Personality and Psychosocial Factors of College Drinking Amount and Frequency

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Introduction

Despite laws in every State that make it illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase or possess alcohol, young people report that alcohol is easy to obtain and that most high school and college students drink with one goal — to get drunk. Binge drinking is defined as consuming six or more drinks in one sitting for boys and five or more in one setting for girls. In this exploratory research, several articles were gathered in order to interpret previous findings in the current study. One factor that was looked for in the current study was age of first drink; had it increased college drinking amount and frequency? For a study by Grigor (2006), age when participants first drank and age of first intoxication predicted the level of alcohol-related consequences. This research demonstrated on age of first drink, decreases alcohol-related problems such as binge drinking issues.

Ross, Dolderer and Cory (2006) found elevated rates of co-occurrence between binge drinking and alcohol-related problems. Alcohol use problems and their association with marijuana were discussed. Using the Five Factor Model, it underscores the comprehensiveness personality factors and style of impulse control, a personality style defined by different combinations of conscientiousness and neuroticism. Those who tend to be on binge drinkers and each group reported a higher level of conscientiousness than others. This finding supports the suggestions that neuroticism is positively related to amount and frequency of binge drinking.

Student perceptions of the number of friends who drink and college drinking amount and frequency were also investigated in the recent study. A study by Miller and Fass (2006) demonstrated that there was a relationship between the amount of alcohol students drink themselves and the amount they believed other students drank. Results showed that the median number of friends who drank more than they did for alcohol was 5 drinks or nothing alcohol other college students drank more than students who drank less. In particular, non-college students, non-drinkers, and university students perceived that college students drank more than they actually did. This shows that proportion of friends who drink increases, college drinking decreases and frequency increases.

In a study by Jones, Ozinma, Wilson, Beser and SEH (2006) the relationship between substance co-occurrence and binge drinking was investigated. Results showed that students who binge drank more often were more likely to have used cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs. Those students were also more likely to report current use of cigarettes and marijuana. This demonstrates a positive relationship between binge drinking and experimental drug use.

Drinking in college is in relationship to quantity and frequency of alcohol intake was discussed in the study by Stuart, Morris, McPherson and Hormm (2006). Correlational analysis controlling for gender showed that the correlations between neuroticism and alcohol consumption were significantly higher for women than men. Those who have higher levels of neuroticism were significantly related to binge drinking frequency. (1) fear of negative evaluation and social avoidance. (2) Conscientiousness and alcohol disengagement subscale of drug and alcohol disengagement were used to measure the use of alcohol/drugs as a way to cope with problems. The drug and alcohol disengagement subscale of the COPE consists of 4 items that are part of the 56-item full questionnaire.

Table 1. Bivariate correlations and results from regression analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of first drink</td>
<td>15.920</td>
<td>3.947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of friends who drink</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>0.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Correlations significant at p < .05.

Discussion

The present study analyzes bivariate associations among five factors and college drinking amount and frequency separately with correlations, as well as together with multiple regression analysis and its findings. Correlations among the five predictors and college drinking amount and frequency are shown in Table 1.

Bivariate Correlations

In describing the results, significant bivariate correlations between critical item variables and college drinking amount and frequency are reported. Followed by significant correlations between five variables and college drinking amount and frequency. To determine these values, each of the critical item and list variables were entered into a regression equation so the role the predictor of college drinking amount and frequency. All five of the variables were significantly correlated (r = 0.16) with college drinking amount and frequency/experimentation drug use, substance use for coping, neuroticism, age of first drink and proportion of friends who drink alcohol.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between genders for college drinking amount and frequency and various potential predictors.

For males, the multiple regression model with five predictors produced R² = 0.206, F(5, 67) = 7.397, p < .001. For significant predictors, proportion of friends who drink alcohol and substance use for coping (positive regression weights), indicating college students with higher proportions of friends who drink and increased use of substances for coping were expected to drink more frequently in higher amounts, after controlling for the other variables in the model. For females, the same model produced R² = 0.295, F(5, 70) = 7.059, p < .001. It can be seen that among the significant predictors, proportion of friends who drink alcohol, neuroticism and age of first drink were expected to drink more frequently and in higher amounts, after controlling for the other variables in the model. The other independent predictors (age and proportion of friends who drink alcohol) were not expected to be related to college drinking frequency and amount significantly more than those who did not experience drinking.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study included college students from a single Mid-western university. The data was gathered using a survey from spring 15 to 22 year olds. The overall study was an anonymous, voluntary, 56-item questionnaire that was administered by the World Health Organization (WHO) and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The study was approved by the University’s Institutional Review Board. College students were asked to complete the questionnaire in their own time and in a private setting. To make sure that students did not have access to the questionnaire, the survey was distributed to students in their dorm rooms by a research assistant. The completed questionnaires were then collected by a research assistant.

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