest mean score had the greatest influence in college student drinking and the lowest score was the least influential. The Social Influences factor had the highest mean score of 34.6429. This factor had the greatest significance in influencing college students to drink alcohol. College students reported the highest scores for his category and were more likely to drink for social reasons. The second highest mean score was for the Stress Reduction category. This category was the next influential in college student drinking. The mean score for the stress reduction category was 21.25. The category with the least significance with influencing college level drinking was the sensation seeking category. College students reported that they were

less likely to drink for sensation seeking reasons. Students reported the lowest level of scores for this category. The total mean score for the sensation seeking category was 16.4643. Scores from the survey are shown below in Figure 1, Descriptive Statistic Mean Scores. Visual interpretation of the scores is shown below in Table 1. Descriptive Statistic Mean Scores.

TABLE 1 Descriptive Statistic Mean Scores

		Social Influences	Stress Reduction	Sensation Seeking
N	Valid	28	28	28
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		34.6429	21.2500	16.4643
Median		35.0000	20.0000	16.0000
Mode		32.00	13.00	11.00
Sum		970.00	595.00	461.00

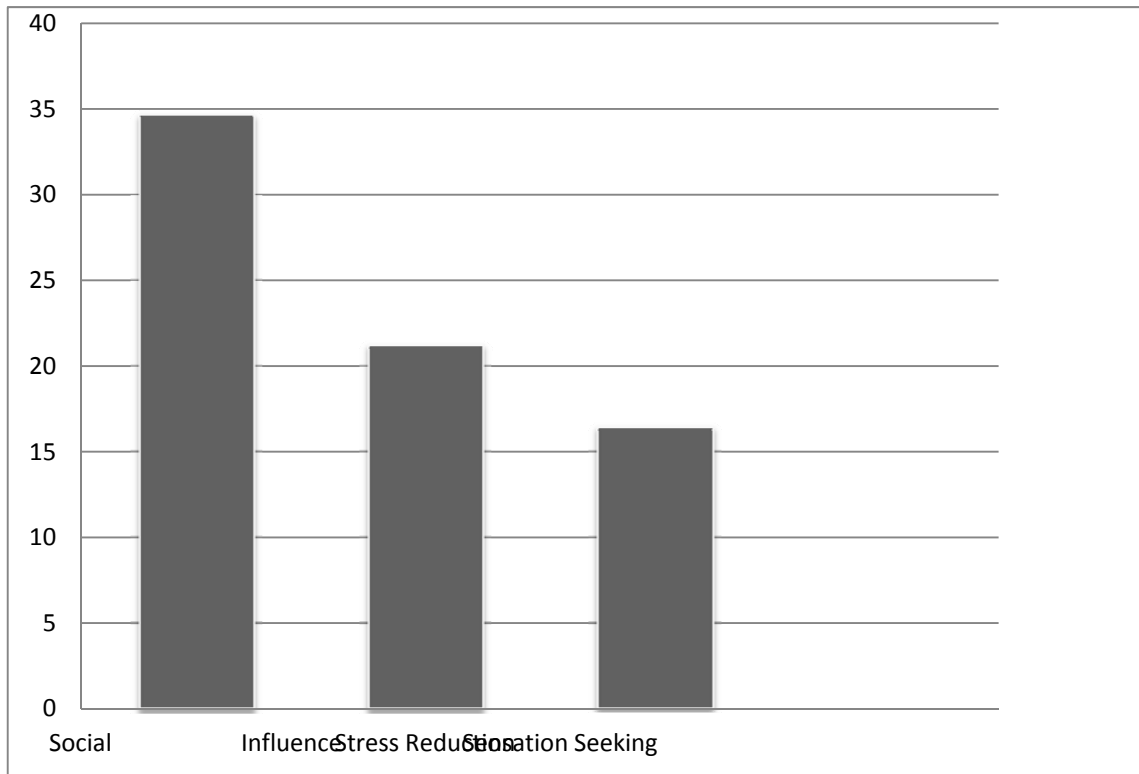


Figure 1 Descriptive Statistic Mean Scores

4.2 SUMMARY

This chapter has served to outline the results found by the researcher. For the hypothesis, it was found that social influences had the highest influence in college drinking with a mean score of 34.64. This was followed by stress reduction and then sensation seeking. These findings will be described in full detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this study, there was one main hypothesis regarding the influences and motives of college students and drinking. The hypothesis that was examined was that susceptibility to social pressure and social expectations play the central role and are a major influence in college students drinking behaviors. The results showed that social influences had the greatest influence in undergraduate college drinking with highest mean score derived from the surveys. The score for social influence was 13.39 points higher than stress reduction influences and 18.18 points higher than sensation seeking influences.

Results from this study show that social influences had the greatest impact on undergraduate college students and alcohol consumption. These findings and results are similar with most of the results from the literature regarding undergraduate college drinking. However, many of the previous studies collected data from multiple parts of the school year. Results may have been different at different parts of the semester based on course loads and requirements. Most of the participants are in early level college courses and it may be that students have not started their core classes for their major. Results from this study relatively matched previous research.

5.1 LIMITATIONS

Limitations must be considered when using a rating scale such as a likert scale that was used for the current study. There were several degrees of the answers and participants may not have responded their exact levels of agreement or disagreement of the questions on the survey. Questions were based on the student's opinions and they may not have put as much in depth thought into it, as if it was based on critical thinking questions. Also, the surveys that were completed for the study did not collect data in regards to how many the students actually drank alcohol only their thoughts in the motives and influences that lead them to drink, if they even drink alcohol. Some participants of the study may not even drink alcohol at all and their views could be completely different if they did indeed drink. If this information was included the results may have been analyzed differently to see if the levels of alcohol consumption changed the results at all. The research was also limited due to the fact that there was no data collected on the housing situation for participants of the study. Sample size of the current study was also very small, with only 28 participants. Another limitation was that information pertaining to socioeconomic background, gender, age, and grade level was not collected.

5.2 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This particular study provided some insight the influences of college level alcohol drinking. Further research and additional parameters being considered would provide a greater understanding of undergraduate college drinking. Additional information such as gender, age, and socioeconomic might also provide interesting findings. Future studies should also include the amounts of alcohol consumed by each participant of the study. An additional direction to be considered would be what type of housing situation the college students have. Depending on the environment the students are in, may yield different results. A last direction to be considered would be testing at different points of the school year to see if results vary from different parts of the semester. Future studies may also focus on ways and programs that limit and reduce alcohol consumption among college students.

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