

UNLEASHING THE WILD SELF: EXPLORING MEDIA INFLUENCE AND
DRINKING AMONG COLLEGE WOMEN

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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January, 2010

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ABSTRACT

Unleashing the Wild Self: Exploring Media Influence and Drinking

among College Women

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Doctor of Philosophy

Temple University, 2010

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Objective: The study examined alcohol consumption among college women ages 18 to 24. It helped to understand who, when, what, why and how much college women drink. It also examined how “girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals influence college women in excessive drinking and “outrageous” behaviors. **Theory:** A combination of drench hypothesis (Greenberg, 1988) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) was used as the guiding framework to understand the dynamic relationship of environmental and personal factors in learning and imitating behaviors seen in the media. **Method:** Two online studies were conducted. The first study was a structured interview conducted with 38 women and 29 men. Study 2 was a survey. A total of 449 college women took part in the survey. Some men (N=174) also took part in the study to provide men’s opinions and some perspective on women who drink and behave outrageously. **Results:** The survey results show that 42% (N=169) of college women in the sample engage in heavy episodic drinking every weekend at house parties. As a result, some have gotten into fights, missed classes, experienced hangovers and vomiting, and have driven drunk. Nearly 14% (N=55) of the women in the study reported being sexually assaulted while they were

drunk. In addition, the study shows that “girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals are perceived in different ways by different college women. Most college women view the behaviors as negative. However, some college women do evaluate the portrayals as positive. These women are likely to engage in similar outrageous behaviors. The “girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals are less likely to influence alcohol consumption among college women. A multiple regression analysis showed that outrageous behavior correlated with self-control, sexual outcome expected, positive evaluation of the “girls gone wild” portrayals and sensation seeking tendencies. Drinking on the other hand correlated only with sensation seeking tendencies and how much value was placed by the respondents on being social. The findings of the study also show that men assess drunken women as vulnerable and “easy.” **Conclusion:** Interventions that include strategies for better self-regulation and explaining of potential negative outcomes are likely to be effective in drinking and drinking-related behaviors. Media literacy programs might help in critical evaluation of media content and thus reduce its negative influence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks (William Shakespeare).

This is one of the longest writing projects that I have undertaken. It could not have been completed without the generosity and help of some of the amazing people I have met during my years at Temple. They have guided me and helped me every step of the way. I especially want to thank Dr. Mathew Lombard for his guidance, support and valuable suggestions. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Nancy Morris, Dr. Michael Maynard and Dr. Clara Haignere for always encouraging and helping me whenever I needed their help.

G.B. Stern wrote “silent gratitude isn’t much use to anyone.” So here is my list of wonderful professors, friends, and colleagues who have gone out of their way to help me with data collection, overall assistance, and support when I needed it most. I would especially like to thank Dr. Michael Lewis, Dr. Priscilla Murphy, Dr. George W. Miller, Dr. Donnalyn Pompper, Dr. Hector Postigo, and Dr. Tom Wright for their help with my dissertation work. I would also like to thank my peers and friends Aaron, Abbe, Aimee, Diane, Guillermo, John, Kelly, Erica, and Rebecca for their help and support.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wonderful family for their support in all my endeavors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	6
2. COLLEGE DRINKING	9
Magnitude of Alcohol Related Problems on College Campuses	9
Alcohol Consumption among College Women	10
Enabling Factors among Young Women Who Drink.....	13
Deterring Factors for Alcohol Consumption among Young Women	16
Social Factors.....	17
Societal Perception of a “Drinking Woman”	17
Perceptions of Sexual Promiscuity	18
Perceptions of “Girl Power”	20
3. ALCOHOL IN THE MEDIA: PORTRAYALS AND THEIR INFLUENCES	24
Portrayals of Alcohol in Advertising and their Influences	25
Portrayals of Alcohol in Television Shows	28
Portrayals of Alcohol in Films	31

Portrayals of Alcohol in Music, Music Videos, and Other Videos	32
Portrayals of Alcohol in News Media	33
Alcohol on the Internet	35
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	39
Cultivation Hypothesis	39
Drench Hypothesis	40
Social Learning Theory	42
Social Cognitive Theory	44
Research Questions and Hypotheses	46
5. STUDY 1: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS.....	57
Research Design	57
Participants.....	60
Procedure.....	59
Major Findings from Study 1.....	62
Responses from Women.....	62
Responses from Men.....	81
6. STUDY 2: SURVEY-METHOD	92
Operationalization of the Variables.....	92
Dependent Variables.....	94
Independent Variables.....	95
Research Design	104
Participants.....	104

Procedure.....	104
7. STUDY 2: SUREVEY-RESULTS.....	107
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	107
Research Question Results	112
8. DISCUSSION	153
Alcohol Consumption among College Women.....	154
Outrageous Behaviors.....	165
Media Influence in Alcohol Consumption and Outrageous Behaviors..	166
Theoretical Implications	173
Methodological Implications.....	176
Limitations.....	178
Future Research.....	180
Summary of Major Implications and Conclusions	181
REFERENCES CITED	184
APPENDICES	201
A. STUDY 1 CONSENT FORM.....	202
B. STUDY 1 QUESTIONS	203
C. STUDY 2 CONSENT FORM.....	207
D. STUDY 2 QUESTIONS	208

LIST OF TABLES

Table 7-1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics.....	119
Table 7-2. Descriptive Statistics on Alcohol Initiation among College Women..	111
Table 7-3. Descriptive Statistics on Alcohol Use among College Women.....	118
Table 7-4. Descriptive Statistics of Drinking among Women in a Typical Two-Week Period	121
Table 7-5. Descriptive Statistics of Drinking Related Problems	123
Table 7-6. Comparison of Correlation between Independent Variables on Self vs. Others.....	141
Table 7-7. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Outrageous Behavior.....	145
Table 7-8. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Alcohol Consumption.....	147

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 6-1. Dependent and Independent Variables..... 93

Figure 7-1. College Men’s Perception of “Women and Alcohol”..... 130

Figure 7-2. Year in School and Outrageous Behaviors143

Figure 7-3. Relationship between and among Independent and
Dependent Variables..... 149

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One Friday night, after drinking close to two pitchers of beer, she had a screaming fight with her boyfriend and put her fist through the rear window of her car. And then there are a handful of evenings she can recall only in flashes... On a recent blustery night, she and five of her closest girlfriends, dressed in unseasonable short sleeves, downed cocktails and took shots of "buttery nipples," a syrupy blend of butterscotch schnapps and Baileys Irish Cream. It was a Tuesday during midterm exams, but they closed down the bar anyway. "You don't want to be that dumb girly girl who looks wasted and can't hold her liquor. I know it's juvenile, but I've had boys comment how impressed they are at the amount of alcohol I've consumed," Diebold explains. "To be able to drink like a guy is kind of a badge of honor. For me, it's a feminism thing."

(Morse, 2002, ¶ 1, 2)

The above quote from a Time magazine news report provides a peek into the mindset of some young women today who are consuming alcohol in excess and behaving outrageously often under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol abuse on college campuses has been found to be more common in young men, but in recent years heavy drinking among girls and young women has emerged as a growing multifaceted problem (The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth [CAMY], 2006; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse [CASA], 2003; CASA, 2006; Meltz, 2005; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002). Although alcohol abuse among young college women is a growing problem, relatively few studies focus exclusively on young women. Most research on college drinking considers college students as a homogenous group with members who behave uniformly, share similar problems, and whose common behaviors can be changed or influenced by similar messages. Given the tendency toward one-size-fits-all analysis of the college-age drinking, it is not surprising that preventative

messages and strategies do not have the desired impact, as is evident from the fact that alcohol consumption rates and binge drinking continue to be a noticeable problem on many college campuses (Childs & Grayson, 2008; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002). Joseph Califano, chairman of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University observed, “finding and gaining access to effective prevention and treatment programs for girls and women is infuriatingly difficult. Few programs are designed specifically for them and research for prevention strategies for girls is hard to come by” (CASA 2006, p. ix). In sum, there is no doubt that there is a strong need to understand alcohol consumption among college women if effective preventive strategies are to be developed.

Although homogeneity among college-drinking groups has often been assumed in many studies, some previous studies show that there are salient differences in alcohol consumption depending on gender (Casper, Child, Gilmour, McIntyre, & Pearson, 2006; CASA 2006; Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdell, Davenport, & Rimm, 1995; Wolaver, 2007). These studies demonstrate differences among women and male drinkers; for example, results show that women with low self-esteem were more likely to drink heavily than women with high self-esteem but the relationship between self-esteem and alcohol consumption was not found to be significant among male drinkers (CASA, 2006). Also childhood abuse, family influences, peer pressure, and depression are found to be stronger predictors in alcohol abuse in women than in men (CASA, 2006). Another noted difference among men and women concerns who they find comfortable to talk to and reach out to when they need help with alcohol-related problems. Studies show that boys experiencing problems or stress are more likely to find formal support such as support

from counselors or teachers to be more helpful while women find help from peers, particularly same-sex friends to be more helpful (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982; CASA, 2006). The above examples suggest some of the important differences between young men and women in the area of alcohol consumption. These differences might be important for public health officials to note and use to develop different strategies based on gender. For example, if males rely on professionals for formal support to reduce drinking, then public health officials should talk about available professionals on campus when they talk to men, likewise messages to women might focus on peer counselors as well as professionals.

This is not to suggest that the problem of alcohol consumption among college students can be addressed solely based on gender as the key variable for creating effective messages. The issue of alcohol consumption and abuse is a complex one with a wide range of factors contributing to individuals' behaviors. These factors include physical, social, psychological, and environmental factors. In a wide-ranging literature dealing with individual factors in alcohol consumption, self-esteem, ability to cope with stress, and a history of sexual abuse, are some of the factors that have been shown to affect drinking (CASA, 2006). While recognizing the importance of individual variation, researchers in recent years have moved towards looking at the drinking problem on college campuses in a more comprehensive way by focusing on the individual, the environment, and the social context. The reasonable justification for this is that individuals do not exist in isolation but are influenced by their surroundings (American Medical Association [AMA], 2007; Wallack & DeJong, 1995). The American Medical Association (AMA, 2007) has initiated a major study exploring various environmental

factors contributing to excessive consumption of alcohol among college students.

Through its *A Matter of Degree* initiative, the AMA is trying to identify the environmental factors such as “alcohol advertising and marketing, institutional policies and practices, local ordinances—even social and cultural beliefs and behaviors—that converge to encourage alcohol abuse” (AMA, 2007, ¶ 7) on college campuses.

Understanding the environmental factors and designing preventive campaigns that address environmental causes in alcohol consumption can help in reducing alcohol consumption on college campuses. Although this is an important first step, many more studies are needed to identify the environmental factors that contribute to heavy drinking among college students and then measure how these environmental factors contribute to alcohol abuse among college students in general and women in particular given the growing problem of alcohol abuse among women today.

Among various environmental factors identified in previous studies, media influence in alcohol consumption continues to be a reason for concern (AMA, 2006; AMA 2007; CAMY, 2008; CASA, 2006). In recent years, media portrayals of drunken women have drawn much attention. A recent spring-break survey of college women and graduates (ages 17-35), conducted by the American Medical Association (AMA, 2006) found that “84 percent of respondents thought that the images of college girls partying during spring break [might] be contributing to an increase in females’ reckless behavior” (¶ 6) and “86 percent of those surveyed “agreed that images of college girls partying might be contributing to dangerous behaviors by males toward women” (¶ 6). This survey suggests the influence of media images. However, the survey does not explain how and why these images might be influencing young women today. It is possible that

in the AMA survey one might be seeing a third-person effect. That is, respondents might be answering based on their belief that the images of women partying might be having a greater influence on “other” people than themselves. This is not to say that media images of women partying do not have any influence, but the topic definitely needs further investigation, especially in light of the growing problem of women drinking and engaging in risky behaviors. This study will follow the path opened by the AMA survey but will delve deeper into the topic and will explore if and how media images of women partying influence women and men in their party behaviors.

In order to understand if, how, and to what extent media portrayals of women partying might be contributing to alcohol abuse and reckless behavior among college women, one has to approach the topic in a more comprehensive way by examining specific portrayals along with other factors or sources of influence that facilitate and inhibit influences of the media. Thus, this study will look at media influences along with other factors to establish how and to what extent the media have influenced alcohol consumption and alcohol-related behaviors in young women.

The need to understand alcohol consumption and reckless behavior among college women is necessary, not only because it appears to be growing, but also because it is linked to other issues such as sexual assault, rape, and drunk driving (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006; CAMY, 2008). As noted above, alcohol consumption is a complex social and health problem arising from multiple contributing factors. Thus a comprehensive study will help to better understand and address the problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to first examine the extent of alcohol consumption among college women today by measuring who, when, where, with whom, how much and why many college women drink and engage in high-risk drinking and drinking-related behaviors. The study examines factors such as peer influence, situations, and individual characteristics in drinking and drinking related behaviors among college women.

The study also examines the role media play in drinking and drinking related outrageous behaviors among young women. It focuses on specific media portrayals of women partying like those that often appear on various MTV reality shows, MTV's spring-break coverage, and videos such as *Girls Gone Wild* to understand if, why, and how these media images influence college women's attitudes and behaviors towards drinking and wild party behaviors. Media is a broad term used to define the means used to communicate to a larger audience, such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. Media portrayals mean how media represent a certain, group of people, place or things. In this study the focus is on how media represents young college women and how these representations influence other college women. The study does not focus on the number of the occurrences of the portrayals of women partying in the media. Instead, it focuses on how a few "critical" images influence the audience, primarily women. It aims to provide nuanced and deeper understanding of how some media images of young college women partying influence other women.

With better understanding of how party portrayals in the media affect young women, public health professionals and educators will be better informed and more likely

to consider the impact of the media on young people when they design interventions. It is hoped that this study will also help public health professionals identify women who might be more prone to alcohol abuse and alcohol-related risk-taking behaviors. Information on situations in which women tend to drink more alcohol and attempt outrageous behaviors will help health professionals to come up with strategies and suggestions for women as to how to avoid those situations.

The study will also offers educators, researchers, and public health professionals a fresh approach in examining the issue of alcohol consumption among college women in order to consider salient differences between females and males.

Organization of the Dissertation

In accomplishing the aims described above, the following research road map is used. Chapter Two provides an extensive literature review on alcohol consumption among college students and the magnitude of the alcohol abuse problem on college campuses. From examining the research literature to date, the chapter reviews alcohol consumption specifically among college women and various psychological and environmental factors that contribute to alcohol consumption. This chapter also outlines social and cultural factors as well as societal perceptions of women who consume alcohol. Media portrayals of alcohol and drinking behaviors are important to examine in terms of the content and their influence on the audience. In Chapter Three, studies on portrayals of alcohol in advertising, television, films, music and other videos, news media, and the internet are examined to understand baseline portrayals of women in the context of alcohol consumption. In Chapter Four, different theoretical frameworks that

have been applied in understanding media influence in alcohol consumption among young people are discussed first, including cultivation hypothesis and social learning theory. Then social cognitive theory (SCT) and drench hypothesis, the theoretical frameworks for the study are presented along with several research questions. Each of the concepts of SCT and additional variables of interest (social self-esteem, sensation seeking tendencies and gender equality) are also described in this chapter. Chapter Five contains the information about the participants, procedure and results from study 1. Chapter Six contains information regarding study 2, an online survey. It contains methodological details, including measures used, conceptual and operational definitions of independent and dependent variables, participants and procedures. Chapter Seven presents the results from study 2 which include information on who, when, where, why and how much college women drink and how party portrayals in the media influence women in their drinking and outrageous behaviors. It also presents information on the kinds of media messages that would be effective in curbing drinking among young women. Chapter Eight presents a discussion on the results, methodological and theoretical implications, limitations of the research and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

COLLEGE DRINKING

In this chapter, the extent of the alcohol problem on college campuses, and individual as well as social and cultural factors related to alcohol consumption are presented. First, the extent of alcohol-related problems on college campuses is discussed. Then, alcohol consumption specifically among college women along with various contributing and deterring factors in alcohol consumption are discussed. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the topic of alcohol consumption among women, it is also necessary to look at some of the social and cultural changes that have taken place in society and that have made it more conducive for women to drink alcohol openly in public. Some of the societal perceptions of a “drinking woman,” are also discussed, knowing what these perceptions are provides a larger context for understanding the issue of alcohol consumption and media.

Magnitude of Alcohol Related Problems on College Campuses

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA, 2007), alcohol abuse is a major problem on college campuses across the United States. This is true even though a significant portion of college students who engage in high-risk drinking are younger than 21, the legal drinking age in the United States. Alcohol abuse on college campuses across the United States has been of major concern for university administrators, law enforcement agencies, student health clinics, judicial systems and parents. Various studies in the past have indicated the problem’s disturbing magnitude. A

simple summary of these makes for a long list that includes: an estimated 1,700 deaths annually, 600,000 physical injuries, 70,000 cases of sexual assault or date rape, 97,000 cases of sex abuse, an estimated more than 400,000 students engaging in unsafe sex, academic problems in about 25 percent of college students, attempts of suicide and other health problems, 2.1 million drunk driving cases, vandalism, property damage, police involvement, and long-term alcohol abuse and dependence (Hingson, Heeren, Zakocs, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2005; Hingson, Heeren, Zakocs, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2002; Knight, Wechsler, Kuo, Seibring, Weitzman, & Schuckit, 2002; NIAAA, 2002; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson & Lee, 2002). The magnitude of this problem among college students and the wide ranging negative consequences of excessive drinking justify giving the problem special attention for it affects not just the students but also indirectly affects parents, friends, neighbors, university communities, law enforcers, and the wider community.

Alcohol Consumption among College Women

In the college population as well as the general population, alcohol consumption and high-risk drinking have been found to be most prevalent among males (Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998). Nevertheless, the percentage of women in college engaging in high-risk drinking has gone up significantly over the past few years narrowing the consumption gap that once divided young male drinkers from their female counterparts (CASA, 2007; CASA, 2006, Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002). According to a survey conducted by Wechsler et al. (2002) that looked at binge drinking between 1993 and 2001, binge drinking among men decreased from 49.2

percent in 1993 to 48.6 percent in 2001, while binge drinking among women rose from 39 percent in 1993 to 40.9 percent in 2001. This small but important trend draws attention to drinking among college women, especially those in women's only colleges where the survey found a sharp increase in binge drinking (Wechsler et al., 2002). In the more recent years underage girls have been reported to drink as much alcohol as underage boys and in many cases surpassing the boys (Meltz, 2005; CAMY, 2006). A report compiled by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) states that "girls are binge drinking more, according to all three federal surveys, while boys are bingeing less or increasing their bingeing at a slower rate than their female peers (CAMY, 2006, p. 1).

College students, including women, may drink for fun and socialization, consuming anywhere from one single drink to several drinks usually on weekends (CASA, 2006; CAMY, 2006). Even though most college students drink infrequently, the real problem is that many drink simply to "get drunk" (Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998). This pattern of drinking among college students is often referred to as "binge drinking," "heavy episodic drinking," or "high risk drinking." In this study, these terms are being used interchangeably to indicate infrequent heavy drinking among college students. Past studies have defined heavy episodic drinking as five or more drinks on one occasion in the past two weeks (cited in Wechsler et al., 1995). Wechsler et al. (1995) argue that the number of drinks constituting "binge drinking" or high risk drinking needs to be adjusted for women drinkers to four drinks because women experience the same intoxicating effects with fewer drinks than men. According to Wechsler et al. (1995), the percentage of women abusing alcohol in their study increases

from 33 percent to 39 percent if the criterion for high risk drinking is lowered to four drinks. NIAAA National Advisory Council currently defines binge drinking as “a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram-percent or above. For a typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about 2 hours” (NIAAA, 2007b, p. 2)

While the definition of “binge” drinking is still being debated both in terms of number of drinks and period within which it is consumed, Wechsler et al. (1995) bring forth another issue that differentiates alcohol consumption among women from that of men. They argue that although many women drink as heavily as men do, women tend to underestimate the extent and seriousness of their drinking problem compared to their male counterparts. This suggests that even though the statistics about women’s overall drinking might be lower than men’s drinking, it is possible that the self-reporting might not be very accurate, and perhaps the number of women abusing alcohol might be higher than self-reported.

Not only are college women consuming large amounts of alcohol which leads to serious health problems (CAMY, 2008), they are also engaging in risky behaviors associated with alcohol consumption. In the last twenty years, driving under the influence (DUI) prosecuted cases involving females have risen from less than 8 percent to 15 percent (“1800duilaws,” 2007). Drinking and driving had been reported by almost 50 percent of college women who binge drink at least three times in a 2-week period (“1800duilaws,” 2007). In addition to these negative consequences of high risk drinking, many women face other serious consequences such as physical and sexual assaults, date rape, and unwanted pregnancies while under the influence of alcohol (CAMY, 2008;

Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998, Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002).

Enabling Factors among Young Women Who Drink

Drinking among college students is influenced by many factors including family and peers, individual personality, a person's biological or genetic susceptibility to alcohol abuse, race/ethnicity, gender, environment, and campus characteristics (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman & Schulenberg, 2002; NIAAA, 2007a; Wechsler et al, 1995; White & Jackson, 2007). Parental approval, drinking behaviors, and poor family management have been shown to correlate with alcohol consumption among adolescents (Peterson, Hawkins, Abbott, & Catalano, 1994). A longitudinal study conducted by Peterson et al. (1994) starting with 12-13 year olds showed that at the age of 14-15, parental drinking frequency predicted alcohol use. The study also showed that good parental management practices decreased the likelihood of alcohol consumption. Sensation seeking, impulsivity, nonconventionality, stress, anxiety, and depression were summarized to be some of the individual factors that increase drinking rates and negative consequences among college students (Baer, 2002). Genetic makeup of an individual has also been found to affect their alcohol consumption. However, genetic influence in alcohol consumption was found to become more pronounced in an environment where drinking behaviors were greatly promoted (Timberlake, Hopfer, Rhee, Friedman, Haberstick, Lessem, & Hewitt, 2007). In a longitudinal study, Timberlake et al. (2007) found that the current college students drank less in the precollege years than their peers who did not attend college (17.9% vs. 31.5%), however later in college, college participants engaged

in more binge drinking compared to the non-college participants (65.9% vs. 53.2%). In addition, universities where Greek fraternities and sororities dominate and those where sports teams have a prominent role appear to contribute to greater alcohol consumption among students (Presley, Meilman, & Leichter, 2002). The above studies suggest that a mix of several personal and environmental factors influence alcohol consumption among college students.

While many of the above factors in alcohol consumption are relevant for both young men and women in college, there are also significant gender differences. It has been noted that as girls grow from adolescence to adulthood, their lives are marked with many changes. Of course, the same may be said for boys, but the transitions seem to affect girls and young women differently than young men in a manner that forms their attitudes, beliefs, and habits that influence their use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs more than boys (CASA, 2006; CASA 2003a).

Entering college is a significant move into adulthood, one marked by potentially destabilizing changes in family life, residence, lifestyle, and romantic relationships. Students move into an environment where they have greater independence and freedom, and fewer social and parental controls or pressures. The newfound freedom that many students had been looking forward to in their college experience is often used to engage in risky behavior, especially excessive drinking. Among young people, the greatest increases in alcohol use and binge drinking take place during the transition from high school to college. Girls report binge drinking more frequently in their first year of college than in their senior year of high school (CASA, 2003a).

Some of the reasons for the increase in drinking among young women when they enter college are lack of parental supervision and the college social environment. Girls experience tremendous peer pressure to drink (CASA, 2006; CASA 2003a) that is different from pressure experienced by boys (Borsari & Carey, 2001). Boys experience more direct peer pressure in the form of encouragement, dares, or actual offers from peers (Borsari & Carey, 2001) and girls experience more indirect peer influence. Drinking in girls is strongly related to the number of friends they have who drink (Borsari & Carey, 2001; CASA 2003a). CASA's Formative Years survey reported that girls' perception of peer pressure increases as they progress from middle school to high school. The pressure to drink was reported by 1.7 percent of the 5th graders, 23.3 percent reported pressure to drink in the 8th grade, and 46.4 percent reported peer pressure to drink in high school (CASA, 2003).

Apart from peer pressure, college women drink because they believe that alcohol will help them feel sociable and assertive while decreasing their social anxiety and depression (Baer, 2002; Manohan & Lanutti, 2000). Thus, it is not surprising to note that excessive drinking often happens in social settings with the goal of becoming less inhibited, sexually or otherwise (CASA, 2006). Some women drink because they believe that alcohol will facilitate sexual enjoyment even though research suggests otherwise (Malatesta, Pollack, Crotty, & Peacock, 1982). In fact, alcohol's depressive effect on the central nervous system may contribute to sexual dysfunction and reduced sexual responses (CASA, 2006).

It has also been suggested that females with a tendency to rebel and take risks and those seeking sensation seem to be at risk for substance abuse, including drinking (Parent

& Newman, 1999). Other predictors for alcohol abuse among girls have been poor self-esteem and self-image (Ludwig & Pittman, 1999; Monahan & Lannutti, 2000). Girls with body image issues and eating disorders have been found to use alcohol to counteract their negative feeling and boost their effort to lose weight by drinking excessively and purging (CASA, 2003b). In addition, stress has been found to be a common precursor in substance use in women of all ages (Hoffman & Su, 1998). According to Aneshensel, Rutter, and Lachenbruch (1991), stressful life events are handled quite differently by females and males, “females internalizing reactions by becoming depressed or anxious, and males externalizing stress by becoming aggressive and engaging in delinquent behavior” (CASA, 2006, p. 8). It has been found that stress and depression are often the precursor to alcohol abuse in women. A combination of low self-esteem with stressful life events makes depressive symptoms in girls more likely (Hoffman & Su, 1998). CASA’s *Formative Years* (2003) survey found that females who reported more depressive symptoms were also more likely to report greater alcohol use and binge drinking than females who reported fewer depressive symptoms. Apart from depression, for many young women, academic difficulty and poor school performance increase the risk for alcohol abuse (Pulkkinen & Pitkanen, 1994). In addition, sexual abuse in childhood, pressures of the family, and certain forms of illnesses have been found to be predictors of high risk drinking among girls (CASA, 2006).

Deterring Factors for Alcohol Consumption among Young Women

While many potential negative sources of influence are still being identified and examined, some factors that deter young women from drinking have been identified

including parental influence and negative consequences. According to Fletcher and Jefferies (1999), parents have a major influence on girls, perhaps even more than they exert on male children. Young women who perceive that their parent would disapprove of their substance use are discouraged from experimenting with drugs and alcohol (CASA, 2003a; McMaster & Wintre, 1996; Patock-Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001). The presence of an authoritative mother was found to be especially important for young women in exhibiting higher levels of self-regulation when it came to consuming alcohol (Patock-Peckham et al., 2001). Prior experiences with alcohol that might have resulted in negative consequences, such as hangovers and encounters with law enforcement officials, also deter females from excessive drinking (CASA, 2006).

Social Factors

Societal Perception of a “Drinking Woman”

While there are many causal factors in young women’s alcohol consumption that range from internal individual factors to external factors that have been reviewed in the above paragraphs, another topic that needs to be examined is the larger social context and cultural beliefs about women consuming alcohol. This topic needs to be discussed because some of the culturally ingrained ideas about women and alcohol that we see in the media might be a reflection of deeply held beliefs about women drinking. Whether the media are merely reflecting certain beliefs about a “drinking woman” present in the society, or media producers are creating or magnifying the beliefs, is debatable. However, one can say that certain negative perceptions of a “drinking woman” place women in

vulnerable positions where their weaknesses are exploited and unwelcome sexual advances are made (Blume, 1991; George, Skinner, & Marlatt, 1986).

Women have been consuming alcohol throughout the ages (Plant, 1997), but “women were scorned for drinking like men” in the past (Langone & Langone, 1980, p. 2). However, today alcohol consumption by women is relatively more acceptable in the U.S. society. Today, many women drink along with men in social settings, unlike in the privacy of their homes as many did before. According to Langone and Langone (1980), in the past the society’s attitude towards the drinking woman was that of disgust, denial, and protection. While an intoxicated man has been usually considered funny or even macho, or simply ignored, an intoxicated woman has been and still is considered unfeminine, “hard, disagreeable, and masculine” (Langone & Langone, 1980, p. 7). In spite of American society’s negative stereotypes of a “drinking woman,” today the number of women who drink openly and in excess has risen considerably. The reasons for this increase are many, which may according to Plant (1997) include changes in social, political, and economic freedoms for women.

In spite of these changes that have allowed women to drink freely, buy alcohol, and drink along with men, some of the age-old prejudices and perceptions are still present (Plant, 1997). One of these perceptions is that women are sexually promiscuous when they drink alcohol.

Perceptions of Sexual Promiscuity

Western societies, including the U.S. society, long have viewed heavy drinking women as promiscuous or loose (Langone & Langone, 1980; Plant, 1997). According to Blume (1991) the stereotype of the alcoholic man differs from that of the alcoholic

woman in that the latter contains a culturally ingrained expectation of hyper-sexuality and sexual promiscuity on the woman's part. The notion that heavy alcohol use leads to promiscuous behavior in women has long been held in society. The belief is best summarized in the religious text the Talmud as "One cup of wine is good for a woman; Two are degrading; Three induce her to act like an immoral woman; And four cause her to lose all self-respect and sense of shame" (quoted in Gomberg 1986, p. 87). Plant (1997) points out that the relationship of sex and drinking is complex. Previous studies provide different and sometimes contradictory explanations. Some studies suggest a link between heavy drinking and high risk sexual activities like unprotected sex and sex with multiple partners (Plant, 1997; Stall, McKusick, Wiley, Coates, & Ostrow, 1986). Other studies suggest that drinking does not necessarily lead to risky behavior and that some people are more predisposed to risk taking in general than others, and thus those who do not take risks would not engage in high-risk behavior simply because they are drinking (Plant, 1997). These results are no doubt confusing. However, according to some studies, many young men and women personally believe that alcohol helps them to be sexually less inhibited; this belief leads them to take sexual risks that they otherwise would not take (Hingson, Strunin, Berlin, & Heeren, 1990; Wilsnack & Wilsnack, 1995).

On one side, there is the belief among young people, especially women, that alcohol will help them to loosen up. On the other side, studies show that many women today are using alcohol not just to reduce their inhibition, but also as an excuse to indulge in outrageous behavior (AMA, 2006). The AMA defines "outrageous behavior" as "behavior associated with public nudity, dancing on tables/bars, and participating in drinking contests" (AMA, 2006, ¶ Footnote). Studies suggest that sometimes college

women drink to provide an excuse for their sexual conduct or to relieve themselves of the responsibility for their actions (AMA, 2006; CASA, 2006). What psychological satisfaction women get and why they feel the need to express themselves in such a manner is hard to say. However, Levy (2005) provides some insight into today's young women who feel empowered and are embracing the "raunch culture" as a way to show their power and equality with men in the society.

Perceptions of "Girl Power"

In recent years there have been reports of excessive drinking and outrageous behavior among college women (Cohen, 2007; Deveny & Kelley, 2007; Levy, 2004; Meltz, 2005, O'Malley, & Johnston, 2002; Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, Seibring, Nelson, & Lee, 2002). An example from the Time magazine was quoted earlier (Morse, 2002, ¶ 2). Another news report draws attention to the fact that not only are young women drinking heavily, they are also proudly displaying their drunkenness by posting their drunken party photographs and videos on social networking web sites like Facebook.com and MySpace.com (Cohen, 2007). A CNN news report (Cohen, 2007) highlights a popular web page on the Facebook.com web site called "Thirty Reasons Girls Should Call it a Night" where many young women voluntarily post their drunken picture supposedly for fun and entertainment. The web page has more than 5000 images, including images posted by the moderator of the web page. Cohen (2007) reports, "[the] moderator has posted two photos of herself on the site: one with two beer bottles in her mouth, and another of her lying in the fetal position next to a toilet" (¶ 3). The reasons given for posting these pictures are "it's just something fun to do," and "you need to be able to laugh at yourself sometimes." This might be a viewpoint shared by other women who

post their drunken photographs on this web page. Many of these women do not realize the serious consequences of posting such images of themselves on the internet, which can be accessed by anyone, including potential employers (Cohen, 2007). It is difficult to know why some young women like to display their drunkenness, but one theme that constantly appears is, “if boys can do it, why can’t girls?” Cohen (2007) quotes the moderator of the Facebook.com web page, who wrote in an instant message conversation, “[They think we’re] sloppy, unladylike, low class,... [But] I’ve noticed when college boys do stupid things when they’re drunk, they’re just being boys” (§ 12). It seems like some young women are associating the reckless and outrageous behaviors with either equality with men, or simply as a way to show female power today.

Additional insight into today’s young women and their outrageous behavior is provided by Levy (2004; 2005) who followed the camera crew for *Girls Gone Wild* and interviewed several people involved in the making of the films and women who appeared in the films. Levy sees outrageous behaviors of women as a cultural phenomenon. According to Levy (2005), there is a rise in the “raunch culture” that has spread from the strip clubs into the lives of ordinary young women. Levy (2005) says that many women today are emulating the strippers and the porn stars and expressing sexuality in a manner that some feminists deem as objectification of women. The only difference is that these women are behaving like porn stars and strippers voluntarily. Many women today feel that they are in control and empowered enough that they do not need “to worry about objectification and misogyny,” (Levy, 2005, p. 4) and instead are enjoying themselves by making sex objects of other women and themselves. What women of the “raunch culture” are saying is that they want to be “ ‘one of the guys’; they hope to be experienced ‘like a

man' [and] going to strip clubs or talking about porn stars [is] a way of showing themselves and the men around them that they [aren't] 'prissy little women' or 'girly-girls' " (Levy, 2005, p. 4). These young women also mention that this behavior is "all in fun, all tongue-in-cheek" (Levy, 2005, p. 4).

It is possible that many women today are consuming large amounts of alcohol in part to prove that they cannot only drink "like men," but can also behave in an outrageous manner defying the old world ideas of feminine behavior without any serious negative consequences (in fact, in some cases with positive consequences like getting noticed and admired by their peers, both men and women). The 30-year-old analysis of Langone and Langone (1980) that many young women are drinking in excess "out of feminist rebellion or as part of the general reaction to the attempts of misguided moralists to regulate personal habits, or simply for the fun of it" (p. 4) seems to hold true even today as some quotes from recent new articles suggest. Whatever the reasons might be for an individual, the reality for many women is that they do get into compromising situations and serious problems like accidents, assaults, and rape when they over indulge in alcohol and lose control (Brankesh, 2005; Mohler- Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Wechsler, 2004; "sciencedaily," 2007). A conservative estimate provided by Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan (2001), suggest 25 percent of women in America experience sexual assaults including rape and half of these cases involved alcohol.

Summary

Alcohol consumption among college students, especially men has been a problem, however in recent years heavy drinking among college women and young girls

has become a growing problem. Alcohol consumption among women is influenced by various sets of individual and environmental factors such as peer influence, experiences with alcohol, parental influence, sensation seeking tendencies, stress, anxiety, and depression. Even though women consuming alcohol were looked down upon in the past, the social, political and economic changes in the society have made drinking more acceptable for women. Thus more and more women are drinking outside the confines of their home and many are drinking heavily to the extent that drinking among young women has become a problem today. Even though drinking has become socially acceptable for women, some of the age old prejudices and perception of a “drinking women” still persists in the society. Women who drink are often perceived as being sexually promiscuous, unfeminine and disagreeable.

This chapter presented information on drinking among college students in general and women in particular along with various predicting factors for alcohol consumption among young women. Societal perception and drunken behaviors of young women were also reviewed. This was done to provide a larger social and cultural context to the issue of media influence in alcohol consumption among young women. In the next chapter, media portrayals of alcohol and their influence are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 3

ALCOHOL IN THE MEDIA: PORTRAYALS AND THEIR INFLUENCES

Media is extensively used by young people. There is no doubt that they are a vehicle for advertisers to promote products and consumption. Alcohol portrayals are common not only in advertising in different media, but in television shows, in films, in music and music videos, and on the internet. Studies have found that the media portrays alcohol consumption in a positive light by associating alcohol consumption with fun and good times. Drinking alcohol is associated with positive consequences or desirable attributes in the media while negative consequences of drinking are rarely shown (Bahk, 2001b; CASA, 2006; Grube & Waiter, 2005; Signorielli, 1993).

There is a huge body of research examining alcohol advertising. However, messages of alcohol consumption do not just come from advertising; they also come from other media sources. These sources need to be examined in detail to understand how some recurrent images influence its audience. Cherryington, Chamberlain, and Grixti (2006) rightly criticize research carried out over the past decades that tends to focus exclusively on alcohol advertising and the problem of alcohol abuse. Most research has lacked in-depth analysis of media portrayals such as those found in prime-time television, films, and music shows and the meaning they convey to the young audience.

Cherryington et al. (2006) say, “these sources are all critically interconnected to the ongoing construction and maintenance of *positive* views about alcohol, but receive very little critical attention” (p. 213). Although there are studies on alcohol portrayals, they mainly look at the content, for example how many incidents of alcohol consumption there

are in prime-time television programs and the types of portrayals (Christensen, Henriksen, & Robert, 2000; Grube, 1993; Grube & Waiters, 2005). There are very few studies that look at the influence of the alcohol-related content on audiences. Many of these studies focus on the adolescent population and much less on college age young adults.

Portrayals of Alcohol in Advertising and Their Influences

In the U.S. for many years the alcohol industry placed a self-imposed ban on hard liquor advertising on television and radio, however there was no such restriction for beer advertising. The self-imposed ban on hard liquor advertising in the broadcast media was lifted in 1996 (Elliot, 1996). With the lifting of the ban by the alcohol industry and without any federally-mandated alcohol advertising policy, today there is much more liquor advertising on television and in print. In 2002, alcohol companies in the U.S. spent \$1.9 billion on magazine, newspaper, television, radio, and outdoor advertisements; 21.1 percent of which was used in magazine advertising (CAMY, 2004). As the revenue strapped media outlets are opening their doors for ad dollars from the alcohol industry, more people are getting exposed to alcohol ads, especially underage youth, (Snyder, Milici, Slater, Sun, & Strizhakova, 2006). A national study on effects of alcohol advertising expenditures and the degree of exposure to alcohol advertisements on alcohol consumption among youth shows that

“[y]outh who saw more alcohol advertisements on average drank more (each additional advertisement seen increased the number of drinks consumed by 1% [event rate ratio, 1.01; 95% confidence interval, 1.01-1.02]). Youth in markets with greater alcohol advertising expenditures drank more (each additional dollar spent per capita raised the number of drinks consumed by 3% [event rate

ratio, 1.03; 95% confidence interval, 1.01-1.05])” (Snyder, Milici, Slater, Sun, & Strizhakova, 2006, p. 18).

Alcohol advertising is by far the most studied area in media influence in problem drinking. Though most studies do not show firm causal links between advertising exposure and alcohol consumption, many do show a correlation (Atkin, 1995; Atkin, Hocking, & Block, 1984; Atkin, Neuendorf, & McDermott, 1983; Snyder, Milici, Slater, Sun, & Strizhakova, 2006). A 1983 survey among 12-22 year olds by Atkin et al. (1983) showed a moderate positive correlation between exposure to alcoholic beverage ads in print media and excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages. The study suggested that advertising stimulates levels of consumption that in turn might lead to excessive drinking. Atkin, Hocking, and Block (1984) also found high exposure to beer and wine advertising correlates with positive approval of drinking among 12-17 year olds. A more recent study (Snyder et al., 2006) showed that youth (15-26 years old) who saw more alcohol advertisements on average drank more alcohol. Atkin (1995) looked at several major published experimental and field survey studies to understand the effect of alcohol advertising. He concluded that “alcohol advertising stimulates higher consumption of alcohol by both adults and adolescents; the net effect of advertising is in a positive direction. The key question is no longer whether advertising influences drinking, but what degree of impact occurs” (p. 66).

Even though the effects of advertising on alcohol consumption is well established, many of the studies on alcohol advertising have been criticized for methodological flaws, and reported findings and conclusions drawn that are contradictory and confusing (Atkin, 1995). According to Atkin (1995), this is because some of the experimental designs used

in the studies have “methodological deficiencies, [which are] compounded by the lack of conceptualization,” (p. 48) and the field surveys have other sets of problems and limitations that include lack of control groups, reliance on self-report data, and difficulty in reporting causality (Atkin, 1995).

While alcohol ad exposure and its negative effects on underage population remain a concern, there is also a concern about portrayals within alcohol advertising and their potential effects (Katz & Kilbourne, 2004). Many scholars have studied the portrayals in alcohol advertising to understand what images and messages of alcohol consumption are reaching the youth. Several studies and reports have noted the hyper-sexualization and glamorization of women in alcohol advertising (CASA, 2006; Institute of Public Strategies [IPS], 2002; Katz & Kilbourne, 2004). Earlier studies note the prevalence of beer commercials during sporting events and portrayals of exciting lifestyles in the ads (Hundley, 1995). Their findings show that the alcohol commercials portrayed masculinity based on physical labor, initiation rites, and risk taking, while women in these ads had subservient roles (Wallack, Cassady, & Grube, 1990). A more recent study shows that females are portrayed as sex objects in alcohol ads and as many as 70 percent of the alcohol ads in magazines use sex appeal to sell the product (Austin & Hust, 2005). A thematic analysis of alcohol advertisements in women’s magazines show frequent association of alcohol with fitness, wealth, romance, and the challenging of traditional sex roles (Minkler, Wallack, & Madden, 1987). Several studies summarized by Grube (1995) indicate drinking to be associated with “attributes such as sociability, elegance, physical attractiveness, and with desirable outcomes such as success, relaxation, romance and adventure” (p. 108).

According to CASA (2006), alcohol industry advertising makes drinking— and by association women who drink— appear fun and sexy, both qualities that many young women might find appealing. Fun, sexiness, freedom from inhibition, and seduction appear to be common themes in images of women in advertising today. One of the ads worth mentioning in the context of this study is the 2002 Miller Lite- Cat Fight commercial in which two women get into an argument over a beer and the argument escalates into a physical fight in a pool where they strip down to their bikinis and then end up in wet cement. Though the ad was aimed at men and plays on men's fantasies, it also showed an image of out-of-control, highly sexualized, drunken women. These images of hyper-sexualized, drunken women are not just limited to alcohol advertising but are diffused through the wider entertainment media, but their impact on alcohol sales and on attitudes and behaviors of male and female audiences has not been systematically studied.

Portrayals of Alcohol in Television Shows and Their Influences

There is a very limited amount of literature on the portrayals of alcohol on television and their influence in any age group (Grube & Waiters, 2005). Most studies are content analyses of television programs, which are of course important, but do not go further to explore the influence. According to Christensen, Henriksen, and Roberts (2000), 77 percent of prime-time television programs contain some reference to alcohol, and 71 percent of all television programs depict alcohol use. Major characters on prime-time programming, both males and females, are shown as social drinkers; and the portrayals of social drinkers are more positive than alcoholics (Cook & Lewington,

1979). Research shows that “drinkers” characters are of high socioeconomic status, are attractive, and glamorous (CAMY, 2002; Mathios, Avery, & Bisogni, 1998; Wallack, Grube, & Madden, 1990).

Apart from content analysis studies of television programs, some experimental studies on television portrayals of alcohol and their influences have been reported. These studies show varying results ranging from small to substantial effects, but the results of these studies cannot be generalized because of their artificial laboratory settings (Kotch, Coulter, & Lipsitz, 1986; Rychtarik, Fairbank, & Allen, 1983). All of these studies measure the effects of alcohol portrayals on children and adolescents. A longitudinal study using multiple logistic regression analysis showed television and music video viewing to be risk factors in initiation of drinking in young people (Robinson, Chen, & Killen, 1998). There are some studies on effects of portrayals of alcohol on children and youth as mentioned above, but studies on young adults, especially women, are hard to find. In addition, many of these studies are relatively old, studying the media content of 1980 and through the early 1990’s. Media content has definitely changed since then.

One television program worth mentioning in the context of young women and alcohol consumption is the HBO television show *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) which still runs as a syndicated show on TBS. In this program, sophisticated and attractive young women routinely meet at bars to party and drink. This show has been very popular among college women (Levy, 2005; Morse, 2002). The women in the series are independent, more successful than the men they date, and are sexually uninhibited. The program shows women in arguably more powerful roles than the men. The nightlife of these young women might be very appealing to many young women. This program was

also used for product placement of “Absolut Hunk” brand of Absolut vodka (“Entertainment Zone,” 2002). An entire episode of *Sex and the City* revolved around the making of an Absolut Hunk vodka campaign. As the alcohol industry is being constantly scrutinized and criticized for its advertising, other less direct marketing strategies as this one are becoming a favored way for manufacturers to promote alcohol. Shows like these have a potential for greater impact on drinking behavior among young people than traditional advertising, as advertising is often seen as trivial, its intention to persuade is obvious, and thus people avoid it consciously (Kilbourne, 1979). However, when alcoholic contents are integrated within the television program through product placements and as a part of the story line, people are less aware of them and perhaps more open to accepting the messages about alcohol consumption.

Apart from *Sex and the City*, many other television programs are popular with college students and also high school students. These include MTV’s *Laguna Beach*, *Real World*, *Road Rules*, *Rich Girls*, and *Spring Break*. These “reality” shows constantly portray drinking and outrageous behavior among young people. Other programs like the late night promotion of *Girls Gone Wild* videos add to the list of television programs that show out-of-control, drunk women seeking/getting attention and seeming to have fun. This might convey to college women that their peers in other colleges are having a lot more fun (and alcohol) than they are. Studies that systematically look at these shows and their influence on attitudes and beliefs of young men and women regarding alcohol consumption are much needed to understand the topic of media influence in alcohol consumption and abuse.

Portrayals of Alcohol in Films and Their Influences

Previous studies looking at film content report that alcohol is shown and consumed in most films. A study by Roberts, Henriksen, and Christensen (1999) showed that almost 92 percent (185) of the 200 most popular movie rentals for 1996–1997 contained images of drinking. Not only is alcohol present in films, alcohol use is often presented as a normal, non-problematic, or at most semi-problematic behavior for the users. According to Grube and Waiters (2005), portrayals of drinkers in the movies have largely been more positive than of the non-drinkers. Drinkers are shown to be of higher socio-economic status, more attractive, having more romantic and sexual involvements, and being more aggressive than nondrinkers (Grube & Waiters, 2005).

Content analyses of alcohol consumption of women in films show women as vulnerable and in sexually exploitable conditions when they drink alcohol (Grube & Waiters, 2005; Leigh, 1995; Leigh, Aramburu, & Norris, 1992). Female intoxication leading to romance, seduction or unplanned sex have been found in previous studies, as have the morning-after concerns of female heroines about what happened the night before (Grube & Waiters, 2005; Leigh, Aramburu, & Norris, 1992). These themes continue to appear in recent films too. For example, in *The Holiday* (2006) Cameron Diaz and Jude Law are acquaintances who are shown consuming alcohol in the evening and the next morning Cameron Diaz's character is concerned as she does not remember if they had sex after drinking the night before.

Studies of the effects of exposure to depictions of drinking in films on young adults are few, but they do show positive correlation between exposure to portrayals of alcohol and drinking behavior among youth (Bahk, 2001b; Kulick & Rosenberg, 2001).

Many youth-oriented movies portray college drinking. The list includes *American Pie* (1999), *American Pie II* (2001), *American Wedding* (2003), *Animal House* (1978), *Dead Man on Campus* (1998), and *Road Trip* (2000). These movies often trivialize drinking and rarely show negative consequences of drinking; for example in the film *Animal House*, which was deemed by the United States Library of Congress as a “culturally significant” film in 2001, fraternity boys in college are shown excessively drinking and partying. Even though disciplinary actions were taken by the school against the frat boys for their disruptive behavior towards the end of the movie, the movie ends showing how excessive drinking and partying did not affect these young men’s lives later on as the characters end up with prestigious jobs such as that of a senator, doctor, public defender, and an newspaper editor. The positive portrayals and lack of negative consequences trivialize the issue of excessive alcohol consumption among college students. The kind of effects these movies have on college students needs further exploration. Many more studies are definitely required to understand the portrayals of alcohol in films and their influence on the audience, especially those under 21 years.

Portrayals of Alcohol in Music, Music Videos, and other Videos

Music videos also carry messages of alcohol and alcohol consumption among youth. Drinking is often associated with wealth and luxury, sexual activity, and crime or violence in the music videos (Grube & Waiter, 2005). The negative consequences are

rarely mentioned in the music and music videos (Roberts, Henriksen, & Christensen, 1999; Robinson, Chen, & Killen, 1998). Alcohol is mentioned much more in rap music than in any other genre of music. The common theme that often surfaces in rap music is about “getting intoxicated or high” (Grube & Waiter, 2005, p. 330). Analyses of portrayals of alcohol in rap music were found to be of “identity, pleasure, sensuality, and personal power” (Herd, 1993; ¶ 32).

In addition to music videos, videos like *Girls Gone Wild* make enormous money. *Girls Gone Wild on Campus Uncensored* made almost \$40 million in a year (Deveny & Kelley, 2007), which shows their popularity. These videos capture uninhibited college girls, flashing their body parts often under the influence of alcohol. These videos show an image of women which feminists have criticized, yet many women see it as a sign of liberation and of power, as discussed above (Levy, 2004, 2005). However, the impact of these kinds of videos on the audience has not been studied.

Portrayals of Alcohol in News Media

The entertainment news media thrive on reporting the life of Hollywood celebrities. The tabloids and other mass entertainment magazines like *US Weekly*, *In-Style*, *Star Magazine*, *National Enquirer*, and television programs like *Entertainment Tonight* (CBS) and programs on *E!* channel are widely read and watched by young women (“USmagazine,” 2007; “American Media Inc,” 2007). These news outlets often report the wild nightlife of young Hollywood celebrities like Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, Nicole Richie, and Lindsay Lohan, including their excessive drinking. Although the

media sometimes portray these stars as “troubled,” they most often glamorize their “bad girl” behavior (Deveny & Kelley, 2007).

The nightlife of a celebrity is not just there in print and on television, it is widely available on the internet on popular gossip blogs and websites such as perezhilton.com, TMZ.com, omg.com, and defamer.com. Today, in the media there is much attention given to the celebrities and their drinking and partying lifestyle. It is possible that for some young women this is an enviable model of behavior, especially for those who already desire their lifestyle. A *Newsweek* poll found that 77 percent of Americans believe that Britney, Paris, and Lindsay have too much influence on young girls (Deveny & Kelley, 2007). Deveny and Kelly (2007) quote an 18-year-old high school senior who describes herself as a recovered Paris Hilton addict who says, “I loved everything from her outfits to her attitude” (p. 1). There might be many more young girls like this Paris Hilton fan who might be influenced by celebrities and their negative traits. However, the impact of celebrity news, especially about their partying lifestyle and alcohol and drug use, on young people cannot be fully understood unless a systematic study is undertaken. Hansen (1995) rightly points out, “we need to go much further than entertainment programs; we also need to look at factual portrayals in news, documentaries, and current affair programs...The images of alcohol drinking in factual television programming are frequently ambiguous and contradictory, as they reflect the wider, social, legal, and cultural double standards associated with alcohol consumption” (p. 151).

Alcohol on the Internet

The internet today is used by many advertisers, including alcohol companies, to sell their products. While the traditional media have been scrutinized for alcohol promotions that reach underage drinkers (FTC, 2003), the internet, where many young people spend many hours each day (Lebo, 2003), has not been examined much for alcohol promotions. Alcohol advertising can be found in various forms on the internet. A casual discussion with college students (both males and females) reveals that they often get marketing messages via email related to alcohol promotion from bars and clubs in their areas. It is likely that these promotions draw many college students to places where they find inexpensive alcohol to drink in excess as they socialize with their friends. There has not been any systematic study of internet promotions of alcohol and their impact on alcohol consumption and research in this area is again much needed, especially as young people are spending more and more time on the internet (Lebo, 2003).

One example of advertising of alcohol on the internet is the promotion of Heineken beer in a prominent green color around Saint Patrick's Day on the Yahoo web site (Elliot, 2006a; 2006b). Many users who rely on Yahoo as their email server are likely to be exposed to these beer ads when they access the Yahoo web site, and some of these users are likely to be less than 21 years old. In addition to traditional advertising, many alcohol companies are finding different ways to communicate and connect with their consumers on the internet. For example, the launch of the controversial Bud.TV during the 2007 Super Bowl, "an internet based entertainment network" produced by Anheuser-Busch, the largest brewer in the U.S., is likely to expose a lot of young people to alcohol related information (Elliot, 2006b; Center for Science in Public Interest [CSPI], 2006).

This is especially because Bud.TV targets young people who are frequent users of video sites such as YouTube and social networking sites such as MySpace.com. Anheuser-Busch executive Tony Ponturo told the Associated Press “the main reason that we’re doing this is that we need to connect to these new beer consumers” (CSPI, 2006, ¶ 2). These “new beer consumers” are often under the legal drinking age. A Georgetown University study cited by CSPI (2006) suggests that 13 percent of visits to alcohol-branded web sites were initiated by underage consumers and 34 percent of in-depth visitors to Anheuser-Busch’s Bud Light site were younger than the minimum legal drinking age. Another study from Georgetown University mentions 700,000 underage drinkers visited alcohol company Web sites in the last six months of 2003 (CAMY, 2004a). These websites often have video games, downloadable music and other interactive accessories that draw young people to these websites (CAMY, 2004a). Entertainment web sites maintained by alcohol companies often ask visitors to provide their legal age on their website. However, it does not take much for the technologically savvy youth of today to figure out that they can put in any age they choose and access the web site, especially because marketers do not take any specific step to verify the age of the visitors on their web sites. Thus, many underage people may be visiting the web sites and are exposed to alcohol-related contents. As more and more companies start to use the internet for alcohol advertising and promotions, it is likely to expose more young people to alcohol.

Apart from companies promoting alcohol on the internet, drunkenness is also being indirectly popularized through the internet. As noted above, many young college students, including women, post photographs and videos of their drunkenness on social

networking web sites. The internet appears to be a new medium for sharing stories of drunkenness and fun among friends who do not share physical proximity. However, millions of unintended viewers come to know about these stories too. Without any systematic research, it is difficult to know why some young people like to display their drunkenness and outrageous behavior to the public, whether other people who see these displays view them as positively or negatively and what motivates or influences them to drink and behave outrageously.

Research on media influence is often difficult and complex, for people do not live in isolation; an individual is influenced by many factors that range from friends, family, and the environment, to the media. The media are just one source of influence and thus to separate them out from the rest of the factors is rather difficult. Second, media effects studies pose methodological, conceptual, and theoretical problems as pointed out by Atkins (1995). Many quantitative experimental studies on media influence in alcohol consumption are criticized for their artificial and controlled setting that is removed from the “real world,” and are thus beyond generalization. Qualitative studies on the other hand are criticized for being less objective, and with non-representative samples are also not generalizable. Even though complexities and problems in research related to media influence in alcohol consumption exist, it is worthwhile to understand media influence so that positive changes can be made in the lives of individuals who might be negatively influenced by media. In addition, the understanding of media influence can help in improvement in the media content and portrayals based on systematic research.

Summary

In this chapter, studies related to portrayals of alcohol in various media and their influences were presented. There are many studies that measure alcohol incidences in the media however there are very few studies on alcohol portrayals and their influence. In addition, most of the studies related to content of the media and their influence are relatively old. More recent studies are much needed since the content of the media has changed and the college students of today have grown up with a very different kind of media content. Thus, this study will examine a controversial media content that college students of today have been exposed to, that is the portrayals of girls gone wild to understand its influence.

Findings from previous studies indicate that alcohol consumption is glamorized in the media. Not only is it glamorized, often the portrayals show little to no negative affects of drinking. Experimental studies have shown that glamorized portrayals positively influence alcohol consumption among young people. Studies on the effects of alcohol portrayals in the media are relatively few and studies on glamorized portrayals of alcohol on women are non-existent. The increase in alcohol consumption among women requires close examination and understanding of various factors including the effects of glamorized portrayals of alcohol on young women so that the problem can be better addressed.

In the next chapter (Chapter Four), theoretical frameworks frequently used in studies of alcohol are mentioned along with the theoretical frameworks used in this study – the social cognitive theory and the drench hypothesis are explained in detail. Several research questions for this study are also presented.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, cultivation hypothesis and drench hypothesis (which focus on cumulative and prototypical portrayals, respectively), and social learning theory and social cognitive theory (with the latter an expanded and updated version of the former) are presented. Cultivation hypothesis and social learning theory are the two commonly applied theories in the study of alcohol portrayals and their effects and are thus presented. Drench hypothesis and social cognitive theory (SCT) are the guiding frameworks for this study to understand the influence of media portrayals in drinking and drinking related behaviors among women. Several research questions and hypotheses are also presented and discussed in this chapter.

Cultivation Hypothesis

Studies on alcohol portrayals and their effects have been guided by two major theories in the past – the cultivation hypothesis and the social learning theory.

The cultivation hypothesis predicts that heavy viewers of television are more likely to accept the social reality presented on television programs than light viewers (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorrielli, 1986; Gerbner & Gross, 1976). In the context of alcohol consumption, the cultivation hypothesis predicts that the higher the frequency of problem-free alcohol portrayals on television viewed by frequent television watchers, the more alcohol they will consume (Brown & McDonald, 1995). The cultivation hypothesis focuses on the frequency of occurrence of alcohol content and alcohol-related

behaviors in the media in order to predict alcohol-related beliefs held by the viewers. Studies based on the cultivation hypothesis often use correlation to test the hypothesis. Many of these studies have yielded inconclusive results or shown weak correlations (Brown & McDonald, 1995). Only a few studies have looked at specific programs, such as soap operas and music videos, and shown stronger correlations (Brown & McDonald, 1995). Brown and McDonald (1995) point to the weakness of these studies, stating that because the data were not collected over a period of time it is hard to know “whether television viewing or drinking behavior came first” (p. 136). In addition, many spurious relationships are possible as alcohol consumption is a complex issue that is affected by many different factors. Cultivation hypothesis is not suited for studying the “girls gone wild” portrayals and drinking because the frequency or the number of occurrences of these portrayals in the media is not high, if one simply counts their occurrence in television programs or any other medium. Hence, cultivation analysis is unlikely to help in understanding how images of women partying in the media influence the viewers. An alternative hypothesis, the drench hypothesis, suggested by Greenberg (1988) in the study of media portrayals, and which emphasizes quality rather than quantity of portrayals seems better suited for this study.

Drench Hypothesis

Greenberg (1988) proposed the idea of looking at “critical portrayals” (p. 97) in the media rather than the total number of portrayals, which is often used by researchers to measure the impression formed by media images. Greenberg’s argument was that if we closed our eyes and visualized television portrayals and recalled them we would come up

with only a few vivid portrayals among all the portrayals we have seen. Thus, these few portrayals, which Greenberg called “critical portrayals,” were much more significant to “individual (and perhaps collective) memories [and thus] should be examined more closely” (p. 97). According to Greenberg (1988), television might have little more than a gradual and cumulative effect, which Greenberg refers to as a “drip-drip-drip effect.” Instead he proposes that certain portrayals might have a “drench effect.” Greenberg suggested, “some characters in some series, or miniseries, or a single program may be so forceful as to account for a significant portion of the role images we maintain. It is those influential portrayals that should be pursued” (p. 97).

Since Greenberg proposed the drench hypothesis, it has been used by very few scholars in understanding the influence of media portrayals (Bahk, 2001a; 2001b; Reep & Dambrot, 1989). Bahk (2001a) identified several theoretical constructs for explaining drench effects of dramatic presentations that included *perceived realism*, *role identification*, and *media involvement*. The drench hypothesis needs to be developed further and empirically tested to make it more comprehensive for studying portrayals and their effects.

Drench hypothesis is relevant to this study of influence of dramatic portrayals of women drinking and partying because even though the number of images of women partying might not be extremely high, one can intuitively say that even merely mentioning the words such as “girls gone wild” evokes in many people’s minds certain images of drunken women behaving outrageously. These party portrayals are certainly recognizable by most; however, it is hard to say if and what kind of influence they have without any empirical study. Thus, drench analysis is the basis for selection of certain

images to examine for the study. Since, the drench hypothesis merely focuses on the media images themselves and ignores other context and situation variables that influence an individual's behavior, it has been used in the study in conjunction with social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory (SCT) is an extension of Bandura's (2001) social learning theory. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of personal factors, individual behaviors, and the environment (Bandura, 2001). Individual behaviors are a result of cognitive processes. However, the enactment of a behavior is mediated by values, expectations, and reinforcement that the individual gets through his or her interaction with the environment. This theory helps to understand human behavior in a comprehensive manner taking into account personal factors and environmental factors. Thus is better suited for the study. In the following paragraphs social learning theory and social cognitive theory are presented and their relevance in this study is further explained.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory has been used extensively in the study of alcohol portrayals and their effects. The social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986) proposes that people learn by observing other people's behavior, then imitate based on *intrinsic reinforcements* (reward or punishment) that follow different behaviors. Modeling occurs through a series of steps that include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The theory suggests that people can learn new information without demonstrating new behaviors unless they are motivated to imitate the behavior based on their perception of rewards and punishments they might receive. However, people are also able to control their behavior

through a process of self-regulation that involves *self-observation* (individuals look at themselves and their behavior and keep track of their actions), *judgment* (individuals compare these observations with rules or standards set by society or themselves), and *self-response* (judging and then rewarding or punishing themselves).

In the case of alcohol portrayals in the media, the theory suggests that learning of behaviors related to alcohol is likely to occur depending on the positive or negative consequences of drinking shown in the media. Social learning theory not only focuses on the frequency of portrayals in the media but also on the type of portrayals, whether they are positive or negative, to conclude whether behavior will be imitated or not. Previous studies on portrayals of alcohol, especially those related to women, have shown that because female characters have been shown to suffer more severe sanctions than men, women are more likely to have negative views about drinking (Breed & DeFoe, 1981; Greenberg, Fernandez-Collado, Graef, Korzenny, & Atkin, 1979). In today's media, the portrayals of women consuming alcohol seem to have become more positive as alcohol consumption is portrayed as fun and sexy, as are the behaviors of drunkenness (CASA, 2006). In this case, according to the social learning theory, one can expect that women today are likely to have a more positive view about drinking and are likely to imitate the behaviors of female characters when positive consequences of drinking are shown in the media.

Moving from observational learning to actual enactment of the behavior seen in the media might not be as simple as presented by social learning theory. Studies on the influence of media portrayals on alcohol consumption show that effects of similar portrayals can be different for different segments of the audience based on their prior

experience with alcohol (Hansen, 1988). Hansen's (1988) study noted that viewers' inexperience with problematic drinking patterns might result in their paying greater attention to such portrayals. Audience members' individual characteristics can affect their interpretation of media images. Social learning theory does not take into account prior experience, nor does it take into account various external factors such as the influence of friends and family and situations that can aid or inhibit enactment of a behavior, thus it has some limitations. However, social learning theory has been updated to include many more constructs that are better able to explain, understand, and predict the influence of portrayals in the media on their audience. This updated version was relabeled as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) which is the guiding theory in this study to understand portrayals of drunkenness of college women and their influence.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) includes many more concepts today than its earlier inception as social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963). These changes were incorporated to address the fact that human behavior is complex, and is influenced by many factors that rest within an individual as well as outside. Social cognitive theory explains human behavior in terms of a "triad, dynamic, and reciprocal model in which behavior, personal factors (including cognitions), and environmental influences all interact" (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 165). Some of the major concepts of social cognitive theory mentioned by Baranowski, Perry, and Parcel (2002) are: *the environment* (family, friends and the media); *situations* (perception of the environment); *behavioral capabilities* (knowledge and skill to perform a given behavior); *emotional*

coping responses (strategies or tactics that are used by a person to deal with emotional stimuli); *self control* (personal regulation); *outcome expectations* (anticipated consequences); *outcome expectancies* (value placed on the outcome); *self-efficacy* (performance confidence); *observational learning* (learning by watching others); *reinforcement* (responses to a person's behavior), and *reciprocal determinism* (dynamic interaction of the person, the behavior, and the environment). With all these concepts, social cognitive theory addresses human behavior in a very comprehensive manner that takes into account personal as well as environmental factors that influence behaviors. In this study, social cognitive theory implies that alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior among college women will be influenced by a set of personal factors (self-efficacy, emotional coping responses, and degree of self-control) and environmental factors (friends, peers, and media).

SCT is one of the most comprehensive theories that has been used to understand, explain, and to some extent predict many issues and behaviors. However, social cognitive theory has been criticized for the same reason that it is praised, that it is, “too comprehensive in its formulation [and that] there are so many constructs that some authors have found a way to explain almost any phenomenon using one or more of the constructs” (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p.181). Baranowski, Perry, and Parcel (2002), suggest that “both practitioners and investigators using SCT must specify the range of phenomena to which it applies, examine the situations in which the theory does not apply, and limit the claims about the utility of SCT to those that are supported by empirical evidence” (p.181). Keeping the strengths and criticism of SCT in mind, this study uses social cognitive theory (SCT) as its basic theoretical framework to examine

the issue of media portrayals of women drinking and partying in a comprehensive manner. The range of phenomena that the SCT will help to understand is who chooses to imitate the behavior, in which situations, and why. Any claims made by the study will be based on empirical evidence and any limitations will be addressed as suggested by the critics. Only certain relevant concepts of SCT will be used in the study. These concepts, their relevance to the study, and several research questions and hypotheses are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Research Questions

This study looks at media portrayals of drunken college women partying, similar to the ones seen on MTV's *Spring Break* and *Girls Gone Wild* video promotions, and how they might influence young college women in their drinking and related behavior. Since there are not many studies in this area on which to base claims or predictions, this study will explore several research questions using social cognitive theory as the guiding framework.

Several concepts from SCT including *environment, situation, outcome expectations and expectancies, observational learning, reinforcements, self-control and reciprocal determinism* are of greater importance for the study and thus have been focused here. These concepts and why they were chosen for the study are explained simultaneously in the following paragraphs. Several other concepts from SCT such as *behavioral capability, self-efficacy* and *emotional coping responses* are not measured in the study because they have been found to be of much lesser significance and including them also posed practical challenges of administering a very lengthy questionnaire thus

were excluded. For example, *behavioral capability* addresses “knowledge and skill to perform a given behavior” (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 169). Most college students do not need any special skills to drink and behave outrageously; whether they choose to do so or not depend more on their environment, situations, and outcome expectations. Similarly, *self-efficacy* addresses a “person’s confidence in performing a particular behavior” (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 169). Since alcohol impairs self-efficacy in people, this was not included in the study. *Emotional coping responses* are basically strategies or tactics used by a person to deal with emotional stimuli including psychological defenses (denial, repression), cognitive techniques such as problem restructuring, and stress management (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002). This concept might be important to explore later when clinical interventions are being designed. In this initial study, the attempt is to understand alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors and identify predicting factors.

Three additional variables that are not a part of SCT but are a part of the personal characteristics of an individual are, *degree of sensation-seeking*, *social self-esteem* and *desire for gender equality*, are included in this study as these variables may provide information about who chooses to imitate alcohol-related behaviors seen in the media and who does not. These variables were included in this study based on previous studies of alcohol consumption mentioned in the literature review (Levy, 2005; Ludwig & Pittman, 1999; Monahan & Lannutti, 2000; Parent & Newman, 1999).

In the following paragraphs, the SCT concepts are presented in detail, and then several broad research questions related to each concept are proposed. Then, explanations of the additional non-SCT variables are examined.

Environment– Environment consists of external factors that are physically outside an individual such as their social environment which would include family members, friends and peers etc. or physical environment such size of the room, ambience etc (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002). In this study, two environmental factors, media portrayals and friends and peers, are explored to understand how these factors influence drinking and drunken behaviors among college women. These two factors are chosen because college students (including female students) are often away from home and parental influence, and spend more time with their friends and peers. Thus, friends and peers are likely to have greater influence on female students in a given social situation than parents. Another environmental factor is the media portrayal of drunken college women. Media portrayals are also explored in the study to understand if and how these portrayals influence young women in their drinking and outrageous behavior.

RQ 1: Do peers and friends influence alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women?

RQ 2: Do media portrayals have an influence on alcohol consumption among college women?

Situation refers to an individual's perception of the environment such as place, time, physical features, activity, participants etc. (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002). In this study, place, time, and activities in which more drinking and drinking-related behaviors take place are explored to better understand some of the important questions of when and where these behaviors take place.

RQ 3: When, where, what, and how much do college women drink?

In context of alcohol consumption among college women, the study would be better informed by knowledge about problems faced by college women because of their drinking.

RQ 4: What problems do college women face because of their drinking?

Observational learning addresses how people learn attitudes and behaviors by observing others and the emotional responses of others. The SCT theory explains that vicarious learning can occur by observing and imitating other people's behavior. Bandura (1977) suggests, "virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for the behavior" (p. 392). Bandura (1977) also states that "emotional responses can be conditioned observationally by witnessing the affective reactions of others undergoing painful or pleasurable experiences" (p.118). After observing a behavior or event, individuals either adopt an idea or reject it based on positive or negative consequences that they observe.

Observational learning is especially important in this study because many college women vicariously learn from media portrayals of other college women drinking and behaving outrageously without realizing some of the negative consequences of their behaviors such as passing out and unwanted sexual advances, which are not included in the media party portrayals. Many women might be making decisions to imitate the behaviors portrayed in the media depending on the perception of the benefits they might get such as fun, pleasure, and attention from peers and friends as shown in the media portrayals. It is also possible that many college women perceive the actions of models in the media to be unattractive, deviant, and not worthy of imitation.

Since there is not much information about the relationship between alcohol consumption, outrageous behaviors, and the influence of party portrayals several research questions are important to explore.

RQ 5: To what extent have college students been exposed to images of drunkenness and outrageous behavior of women through the media?

RQ 6: Do college women behave outrageously when they drink?

RQ 7: How do college women view the outrageous drunken behavior(s) of young women in the media? As positive, negative, or neutral?

Even though this is a study about alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among women, better information can be provided when men's opinions and beliefs are included to compare and contrast with women's opinions. Thus,

RQ 8: How do college men view the wild drunken behavior(s) of young women in the media? As positive, negative, or neutral?

RQ 9: What do young men think about college women who drink alcohol?

Outcome expectations is defined as “anticipatory outcomes of a behavior,” and (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 169). Outcome expectations are learned in different ways, from previous experiences, by observing others in similar situations, by hearing about a situation from other people and their emotional and physical responses to behaviors (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002). Outcome expectations from drinking and outrageous behaviors are likely to be learned in similar ways by college women. Since, the media extensively covers drinking and partying during spring break, it would be important to explore outcome-expectations during spring-break.

RQ 10: What kinds of outcomes expectations are there among college women regarding spring break parties in terms of drinking, social and sexual behaviors?

Alcohol consumption among women (as in men) is multi-dimensional, thus the outcomes expected also have multiple sides such as outcomes expected from drinking alcohol, and social and sexual outcomes expected from drinking and behaving outrageously. Since the literature review shows close links between sex and alcohol in the case of women, thus this dimension is included in the study. These dimensions need to be understood so that better preventive strategies for young women can be designed. Outcomes expected from consuming alcohol and behaving outrageously need to be explored.

RQ 11: What positive outcome (benefits) do college women expect from drinking alcohol?

RQ 12: What positive outcomes (if any) do women expect from outrageous behaviors?

RQ 13: What negative outcomes (if any) do women expect in imitating the behavior(s) portrayed in the media of drunkenness and outrageous behavior?

RQ 14: What social and sexual outcomes (if any) do college women expect when they drink alcohol?

Outcome expectancies are the value that a person places on a particular outcome.

In this study, it is not only important to note the outcomes expected, but also how important these outcomes are for college women. Outcome expectancies are not explored

as separate research questions in this study but will be measured and reported along with outcome expectations.

Self-control is described as “personal regulation of goal-directed behavior or performance” (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 169). Many of the human behaviors are regulated by internal standards and self-reactions. In the context of this study of alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors, self-control is an important concept to explore to understand the enactment of these behaviors. Thus, the research question:

RQ 15: How much self-control do college women feel in a social gathering when they are with their peers and friends?

Reinforcements are “responses to a person’s behavior that increase or decrease the likelihood of [the behavior] occurring” (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002, p. 169). In this study, it is important to know if college women get positive or negative reinforcements from their friends and peers when they drink excessively, and behave outrageously. If the reinforcements that women get from their friends and peers are positive, one might expect the actions to be repeated. For example, Morse (2002) quotes a young woman saying, “I know it’s juvenile, but I’ve had boys comment how impressed they are at the amount of alcohol I’ve consumed” (¶ 2). These kinds of positive reinforcements are likely to encourage women to drink more. However, one does not know if the reinforcements are mostly positive or negative, for women can also be criticized for getting drunk and not being in control. Thus:

RQ 16: How do reinforcements from peers and friends affect drinking and outrageous behaviors?

Reciprocal determinism: Baranowski, Perry, and Parcel, (2002) describe reciprocal determinism as “the dynamic interaction of the person, behavior, and the environment in which the behavior is performed” (p.169). It is hypothesized that change in any one of the three factors is likely to causes changes in the others. It is also noted that not all the factors will have equal influence. Since personal and individual factors are being measured in the study, there is little opportunity to measure this concept as a separate research question. However, the study will explore which individual and environmental factors have greater influence on drinking and outrageous behaviors.

Previous studies on alcohol consumption identified several individual factors that influence alcohol consumption among college students. The three non SCT variables of interest in this study that are: sensation-seeking tendencies, social self-esteem, and gender equality. These variables are explained in the following paragraphs.

Sensation seeking: Zuckerman (1979) defines sensation seeking as “the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences” (p. 10). Previous studies have indicated that high sensation seeking individuals use drugs and alcohol more, and use them more often, than their peers who have low sensation seeking tendencies (Parent & Newman, 1999; Zuckerman, 1979; 1994). Parent and Newman (1999) suggest that, “the personality trait of sensation seeking appears to play an important mediating role in alcohol use and associated risk-taking behavior in young women” (p. 12). In this study, measuring sensation seeking tendencies is likely to provide information on who consumes more alcohol as well as who behaves outrageously. It is also likely to provide an opportunity to understand if and how people with varying degrees of sensation seeking

tendencies view portrayals of drunkenness and outrageous behavior and how these portrayals might affect them. Thus,

RQ 17: How do women with different levels of sensation seeking tendencies evaluate media party portrayals?

RQ 18: Do sensation seeking tendencies affect alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior in an individual?

Social self-esteem (SSE): Monahan and Lannuti (2000) conceptualized social self-esteem based on Baumeister's self-presentation theory (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989). According to the theory, people with high social self-esteem "are characterized by a willingness to take risks in order to enhance their image, confidence in their ability to achieve social success, and belief in their attractiveness" (p. 179). In contrast, people with low social self-esteem are characterized by negative self-perception, negative meta-perception and a "self-protective" intrapersonal style (Monahan & Lannuti, 2000, p. 179). Alcohol's role in facilitating social interaction by helping individuals to become less inhibited has been discussed in the literature review. Women with low social self-esteem have been found to consume more alcohol (Ludwig & Pittman, 1999), and drinking alcohol has been found to help women with low social self-esteem to be socially more open than women with high social self-esteem (Monahan & Lannuti, 2000). However, it is not known if and how social self-esteem affects outrageous and reckless behavior in women. Thus,

RQ 19: How does social self-esteem affect alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women?

Gender equality – It is necessary to explore this variable in the context of alcohol consumption in women based on comments made by several women in various interviews (Levy, 2005; Morse, 2002). A few of these comments are mentioned in the literature review and an example is also quoted at the beginning of chapter 1 “...to be able to drink like a guy is kind of a badge of honor. For me, it’s a feminism thing” (Morse, 2002). Thus, the study explores,

RQ 20: How does the desire for gender equality affect the amount of alcohol women consume, how wildly they behave, and their views of the “girls gone wild” portrayals in the media?

Since this is a broad comprehensive study on alcohol consumption among women, it would also be useful to explore the kind of messages that would resonate best with women in curbing drinking, the last research question is:

RQ 21: What kind of messages would be most effective in curbing alcohol consumption?

Summary

In this chapter, several theoretical frameworks that have been used in the study of alcohol consumption cultivation hypothesis, drench hypothesis, and social learning theory were reviewed along with the theoretical framework used in this study the social cognitive theory. Several concepts from social cognitive theory were also presented. The focus of this study is on several SCT concepts that include environment, situation, outcome expectations and expectancies, observational learning, reinforcements, self-control and reciprocal determinism and non SCT concepts that include sensation seeking

tendencies, social self-esteem and gender equality. A total of 21 research questions are also presented in this chapter. In the next chapter, (Chapter Five) study one is described in detail and results from study 1 are presented.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY 1: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This chapter outlines the research design, participant recruitment, procedure, data analysis and results from study 1. The purpose of study 1 was to explore individual and environmental factors that contribute to alcohol consumption, and how “girls gone wild” portrayals influence young women in their alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. Through stories and experiences provided by college women in their own words, this initial study provided in-depth qualitative data on the topic and also helped in designing study 2, a survey, aimed at providing data that could be used to generalize to a larger population of college women.

Research Design

Study 1, conducted online, consisted of open-ended questions in order to gather detailed information about women’s experiences with alcohol, their thoughts on “girls gone wild” portrayals and their influences. For example, “Why do you drink alcohol?” (see Appendix B). Open-ended questions were used because of limited information on the topic as previously stated. This made it rather difficult to hypothesize or construct valid quantitative survey items without first drawing in-depth information from the research participants themselves.

The online study gave the participants an opportunity to be anonymous and still be able to share their experiences in detail. Anonymity and sharing information in detail at the same time could not have been possible using face-to-face interview or focus group

methods where the interviewer or the moderator is face-to-face with the participants. The presence of an interviewer or other participants could have affected the way respondents answered the questions. The participants in this case needed to feel comfortable to share information on sensitive issues like those relating to wild party behaviors and sex without feeling embarrassed or judged. The likelihood of getting socially desirable answers would have increased in the physical presence of the interviewer, moderator or other participants.

Usually an initial study is done to check and refine the instruments for a larger survey. However study 1 was conducted in order to gather preliminary information on the topic of alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. Study 1 helped to gather a variety of responses that provided some insight into the topic and it also helped to develop questions and categories for a second more structured survey. Given the way study 1 was conducted and the data were analyzed, it would be more accurate to call it an online structured interview rather than an in-depth survey.

The online structured interviews collected data from both male and female college students. Even though the study focused on college women, information from men about their perception of women who drink and behave outrageously helps to understand the phenomenon in the society better as previously stated. There were separate sets of questions for male and female participants (see Appendix B). Since the study aims to understand alcohol consumption and alcohol-related behaviors among women, only female students were asked to share their experiences with alcohol. However, both men and women were asked to answer questions related to media influence in alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors.

Female respondents answered 25 questions on alcohol consumption and their drinking-related experiences, and 12 questions on media influence in alcohol consumption and party behaviors. Male college students answered a total of seven questions related to drinking and outrageous behavior of women in the media and in real life (see Appendix B).

In the study, men and women participants were asked to watch a short two-minute video clip which was downloaded from the web site Youtube.com (this video clip is no longer available on the web site (Youtube.com, 2008)) and write their reactions. The video was very similar to the infomercial of *Girls Gone Wild* and *MTV Spring Break* coverage. This particular video clip was chosen after examining more than 50 online video clips of drinking and wild behaviors at parties and on spring break. Several themes or activities were found to be common in all the party videos. The videos showed young women taking alcohol shots and/or drinking heavily, dancing on the bar tables, dirty dancing, wearing wet t-shirts, kissing other women, and displaying their “private parts” in public. The video clip chosen for the study contained all these elements. It represented a “typical” party portrayal that one associates with *Girls Gone Wild* infomercials. This was further confirmed to be the right choice through the responses of the research participants presented later in this chapter.

The respondents watched the video clip and wrote down their reaction to the women in the video by answering the open-ended question “What are your thoughts and feelings about the women you see in this video?” Several secondary questions related to party behaviors in the media and in real life were also asked (see Appendix B).

Participants

Undergraduate students (N=69), 29 males and 40 females between the ages of 18 and 24 years old at a major university located in the Northeast of the United States, took part in the pilot study. The university was chosen because of its large and diverse student body. Size and diversity facilitated in collecting data that included ideas and opinions of a wide variety of college students.

Procedure

The research participants were recruited for the study by approaching instructors of different sections of a public speaking course. Public speaking is a required course for undergraduate students in most majors in the university. The course, therefore, included students from many disciplines and levels allowing for collection of diverse opinions and experiences. The nature and mature content of the topic, that is alcohol, sex and outrageous behaviors, made it necessary to gather data only from participants who were 18 years or older.

An instructor of different sections of the public speaking course provided students an opportunity to earn extra-credit points for taking part in the study. If any student did not wish to participate, he/she could do an assignment of equal magnitude to earn extra-credit points for the class. The instructor informed the students about the study and let them know that their participation in the study was voluntary. Other instructors just let their students know about the study.

Study 1 was conducted online. The instructor was sent a web link to pass on to the students. The participants had to complete an online consent form before they proceeded to answering the questions (see Appendix A). Participants answered several open-ended

questions at their own pace (see Appendix B). The participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire. In the questionnaire students were asked to share their opinions and experiences with alcohol, and were also asked to provide suggestions for any addition or refinement of questions for the survey.

Data Analysis

Study 1 was used to gather qualitative data using open-ended questions. Thus, the analysis was also done in a qualitative manner that included identification of common themes in participants' responses and presenting participants' responses in their own words. Participants' verbatim responses are mentioned in the following paragraphs to provide better understanding of the context as well as participants thought and experiences.

The accounts throughout the chapter are direct or verbatim statements from the respondents and are not corrected for grammar, syntax or slang language used. Only spelling mistakes are corrected and very few words are inserted in parentheses when the context is not clear on its own. This was done to maintain the essence of the language and also to note the way college students write and speak today. It should be noted that these are casual responses on an online questionnaire. A short summary of the responses are provided first for each question that was asked of the respondents. A complete summary, analysis, and findings from study 1 are provided at the end.

Major Findings from Study 1

Responses from Women

Study 1 was completed by 40 female undergraduate students. Among the women participants six out of 40 were non-drinkers. The main reasons stated for not drinking alcohol were the taste of alcohol, health reasons, and religious beliefs. Some typical responses for not drinking alcohol included:

Participant: *I don't drink alcohol because I don't like the taste.*

Participant: *The reason I do not drink alcohol is that I do not like the taste of alcohol, and I do not like the feeling of dizzy or out of control after getting drunk.*

Participant: *I am a health conscious person. Alcohol is bad for your body and can impair your judgment at important times.*

Participant: *They [alcohol] do not taste good and consuming alcohol kills brain cells.*

One participant just mentioned "religious beliefs."

Alcohol Initiation

In response to the questions regarding when and where women respondents first drank alcohol, most of the female respondents mentioned that they were introduced to alcohol in the junior or senior year of high school at a party. Typical responses included:

Participant: *senior year of high school with my friends.*

Participant: *after junior year in high school at a party in the summer.*

To the question "Who offered you your first alcoholic drink?" the most common response mentioned was that drinks were offered by friends. Very few women mentioned alcoholic drinks offered by family members. For example,

Participant: *I first drank alcohol my freshman year of high school. I was offered alcohol by older teammates.*

Participant: *at a friend's house, a friend offered.*

Participant: *I first drank alcohol in eighth grade. I lived in a town where our only entertainment on weekends was to meet up with friends and really just walk around. One night a friend brought out a 40oz of Malt Liquor called a Hurricane and I tried some. I have no idea how he was able to get it but it was the first time I had ever tried alcohol.*

Those who mentioned family members as the ones who introduced them to alcohol made statements such as,

Participant: *the first taste ever came from a family function, family member allowed me to taste the wine.*

Participant: *my first drink ever was probably a sip of beer with family and I would have been pretty young but the first time I got drunk was 8th grade.*

Participant: *Since I was 15 years old I was allowed to have a small taste or glass of wine at special occasions or dinners, my mother ultimately made the decision to make sure alcohol wasn't forbidden so I wouldn't overindulge.*

Environment and Situations Conducive for Drinking

For the questions, "When, on what occasion, and where do you tend to drink more alcohol?" Most women mentioned bars and house parties as the places where they tend to drink more. For example,

Participant: *I tend to drink more alcohol when I am out at the bars with my friends.*

Participant: *Now, I drink more at bars. We go out as a group on the weekends just for something to do.*

Participant: *home parties mostly, then went to bars when I became of age.*

Participant: *I tend to drink more alcohol at my friend's house parties because I feel it is safer and less expensive to drink in the comfort of a close friend's house than at bars. I do drink in bars, but not as often.*

Participant: *I usually drink alcohol on the weekends. I have learned over the years because of my reaction to alcohol to stick with expensive beers like Guinness,*

Yards, Flying Fish or Dark wines like Yellow Tail. I will drink at bars but I prefer to drink at home so that I do not have to worry about driving.

Respondents also mentioned some occasions when they tend to drink more alcohol such as “family parties, weddings, occasional holidays,” “out after work with coworkers, or parties, especially birthday parties.”

Reasons for Drinking

Why do you drink alcohol? To this question the common reasons mentioned by women were, for relaxation and relieving stress, getting over depression, for fun, to loosen up, enjoyment of the taste of alcohol, to socialize, and to fit in. For example,

Participant: *it [alcohol] makes me feel good and relaxed.*

Participant: *To enhance my fun, to fit in, to relax.*

Participant: *1. It helps me feel less stressed 2. To have a fun time with my friends 3. To open up to people more easily.*

Participant: *I find it relaxing and enjoyable. It takes the edge off and relieves stress.*

Participant: *to relax after a stressful school week or long shift at work, to have fun with friends, and because I enjoy all the different tastes and varieties of alcohol, because I enjoy the effects it has on the body it can ease nerves in social situations.*

Participant: *Enjoy the taste of select beverages, social drinking.*

Participant: *To get a buzz, to be sociable.*

Participant: *My friends do encourage me, if I want to stay in one night to relax they will sit there and beg me to go for a drink with them and if I say no they call me a loser or lame. I don't like being called names so I usually end up going for a drink with them. They don't force me, if I truly didn't want to go out I wouldn't but sometimes it's nice to be out with friends when you have nothing better to do.*

Participant: *because I'm depressed, and to have fun with friends.*

To the question “Why do you think other college women drink alcohol?” The common reasons given were peer pressure, trying to fit in, to feel less inhibited in talking to men, to relieve stress, and as an excuse for doing something stupid. For example,

Participant: *to get hammered, to use it as an excuse to do something stupid (aka sleep with a guy).*

Participant: *to get messed up to not remember anything, to hook up with someone to not be nervous.*

Participant: *to loosen up to feel less inhibited to have a reason to act foolish.*

Participant: *Peer pressure or the assumption that it's the cool thing to do.*

Participant: *1. Peer pressure 2. Because it is always around when you go to campus parties 3. They feel more loosened up to talk to guys.*

Participant: *Peer pressure. Everyone else seems to be having fun and letting loose. If you don't drink, you're a prude.*

Participant: *the same reasons as myself, but also: out of boredom because they think everyone else drinks too to be less sexually inhibited (to say or do the things they can't bring themselves to do when they are sober) to get attention.*

Participant: *To celebrate things (birthdays, exciting news, etc) and to relieve stress. When I am stressed I like to go have a drink or two to relax.*

Participant: *Some reasons might be for stress relief, for pleasure and mostly because they want to go to parties and therefore there is alcohol present so they can consume it.*

Participant: *Because everyone else is drinking and if they aren't they feel excluded. College is a big time for drinking and you're supposed to party a lot and loosen up. For others it's a matter of making themselves feel better or treating themselves after a long day.*

Negative Outcomes of Heavy Drinking

Respondents were asked to narrate an incident when they might have had a little too much to drink. Their vivid stories contained themes of drinking too much and

vomiting, blackouts, fights and getting closer to someone they did not know well.

Incidents of drinking too much, vomiting, fights, and blackouts were narrated as,

Participant: at a house party, I drank a very strong drink, way too fast, had to be driven home and threw up the entire way...went to sleep and then woke up completely hung over.

Participant: I tend to eat a lot and pass out.

Participant: Mostly when I was not of age is when I would be most intoxicated. It usually began with taking shots of hard liquor before going out than drinking beer while out, mostly playing drinking games to get drunk faster.

Participant: We had a party at my apartment and I drank a little too much and went to sleep. When I woke up I realized that someone threw eggs against my wall. I later found out that kids were in my apartment that I didn't know, but was too incoherent to do anything about it.

Participant: Freshman year I drank too much and blacked out. I ended up falling and hitting my face on concrete steps. I had to be rushed to the hospital and my mom came down from Massachusetts. I had to go through the judiciary system. Participant: I went out with some friends to a bar and saw my ex-boyfriend for the first time since he broke up with me. I drank more than I normally would have because I was trying to relax and not act weird around him because I still hurt about what had happened between us. I drank too much and took a cab home with friends. Later that night I threw up and passed out inside the shelf of our entertainment system. When my roommate came home she was really worried about me and got mad that I had scared her so badly.

Participant: My friends and I went to [Bar X] in Old City. We walked in and the club owner pulled us in VIP and gave us drinks for free all night. We finished a couple bottles of champagne and the owner gave us all about 6 shots each. I drank so much so fast it hit me at a point where I blacked out and my friend put me in a cab home. I have minor memories of going home or even getting in my apartment. It was not the amount of alcohol consumed it was in the time it was consumed.

Participant: There was an incident that actually still scares me to this day where I had apparently way too much to drink. My friends and I started drinking at one bar from 9-11 because it was a \$10 all you can drink open bar. I don't remember past 10 pm but my friends told me that I got kicked out of that bar, and then another bar they brought me too and then I started fights with my friends and started saying really mean personal stuff to them, yelling it in their faces. No one

would talk to me for almost 2 weeks after and I've never felt so bad after an event in my life.

Those who mentioned getting close to some they hardly knew narrated incidents such as,

Participant: After work with friends, after mixing wine, beer and champagne-danced around without shoes, "accidentally" stepped in a lake, got a little closer than I normally would to a male co-worker, and eventually got sick, boyfriend got mad that I wasn't home and didn't answer the phone.

Participant: I have made decisions that I would not make while sober. I have had intimate partners that I would not normally do anything sexual with. I have also said very mean things while drunk that I normally would not say.

Participant: I ended up in a 69 with a guy that I had just met that night on a first real drinking party in high school when I was 16. It was something I completely regretted in the morning, was humiliated for through another school, (The guy received a standing ovation at his high school in the lunch room from all the guys). It screwed me up emotionally for a couple months afterwards.

Problems Faced by Women Because of Heavy Drinking

Have you or any of your girlfriends had a problem because of too much of drinking? To this question most women respondents answered no, a few narrated their friends' stories and a very few narrated their own stories. The stories involved problem drinking, hangovers, arrests, sex with strangers, and fights.

Participant: A (now ex) friend got totally sloshed about 2 weeks before her 21st birthday and ended up getting arrested for public intoxication and of course, got in trouble for being underage. She ended up being sent to the hospital to have her stomach pumped.

Participant: I have not had any serious problems from drinking too much alcohol, just hangovers. However, my one friend was drugged by someone putting something in her drink one night when we were out.

Participant: Some of my friends have done certain sexual acts with men when they were drunk.

Participant: I have done many things that I am not proud of because of drinking. Starting fights with other people, being the crying person in the group, sexual encounters that I regretted the next morning. I have tried on more than on

occasion to walk down major roads by myself when drinking. I have gotten into fist fights. Things I prefer to keep in my past.

Participant: I had a slight problem but learned to control my drinking in a responsible way, my roommate still has a problem and I confronted her, she got help from a counselor but no sooner than a month went by that she was back to her old ways of blacking out drunk every time she drank.

Drinking Games

Drinking games are quite common among college students at parties and are means to get drunk fast. When college women were asked “Have you ever taken part in drinking games or drinking competitions? If yes, what games did you play?” To this question most women answered “yes.” The games mentioned by the respondents were *pyramid, asshole, beer pong, flip cup, drinking card games, kings, a deck of cards- who ever picks the lowest card must take a shot, shots and ladders, and Up the river down the river F%\$# the Dealer Beer Pong.*

Drunken Behaviors

Have you ever done something when you were drunk that you normally would not do? The common themes that emerged from the responses of the women were singing and dancing, arguments and fights, kissing, and having unplanned sex or sex with a stranger. For example, those who mentioned fights after drinking made statements such as,

Participant: I tend to be more open when I drink. I'll be brutally honest and speak my mind and it got me in trouble more than once. Example: I got in a pretty heated verbal fight with a guy friend, which almost resulted in a physical fight between him and my boyfriend. That type of stuff never happens to me sober!

Participant: I've got into a verbal argument with a then boyfriend, in a public place in front of others. I was very loud and verbally abusive.

Participant: *of course. Flash people at Mardi Gras parties, talked to people I wouldn't normally talk to, tried drugs, get angry.*

Those who mentioned kissing, unplanned sex and sex with strangers made statements such as,

Participant: *I have hooked up with a friend of mine because I was drunk. I lived with him and a couple of my other friends for the summer and we slept in the same bed because my roommate snored. We both got very drunk and when we went to go to bed we hooked up. We ignored it ever happened and never talked about it again.*

Participant: *yes I am very much more flirtatious when I am drunk and more talkative.*

Participant: *I have done things that I wouldn't normally do sober, which I regret afterward, such as riding with a driver who had been drinking and cheating on my boyfriend.*

Participant: *Yell at my friends. Hit on guys. Dance on bar tables. Make out with guys in a bar. Bring a guy home from the bar.*

Participant: *Yes I kissed someone that I didn't want to*

Participant: *Yes...sing karaoke, had sex.*

Peer and Friends, Group Make-up, and Alcohol Consumption

When asked “Is your alcohol consumption affected by the kinds of people in the group? For example, if you are in all girls company or in groups where there are more men? In which group are you likely to drink more and why?” To this question most women responded that the gender of the people in the group did affect their drinking pattern. Some mentioned drinking more around men while others mentioned drinking more around women. Some women mentioned they drank more beer when they were around men and drank more cocktails around women. They also mentioned they felt safer to drink more in the presence of female friends than in all male company. For example,

Participant: *yea, I think so... I tend to drink (not more, depending on the group) but different drinks, like if I'm around a bunch of guys, I'll drink beer, but if I'm with my girlfriends, I'll drink mixed drinks.*

Participant: *yea boys - beer girls - liquor, shots, mixed drinks.*

Participant: *drink more when it's the girls because I know sometimes I act a little different and if I am with my close friends its fun and there's always a designated driver to make sure we are safe. Over time I have learned when I am around guys its more dangerous and I don't want anything bad happening.*

Participant: *I am more likely to drink when there is a mix of both girls and guys. I think because I can hang out and have fun with the guys but then if I need help I have my girlfriends.*

Participant: *Yes, with girl I drink more because I'm not as threatened by girls as I am guys.*

Participant: *I am more likely to drink more with girls because I feel safer without boys.*

Participant: *more likely to drink with men than women, although I like women to be present and have it be a mixed group... because it gives an excuse to drink with men! maybe it gives "an excuse" for flirting?*

Participant: *I am more likely to drink when there are more men around, usually just because that means that I am at a party with a bunch of different people, however I drink just with girls too, so I am not sure...*

Participant: *I'll drink more when there are guys in the group. I feel they will protect the girls if anything were to happen.*

Some women mentioned that gender make-up of the group did not affect their drinking pattern but the familiarity with the people in the group did. For example,

Participant: *It isn't affected by gender, it's effected by whether I trust/know the people well or not. If I don't know or trust them, I won't drink as much.*

Participant: *The sex of the people I am with doesn't really affect how much I drink, it's more about whether I know or have met the people before. The better I know the people, the more comfortable I will probably feel, and don't feel a need to drink as much to feel comfortable.*

Very few mentioned that the gender make-up of the group did not affect their drinking.

For example,

Participant: *Doesn't affect me. I tend to drink the same with female and male friends.*

To the question does the presence of friends influence your drinking pattern?

Most respondents who answered the question answered "yes." For example,

Participant: *Yes, when I am with my friends I tend to drink more.*

Participant: *Yes, I'll drink more alcohol when I'm with my closest friends. I know they have my back and will look out for me. I can't drink much when I'm with people I'm not as close to.*

Participant: *If I am out with friends, certain ones I may drink more while in the presence of others I might not drink at all.*

Participant: *Yes. If I'm by myself I don't typically drink but if friends are around we usually do.*

Outrageous Behaviors

What is the wildest thing that you have done at a party, or at a bar or club? The most common responses to this question were dancing on the bar table, flashing, "making out" in a public place, kissing strangers, and trying drugs. For example,

Participant: *Danced on the bar.*

Participant: *Kissed people I didn't really want to.*

Participant: *I also "made out" with a co-worker once... even though I have a boyfriend... oops.*

Participant: *At a bar I have made out with a few guys.*

Participant: *wildest good or bad? good (fun) dance on bars, bad-trying drugs.*

Reasons for Outrageous Behaviors

When asked to share “why did you behave “wildly” or uncontrollably “or explain why their friends might have behaved wildly, the reasons given were being drunk, lowering of inhibition because of alcohol, vying for attention, and having a good time.

For example,

Participant: *I don't normally behave that wildly at all; sometimes I just enjoy dancing and having fun with a crowd. I think friends of mine behave wildly because they have a desperate need for attention especially from men.*

Participant: *ATTENTION CRAVING or they were super drunk, or possibly they just like dancing on a bar counter? I think it's mainly for attention though from guys.*

Participant: *I behaved like this because I had too much to drink.*

Participant: *because I'm drunk and I lose all inhibition*

Participant: *I believe that liquor and beers lower inhibitions and normal safety and rationality that most people would normal have and engage in. When you become inebriated you feel that you can do anything that would normally not be safe and smart.*

Participant: *They [the bars] offer you free drinks if you get up and dance. I figured my clothes are still on, drinks are expensive, and I am a good dancer...so why not.*

Participant: *Because they were drunk beyond reason. Felt they needed the alcohol to let loose.*

Participant: *you tend to lose your inhibitions, or reservations, when drinking. so you just want to have a good time, whether you embarrass yourself a little or not.*

Participant: *At the time I didn't view it as wild, I viewed it has having a good time. But, the reason I behaved that way was because my inhibitions were low and I didn't care as much as I do when I am sober.*

Sex and Alcohol

To the question “do you think when you drink alcohol you feel sexually less inhibited than you otherwise would?” A large number of women said that alcohol made

them sexually less inhibited. Some were not sure if alcohol made them sexually less inhibited or not and even fewer said that alcohol did have any affect on their sexual inhibition. And to the question “have you ever taken sexual risk (e.g. having sex without condoms, having sex with someone you hardly know) when you were drunk?” A majority of the female respondents said they had.

Among the people who shared information about the kind of sexual risk they had taken, most participants mentioned “unprotected sex” and many mentioned sex with people they did not know well. A typical response was “had sex with someone I hardly knew.” Some other responses were,

Participant: I lost my virginity the first time I ever got truly drunk at the age of 18 with someone I hardly knew. I felt horrible the next day.

Participant: I feel more sexually aggressive after drinking, but really only towards my boyfriend. I have made-out with a coworker after a few drinks and was tempted to go further, but regardless of how drunk I was I still had enough sense to draw a line.

Participant: I cheated on my boyfriend when I was drunk. I used protection, but it was more of an emotionally damaging risk rather than physical.

Participant: I had sex with someone I just met. A one night stand.

Participant: Having sex with someone I had met not for long.

Participant: I forgot to use a condom. It was about 3 months into the relationship. I was on birth control so it wasn't a huge risk but we corrected it and made sure it didn't happen anymore.

Media Influence in Alcohol Consumption and Outrageous Behaviors

To the question “do you think television programs, videos, films, etc. have any influence on women’s behavior especially as it relates to alcohol consumption and drunken behaviors?” Most female participants felt that media did have an influence

(40%, N=16). However an equal number of women answered “Maybe” (40%, N=16).

Participant who did not believe that media had an influence were much smaller in number (12%, N= 5) and 8% (N=3) of the participants answered “don’t know.”

The female participants who believed that media did have an influence on women’s drinking provided the following examples.

Participant: *shows like Sex and the City clearly show and encourage women to drink. They also show that it is okay for women to be sexually promiscuous after they've been drinking and encourages them to make stupid choices.*

Participant: *I think there are stereotypes in media of women getting drunk at college parties and will hook up with guys easily*

Participant: *Sometimes they make it look really cool to get drunk... I went through the years of 18-22 drinking more than I should have on the weekends after work. When you are a bartender its encouraged and I made bad decisions.*

Participant: *Women think the other women in these videos are having fun and getting attention and they want to have the same attention and fun.*

Participant: *Alcohol ads show women drinking as sexy and classy. When girls get drunk and out of control, it's made out [to] be fun and a good way to get guys- girls gone wild girls post their pictures from drunken nights on social networking sites I think as a way to prove they have a good social life.*

Participant: *I think for some woman, the media can influence. Popular shows like Grey's Anatomy, make it seem like the norm for a woman to go to a bar, get drunk, pick up the hot guy, take him home to have sex with him, and go to work the next morning. Women see it on their favorite TV shows, so why can't they be like their favorite character and be hot and successful as well?*

Participant: *when paparazzi[s] show how young girls in Hollywood are going out to the club, it makes it seem like everyone drinks when they're young and it's not a big deal. Girls think it's funny when they see Britney spears stumbling out of the bar and then compare stories of when they stumbled around somewhere.*

Participant: *Mostly certain TV shows. For instance, Gossip Girl shows high school students getting drunk all the time.*

Media Messages and Strategies to Curb Alcohol Consumption among Women

When participants were asked “In reducing alcohol consumption, what programs, strategies or messages do you think will work best for women? What would discourage women from drinking excessive alcohol?” Some of the common suggestions made were to show risk of accidents, date rape, to highlight calories in alcoholic drink, narrate personal stories, enhance self-image and self-esteem, show images of women appearing “trashy,” and development of fun events and activities on college campuses that do not involve alcohol. For example,

Participant: [Show] *clear, explicit images of what happens or can happen to people when they drink/ drink too much.*

Participant: *risk of date rape incidents is the strongest message in my opinion*

Participant: *it [alcohol] has a lot of calories.*

Participant: [Personal] *Stories. If I could share my stories of some poor decision making maybe they would listen before experiencing it.*

Participant: *I feel that drunk women look very un-classy, easy, unsophisticated, even trashy. Being an American in Europe, where women are never seen drunk in public, taught me this.*

Participant: *Women making bad choices or fools of themselves under the influence.*

Participant: *I think it really comes down to teaching women how to love themselves and respect themselves, and their bodies. A program should be enacted that helps boost self-esteem, as well as self-control. Women should also be taught to live for themselves and not those around them.*

Participant: *Have activities planned that women can participate in that are fun but do not require alcohol to participate. Encourage healthy lifestyles and choices. I think that it's hard to do though because if someone wants to drink, they are going to. They have to want to limit their drinking in order to be successful.*

Participant: *Offer them things to do that do not involve drinking but they would be very interested in (and those activities are?). I know for me if an event comes up*

that does not involve alcohol but will be fun, I would chose that over any drinking event.

Participant: *Quite honestly, I do not think that a program can influence college women from drinking. That is what college is all about – the parties. It is a social activity where you meet people, you may do stupid things along the way but the experiences are fun and the people you meet are not the kind of friendships you make in class. I think one can inform college women of the risks and disadvantages of what alcohol can do but the elimination of drinking among college women would be a very large hill to climb. Moderation may be taught but I think alcohol is so ingrained in the college culture.*

After answering a set of questions on alcohol consumption and experiences with alcohol, the participant clicked on a video link and watched a video clip of approximately two minutes long. This video clip as mentioned before was similar to the infomercial for *Girls Gone Wild* videos and spring break coverage of MTV. The female participants watched the video and wrote down their response. The aim was to understand if and how these images influence women in their drinking and party behaviors.

Girls Gone Wild Kind of Portrayals and Their Influence

After viewing the video 95% (N=38) of the women said that they had seen similar videos before. In response to where they have seen the video a typical response was “girls gone wild commercials, spring break shows on MTV,” “MTV, movies, girls gone wild, other Youtube videos.”

Most women had a very strong negative reaction to the video when they were asked about their thoughts and feeling and reaction to the video. For example,

Participant: *I THOUGHT THEY WERE COMPLETE IDIOTS, SLUTS AND MORONS WITH NO GOALS AND LOW SELF ESTEEM, NO RESPECT FOR THEMSELVES OR THEIR BODIES.* [All capital letters used by the participant indicates the intensity of the feeling and thus has been left as in the original]

Participant: *I thought these women were trashy.*

Participant: *They look dumb and slutty. I judged them, because they think they look hot and it's not the case at all.*

Participant: *I think it's disgusting and trashy and feel like these girls have no respect for themselves or their bodies.*

Participant: *shocked, embarrassed... I couldn't ever see myself doing most of those things.*

Participant: *I've seen it before. It happens. It's just dancing (for the most part) What happens in the bathrooms and behind closed doors could be another story.*

Participant: *I am just glad I respect myself more than to do that to myself. The attention starved actions are beyond pathetic.*

Participant: *It seemed typical of over stressed over sexed young adults going wild.*

Some of the relatively positive statements included,

Participant: *looks like fun.*

Participant: *they were having fun but also not acting properly.*

Participant: *Either that they're having fun or they're drunk, or she's on stage having a good time but I wouldn't let them pour water on me.*

To the question, "Do you think college women are influenced by these kinds of images?," most women agreed that videos showing wild party behavior did have an influence on other college women and few women disagreed. Those who agreed made statements such as,

Participant: *Sadly yes, and most of them think it's cute, fun and sexy.*

Participant: *Yes, as a method to get guys. Guys swarm around girls such as the ones in the video, and that [is] what they [girls] want also.*

Participant: *Yes, it's part of college culture, they think it's the cool thing to do.*

Participant: *yes, because they see these women as having fun and getting attention and they want to have that fun and want to have that attention.*

Participant: *yes- they probably think it's an obligatory experience to have while in college or that it's what college is all about. May be they wish they could be there.*

Participant: *I think the main reason women do act like that is to get attention from guys. Even though they are seen dancing and kissing other girls, there are always guys dancing along with them or cheering on that kind of behavior. Women may think that's how you have to act in order to get male attention.*

Participant: *I think some may be influenced and some are like me and just roll their eyes. I think it depends on the person. I think woman who are more shallow or insecure tend to act like whores when drunk.*

Participant: *I think all women are glad it's not themselves but some just find it funny and move on and do the same thing.*

Participant: *I just smile to myself, because I believe that every person has the ability to say "stop", and to control themselves. These girls in the videos put themselves in these positions and I feel bad for them.*

Those who disagreed said:

Participant: *I think only certain college women. It depends on the person, I am a college woman and those images do not influence me to want to be like them, rather the exact opposite.*

Participant: *I don't think women are influenced by these kinds of images. I think they feel like it is not classy.*

Participant: *I don't think college women are influenced by these images but I do feel like when they go on the legendary spring break that they think it is required that you can get extra wild and perform crazy acts and wear little clothing like the clip represents.*

It appears that women are more influenced by portrayals of alcohol in which women are shown as classy, sophisticated, successful and attractive as portrayed in the television shows like *Sex and the City* than in *Girls Gone Wild* infomercials. The women in the latter are perceived to be "trashy."

When asked if they had done anything that they saw in the video, many participants said "yes" directly and some indicated that more indirectly.

Participant: *I have when I was drinking.*

Participant: *I've danced up on a bar, but fully clothed, and not in a mini-skirt.*

Participant: *Yes, I have been to Cancun and seen people party like this.*

Participant: *I know someone that danced on a bar drunk and fell. All the women I know dance like that. When I was younger I used to let guys pour water on me while I danced.*

Participant: *I've seen it in Spring Break, New Orleans...but I haven't specifically been like that.*

However, some participants said they have never behaved like that. For example,

Participant: *Not me but definitely friends of mine.*

Participant: *No. I think I'd slap any girlfriend who even thought of acting that way.*

Participant: *I've seen my friends grind and make out with guys at bars a lot, its not my thing they always try to get me to do a "bar make out" but I can't because I think it makes a girl look really sloppy.*

Outcomes Expected from Behaving Outrageously

When women were asked why some women might behave like the women in the video, the common answers were to feel sexy, to get the attention of men, and to have fun. For example,

Participant: *To get attention for sure, and because they think they are cool.*

Participant: *To get guys attention. Almost always why.*

Participant: *Because they're having fun, or they think the guys like what they're seeing.*

Participant: *Because they are not used to go out and have fun; - might think the world will end that night.*

Participant: *For attention and self-esteem*

Participant: *attention, bragging rights*

Participant: *Attention from guys some girls go out looking for sex and this attention probably gets them sex so it's rewarding for them.*

The participants were also asked if they thought girls would face problems if they behaved like the women in the video and if yes, "what potential problems can they get into?" The common responses were that women would get raped, sexually assaulted, get a "slutty" reputation, get pregnant, and be taken advantage of. For example,

Participant: *yes- getting attacked by aggressive men, maybe leading to rape in worst cases- getting taken advantage of in other ways, touched, stereotyped, being embarrassed seeing the aftermath of their drunken partying, or being regretful or ashamed of decisions they made.*

Participant: *Girls do behave like that all time. Some face problems like sexual harassment. In one case, a girl sued the makers of Girls Gone Wild because she claimed they filmed her without her consent. When the video came out, it was embarrassing and damaging to her character.*

Participant: *yes because guys would definitely try and take advantage of them being so drunk and may possibly lead to rape.*

Participant: *Yes. I think the girls in the video could be very embarrassed once they see the way they acted. And worse could happen. The women in the video are easy targets for sexual assaults.*

Participant: *Yes, they are portraying to many men that they are 'easy' and have the potential to be taken advantage of.*

Participant: *yes, I think they could get in trouble with guys, maybe sleeping with them and getting into more trouble with that, and they could ruin they're reputation and have other people calling them names.*

Participant: *Of course, there are so many dangers that come along with major problem would be getting raped, getting taken advantage by a guy or even killed (ex. Natalie Holloway) There drinking that half the girls don't even stop to think about them. It's really scary. I don't think there is a foolproof way to prevent any of this either, it's all based on one's own reaction to alcohol.*

Participant: *Yes, I think they could regret it themselves or find themselves being on a website video where professors or employers might see it and they won't be hired or will be fired.*

Participant: *Some could, If they're sloppy drunk someone (a guy) could take advantage of that sexually, or they could lose some of their possessions (monetary or jewelry), or someone could have their images on the internet and lose their current or potential jobs.*

Responses from Men

This study focuses on alcohol consumption among women and the influence certain media portrayals have on women. However, as mentioned before, in order to understand the influence of “girls gone wild” portrayals on women, how men react to women who behave like the women in the video provides additional information on the behavior and the reinforcement of the behaviors. It was also necessary to look at young men’s reactions to the wild behaviors and drunkenness of women shown in the media because videos like *Girls Gone Wild* are targeted at men and of course the incidents of date rape and assaults that happen in party situations involve men. It also provides better understanding of the differences in thoughts and feelings of men and women. For example, many women might be engaging in behaviors to get the attention of men with the understanding that their behaviors are being positively perceived, they will be viewed as “sexy” and “hot.” But this might be a misunderstanding and not the case. Knowing the difference in perceptions of a particular action, how interpretations differ between men and women, can be genuinely informative and help in developing a better understanding of outrageous behaviors and their effects. Study 1 was complete by 29 male undergraduate students.

Men’s attitude and Beliefs towards Drunken Women

To understand what kind of attitude and beliefs young men hold about women who drink alcohol, a projective technique called “word association” was used (Davis,

1997). Projective techniques help to explore people's attitudes and beliefs. In this methodology, a neutral statement is presented and participants are asked to write down their reactions. The statements are analyzed as positive, negative, or neutral.

Word association was used in this study to understand the underlying attitudes and beliefs of men about women who drink. Men wrote down their thoughts on "college women and alcohol" A majority of the responses were found to be negative as noted below. It should be noted that this was the very first question to male participants, so one can assume no priming effect. The typical responses were as follows.

Participant: *Girls gone wild and parties.*

Participant: *Young women in a sorority having a good time. Young women in girls gone wild videos. Young women at risk of rape.*

Participant: *Easy Sex ...drunk*

Participant: *Sex, Vomiting, Making out with random guys, dancing, sloppiness, fights, boyfriend issues, texting, flirting.*

Participant: *Sex and lots of it blacking out. Abuse. They can't handle themselves...most of them at least bad decisions. Sorority issues. A lot [of women] drink to fit in. They think alcohol is the answer to everything*

Participant: *college women hardcore partying.*

Participant: *College women have no control over alcohol. They binge drink in impress the opposite sex and to fit it.*

Participant: *Vomit, Sex, Giggling, Yelling*

The perceptions of men when they see drunken women behaving outrageously in media representations or directly witnessing such behavior in the real life were an important area to explore in order to compare and contrast men's and women's opinions. For example, men were asked "What are your thoughts and feelings about the women

you see in this video?” and “Can you provide any additional insight into the topic of how men think or feel when they see women behaving like this in their real life scenario?” In the following paragraphs responses from men are mentioned.

Reaction to Outrageous Behaviors of Women in the Media

Male research participants were then asked similar questions as those of women (see Appendix B). College men were also shown the same video clip that women saw during the survey. Men’s responses to the video have been analyzed and are reported below. All men (100%, N= 29) had seen similar videos before. When asked about their thoughts and feelings about the women they saw in the video, there were a few positive responses but most were negative. The responses varied from positive “hot” to negative “slut.” Men’s statements are presented in the same order from being positive to neutral to negative as one goes down the quotes.

Participant: *Hot.*

Participant: *I think these girls know how to have a good time. Thank you, now I feel the need to go to Panama City for spring break.*

Participant: *I honestly don’t see a difference between the women in this video and the ones that I’ve partied with; no wet t-shirt contests but dancing and making out yes.*

Participant: *it’s normal when they are drunk or under alcoholic influence.*

Participant: *I’ve been going out to club scenes since I was 16 and witnessed many girls acting in the same manner without drinking any alcohol. Commenting on the idea that the girls shown in the video are drunk, I would have to say that besides the 2 women shown on stage for the wet t-shirt contest, there was nothing wrong with their behavior. The two women on stage, I believe that if their comfortable with themselves that they can compete in a wet t-shirt contest without alcohol then again there’s nothing wrong with their actions as long as they never regret it. The video showed a few women making out with other women, but I know plenty of women who make out with their "girl friends" (by girlfriends I don’t mean lesbian relationships, I speak of friendship friends). Finally the video had 2 scenes when*

a girl was with a guy, nothing suggests that those women picked up those men right then and there, for all I know they could already be in a relationship. At the same time I have been witness to these actions in person, and honestly if that's how they want to behave then there's nothing wrong with it.

Participant: it looks very "girls gone wild" like, it makes women appear to be dancing sex objects.

Participant: Its trashy but at the same time they could just be letting loose and not actually do any more than some dirty dancing.

Participants: They are slutty and have lost all of their inhibitions.

Participant: I think it's embarrassing for them. I would never want my sisters acting like that.

Participant: That they would probably be really embarrassed when they saw that. Of course that's giving them the benefit that they aren't really trashy whores.

Participant: They look sloppy and a complete mess to be honest, I have been to spring break spots and I have seen much worse then what is seen in this video, lets put it this way if I was a father of any of these ladies I would lose it. Trashy comes to mind and pathetic...slutty is an under-statement...I like hot girls that are reserved and can dance dirty within reason this is just trash!

Participant: I think it's disgusting. I think when women kiss each other and allow themselves to be degraded is NOT a turn on. I really wouldn't want to be with a girl that is shaking around like a whore or kissing another. That leads me to believe she has various STDs or she has emotional problems so she seeks sexual attention from men.

Men's Reasons for Women's Outrageous Behaviors

When asked "Why do you think some women behave like the women in the video?" The three common reasons were because women 1) were under the influence of alcohol, 2) had low self-esteem, and 3) had a need for attention. For example, those who said that women were acting under the influence of alcohol gave responses such as,

Participant: I think some women behave like that because of the liquors ability to take away peoples inhibitions.

Participant: *I feel that they act like that because they usually don't when they are sober and this gives them an excuse to get a little crazy.*

Participant: *Because they're drunk and think it's sexy.*

Other participants who emphasized the need for attention and low self-esteem gave responses such as,

Participant: *Cause they're insecure and need attention.*

Participant: *They all do it for attention and they are trying just as hard as men to have sex with a stranger.*

Participant: *They have sexual frustration and don't know how to release it. They can't handle drinking in a scene like that. They want attention and that's how you get it. Bad attention that is.*

Participant: *They want attention. There is something missing in their lives or something happened to them as a child or their lifestyle has created this social prostitute.*

Participant: *maybe they have low self esteem and they think that any attention from guys is good attention.*

Participant: *they want people to like them.*

Reaction to Outrageous Behaviors of Women in Real Life

When men were asked about what would be their reaction to a woman in real life who behaved like the women in the video, the responses were mixed. Some were positive or neutral; these comments mentioned women having fun and men saw themselves having fun with the girls. Sometimes positive comments were followed by negative comments. Men saw themselves as having fun, but they also made a clear distinction between having fun with women who party hard and not having or thinking of a serious relationship with them. Some men's reaction to the women in the video was quite negative. For example, positive and neutral responses were given as,

Participant: *nothing really, besides the wet t-shirt contest (which of course I'd sit around and watch) it's nothing more than seeing a typical group of girls together at a club or bar. They're just dancing together and looking for attention, by going together in a group, they have the opportunity of watching out for one another when they get drunk.*

Participant: *Depending on how drunk I was and if I was single I might party just as hard as they are.*

Participant: *I would party with them because in the end they did seem to be having a good time.*

Participant: *I would just shake my head. It's entertainment, don't get me wrong, I like seeing women dance and all that but it's not a turn on. I would not take one of these girls home to meet my mother.*

Participant: *I would be happy to see that because I am a man yet I would think that drinking shouldn't make you act that way though.*

Participant: *You only live once.*

The mixed responses included,

Participant: *I would never date them or anything like that but I wouldn't run the other way if they were to approach me.*

Participant: *I might think she is hot, but I would still think she is a loser for acting like that.*

Very few men had a strong negative response. For example,

Participant: *not the kind of girl I would want to be my girlfriend or bring home to the parents.*

Participant: *It is a total turnoff.*

Participant: *That bitch is sloppy.*

Participant: *Nothing. I'd ignore her.*

Participant: *Unless she is insanely attractive I would be repulsed and disgusted.*

One of the interesting findings from the study 1 was men's response to the question, "What do men say among themselves when they see some women behaving

like the women in the video?” Most of the responses were very strongly negative and extremely critical; in other words quite different from their own reactions just presented, which were mostly positive with some negative reactions. This is somewhat puzzling, but a possible explanation is that men felt more comfortable sharing other men’s likely reactions than honestly giving their own out of fear of appearing judgmental. For example,

Participant: *When men see women acting the women in the video, amongst themselves they might say “she’s easy” or “I’m gonna hit that tonight.”*

Participant: *I’m trying to get laid.*

Participant: *Look at these whores, obviously they’re trying to get banged...I’m down...*

Participant: *Skanks, sluts, easy, hot. Men will say anything that comes to mind when they’re around themselves [other men]. They might even call a girl a slut one night after seeing them in a wet t-shirt contest and then try to get her number the next.*

Participant: *don’t know, I guess they like it? Faux-Lesbian is so hot right now!*

Participant: *There’s a good chance this is going to be a good night.*

Participant: *Look at these smutts/whores they need to get a grip on reality.*

Participant: *Ohh that’s awesome, that bitch is “hot” or something along the lines of how they’re going to get them in bed or do something sexual with them.*

Participant: *some men say, “hey drunk girls, maybe I can score.” I feel the complete opposite.*

When men were asked to provide any additional insight into the topic of what men think or feel when they see drunken women behaving wildly in real life, many interesting comments were provided. Most comments referred to women being seen as “easy” and easily available as can be seen in the comments below.

Participant: *When men see drunk women behaving wildly in real life they assume that the women is easy to have sex with.*

Participant: *When a man sees a drunken women, they are like hunters who haven't eaten in a long time. Their mouths begin to water because they know the chances of having sex with a drunk girl are quite high.*

Participant: *I'm sure it's a turn on. Men treat women like objects but the fact of the matter is women who behave like that deserve to be treated like that. If you don't respect yourself then you really mean nothing to anyone else.*

Participant: *I feel that men think that if women behave as in that video they are advertising for a sexual experience when many times they women just feel like being a little risky and dancing like that. It causes confusion especially to drunk men.*

However, a few men were put-off or embarrassed by women behaving wildly. For example,

Participant: *Nothing really, other than it's embarrassing.*

Participant: *It might turn off some men, but for the most part, they'll feel horny.*

Participant: *Anyone with class will tell you that behavior is a disgrace and it makes you look trashy and foolish. I might have loved those girls five years ago but now I can't stand seeing that crap. Respectable men don't like sloppy sexual displays like that. I love hot women, but not ones that show the world how sloppy they get when they drink too much.*

Participant: *Its like a freak show, people will crowd and watch.*

Participant: *well, I think they are being dumb, like I said, I guess some dudes like it though.*

Participant: *think media portrays guys unfairly that all guys are into half naked drunk wet t-shirt contests, but I am not interested in these antics.*

Summary

In order to better understand various factors that influence alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior among college women, an initial study, study 1 was conducted. Study 1 provided qualitative data which helped to better understand young women who drink alcohol, the reasons why they drink, and the role media play in drinking and drinking-related behaviors.

The responses of the women in the study 1 suggest that many college women drink heavily during weekends at house parties where the drinks are free and free flowing and also because they feel safer to drink in the presence of their friends. Drinking games are common at house parties. Women also drink heavily at clubs and bars. The price of the drinks acts as a deterrent for some women in their alcohol consumption. However, some bars offer free drinks to women who dance, provide the entertainment to the crowd, and set the party mood. This leads to more drinking among some women.

Most women start drinking in their junior or senior year of high school and are introduced to alcohol by their friends. Peer pressure and a need to fit-in a group encourage women to drink. Women tend to drink more when they are around people they know and are more comfortable with.

Women drink to socialize, to fit-in, to relax, to get buzzed or drunk, as an excuse to let loose, to relieve stress and anxiety, and to get over depression.

Many women have faced problems because of a night of heavy drinking and are well aware of dangers of heavy drinking. Chances of getting sexually assaulted or raped,

fight, alcoholism, unplanned and unsafe sex with a stranger or friends, and blackouts were some of the problems mentioned.

Alcohol and sex seem to go hand in hand. Casual sex with a stranger after a night of drinking has been mentioned by some college women. Getting attention of men, “hooking up,” and “making out” with men seem to be some of the motivations behind drinking and outrageous behaviors.

In study 1, most women felt that some media did have an influence on drinking and drinking related behaviors. They mentioned several television shows that glamorize drinking and drinking behaviors such as *Sex and the City*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, and *Gossip Girls*.

It was also interesting to note the references to the *Girls Gone Wild* videos and infomercials in the statements of the participants when they saw the video clip in the study. These videos seem to have created a strong impression among the participants. This indicates the validity of the drench hypothesis in this study.

Women expressed differing attitudes about why they might participate in drinking and drinking-related outrageous behaviors. Reflecting on their own party behaviors women mentioned that they behaved within the limits and did it “just for fun” but most were very critical of other women’s outrageous behaviors, calling them “sluts,” women with no morals or self-respect, and craving for attention. Some women see “girls gone wild” behaviors as fun and exciting, others see them as far from the ideal, and a few others are ambivalent.

One does notice a discrepancy in some responses. Some women saw their own outrageous behaviors as something done for fun while other women’s similar behaviors

were criticized. The discrepancy and disconnect between one's own action and similar actions of others is something interesting to note. In assessing these disconnects a kind of ideational dissonance appears between actual behaviors and publicly expressed attitudes toward such behaviors. This is not to say that many women genuinely see these images as something negative and disgraceful, and not worthy of imitations. The "girls gone wild" portrayals are less likely to be the ideals of the American society. The behaviors portrayed are less likely to be a "good girl" behavior however these behaviors are fun and exciting for some, especially at a party, when one gets attention for doing so and are encouraged by peers and friends.

Men's reactions to the women in the video and in real life were mixed. Men often appear to disapprove, condemn, and show little respect for women who are out of control, though at the same time they perceive their behaviors as fun and entertaining. In the responses one does note that men might want to have fun with the women who party hard but are less likely to get into any serious relationship with them.

Based on the above results from study 1 and participants' feedback, study 2 was designed and revised to add categories and responses that were not previously thought included. For example, one such question that was added was the question on the alcohol consumption among people working in bars and restaurants that served alcohol. Several open-ended questions which were asked in study 1 were changed to closed-ended questions for the survey which is discussed in the next chapter (Chapter Six).

CHAPTER 6

STUDY 2: SURVEY-METHOD

In this chapter first operationalization of dependent and independent variables are explained, and then research design for study 2 is discussed. This includes participants and procedures for the study. The chapter follows the logical sequence in which the study was conceived.

Operationalization of the Variables

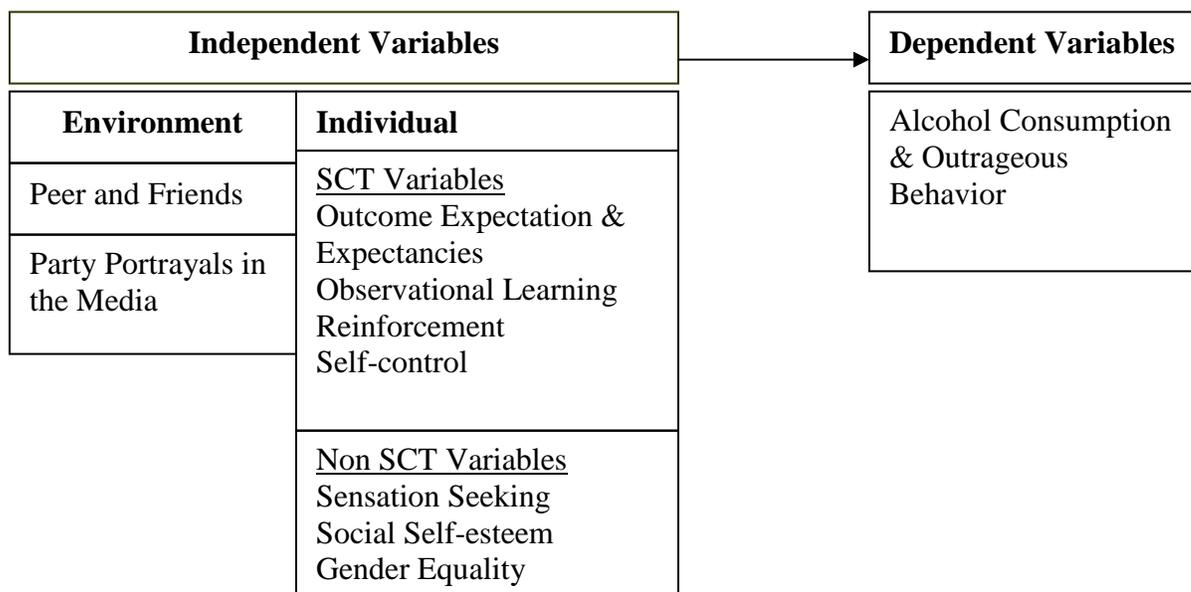
Study 1 helped in the development of survey instrument for study 2. The survey questionnaire consisted of four parts (see Appendix D). An introductory section measured demographic variables such as age, year in school, etc. and contained contingency questions based on gender and alcohol consumption. Part II of the questionnaire measured college women's attitude towards alcohol and alcohol related behaviors. This information was collected because this is a study about media portrayals and alcohol consumption and thus data on alcohol consumption among women was much needed to inform and better explain the phenomenon of alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior in this study. In part III, research participants answered questions related to media portrayals and their influence. Research participants clicked on a video link and saw a video clip of approximately two minutes of women partying. This was the same clip used in the study 1 and has been described in detail in Chapter 5. After viewing the clip, the participants answered questions related to media portrayals and their influence. In part IV of the questionnaire, participants reported their sensation seeking tendencies,

level of social self-esteem, and their desire for gender equality. These are the non SCT variables of interest in the study whose relevance in the study has been explained in Chapter 4. These variables were measured using previously designed scales that have been tested for their reliability. Permission to use the scales was obtained from the researchers who originally designed the scales.

Dependent and Independent Variables

There are two dependent variables alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors and there are several independent variables in the study. These are *environment (peers and media portrayals), situation, outcome expectations and expectancies, observational learning, emotional coping responses, reinforcement, self-control, degree of sensation-seeking, social self-esteem, and desire for gender equality* (see Figure 6-1). Additional variables that inform the study such as *demographics, attitude towards alcohol, and alcohol related behaviors* were also measured.

Figure 6-1: Dependent and Independent Variables



Dependent Variables

There are two dependent variables in the study. One is the *amount of alcohol consumption*, which is defined as “on average how many glasses of alcohol a college woman drinks in a single social setting.” The second is the *outrageous behavior*, which has been defined by the AMA as “behavior associated with public nudity, dancing on tables/bars, and participating in drinking contests” (AMA, 2006; ¶ footnote). In this study the definition of outrageous behavior has been expanded to include physical and verbal fights, using drugs and “making out” in public with strangers. In this study the words “outrageous behavior” and “wild behavior” have been used interchangeably. It should be noted that the outrageous behaviors examined in this study fits the definition used by the American Medical Association (AMA, 2006). Not all the behaviors listed are necessarily negative or reckless; some, such as participating in drinking contests, and ‘making out’ with someone women hardly knew, might get women into to greater problems than dancing on the bar table and kissing a stranger. The concerns raised in the study are more for the former than for the latter.

The dependent variables were measured as follows.

Amount of Alcohol

To measure the amount of alcohol college women drink in a single social setting, a survey question asked,

Based on your preference of alcoholic drink (Beer, Wine, Cocktails, Other hard liquors), please answer the question below. Please note that a drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.

I usually drink _____ number of my above mentioned alcoholic drinks in a single night or in one social setting.

Outrageous Behavior

A scale was developed to measure the variable outrageous behavior. The scale consists of 10 items and has internal consistency (α) =0.89. Responses are made on values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items in the scale are:

In a “typical” party scenario,

- I often participate in a drinking game (beer pong etc.)
- I often dance on the bar table.
- I often do what some would call “dirty dancing” or “grinding.”
- I often flash my body parts (breast, buttocks etc).
- I often “make out” (i.e. kissing and heavy petting) in a public place like a bar or a house party with someone I hardly know.
- I often “make out” with girlfriends when men are watching even though I am not a lesbian or gay.
- I often participate in a wet t-shirt contest.
- I often get into physical fights when I get drunk.
- I often get into verbal fights when I get drunk.
- I often use drugs or another substance along with alcohol.

Independent Variables

The variables *environment (peers and media portrayals), situation, expectations, observational learning, emotional coping responses, reinforcement and self-control* were measured using a series of questions, which are listed below, and the variables *sensation seeking* and *social self-esteem* were measured using preexisting scales that are modified and adapted to the study. The desire for *gender equality* was measured using a scale developed for the study. In the following paragraphs, measurement of the independent variables is presented.

Environment

The environment consisted of a set of variable that included the media and peers and friends. These set of variables were measured using several questions that relate to presence of party portrayals in the media, and peer and media influence. For example, exposure to party portrayals was measured as,

1. Have you seen similar images of women partying as you see in this video clip? Yes ____ No ____
2. Where have you seen these kinds of images? Check all that apply.
 - a. MTV spring break special
 - b. Girls Gone Wild infomercial
 - c. Movies (please specify the name/s) _____
 - d. Television shows (please specify the name/s) _____

The influence of party portrayals were measured as,

Do you believe these kinds of media images affect or influence you in any way in how you behave at parties? Yes__ No__

A five point Likert rating scale was used to measure the peer influence, with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly agree.” Statements included, “1. I drink more when I am around friends,” “I believe that I can drink as much alcohol as any of my male friends,” “I am cheered and applauded by my friends when I do anything “wild” at parties,” “I am often challenged by my friends to drink more alcohol at social gatherings,” “I am called names when I don’t drink alcohol,” “ I have been complimented on how well I can “hold my liquor” when I have had several glasses of alcohol.”

Situations

In addition questions related to the situations when, where and how much college women drink were also asked.

1. Please choose one place where you tend to drink more alcohol

- a. _____ A bar
- b. _____ House party
- c. _____ My home
- d. Other _____ (write in)

2. How often do you drink?

- 1. Every single day
- 2. Every other day
- 3. Once a week during a weekday
- 4. Once a week during a weekend
- 5. Once every 2 weeks
- 6. Once every 3 weeks
- 7. Once a month
- 8. Other (please specify) _____

3. Do you currently work at a restaurant or a bar that serves alcohol? Yes ___ No__

Observational Learning

This variable was measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.” Positive reactions to the party portrayals were measured using questions such as, “These girls are just having fun,” “These girls have guts,” “These girls show “girl power,” “These girls are self-confident,” “These girls are cool and sexy.” Negative reactions were measured using questions such as, “These girls are acting stupidly,” “These girls are “trashy,” “These girls have low self-esteem.”

Other questions asked in order to measure observational learning were, “These kind of media images make me want to party hard,” “These kinds of media images

influence me in how I behave at parties,” “These kinds of media images influence me in my alcohol consumption” which were also measured on a five point Likert scale.

Participants were also asked the above questions indirectly in order to avoid under reporting of behaviors which many respondents might consider socially undesirable. For example, “These kinds of media images influence many college women in their alcohol consumption,” “These kinds of media images influence many college women in how they behave at parties.” These were also measured on a five point Likert scale.

Outcome Expectations and Expectancies

Outcomes expected from drinking alcohol were measured as follows.

I drink alcohol most of the times because:

- I want to just get drunk
- I want to socialize
- I want to “loosen up” or “open up” in a social setting
- I like the taste of alcohol
- I want to escape boredom or loneliness
- I want to relieve stress and anxiety
- I want to feel less sexually inhibited
- I feel pressure from my friends
- I want to get over depression

Outcomes expected by behaving outrageously were also measured. Participants were asked what outcomes they expect when they engage in wild party behaviors. Later, they were asked questions on outcomes expected by “other” women behaving wildly. This was done to note if there were any discrepancies in perceptions of participants’ own wild behavior at the parties and their reactions to the wild party behaviors in the media. This indirect method of inquiry often makes respondents feel more comfortable to share what they really think and feel rather than answer in a socially desirable way as stated before (Fisher, 1993; Sudman & Bradburn, 1974). Outcomes expected were measured on

a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.” For example,

I participated in party behaviors...

- a) just for fun
- b) because I was drunk
- c) was encouraged by my friends
- d) most of my friends were doing it
- e) wanted to “hook up” with someone

Once participants’ outcomes expected were noted, the participants were shown the same video clip as in the study 1 and their opinions on other women and outcomes that they expect from behaving outrageously were noted down. This again was done to avoid socially desirable responses. Participants’ opinions on the outcomes expected by other women were measured using the following set of open-ended questions.

1. Why do you think some girls might behave like this?

Negative outcomes expected were also measured using the following questions.

1. Do you think college women get into problems when they behave like this?

Yes ____ No ____

a. If yes, what potential problems can they get into?

b. If no, tell us why you think so?

Social and sexual outcomes expected were measured using statements such as “I often consume alcohol to feel sexually less inhibited,” “Alcohol makes me sexually less

inhibited,” “I enjoy sex more when I have had alcohol.” The responses were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.”

Social outcomes were measured as “I drink alcohol most of the times because I want to socialize.”

In addition, expectancies were measured using a three items scale with an internal consistency (α) of 0.93. The responses were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.”

- a) It is important for me to have a social life
- b) It is important for me to have lot of friends
- c) It is important for me to be always connected with my friends

Self-control

These variables were measured using the following items. The responses were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.”

- a) I often do things that my friends are doing even if I don’t like it or agree with it.
- b) I often feel the pressure to drink more alcohol when I am with my friends.
- c) I often feel the pressure to be “wild” at parties when I am with my friends.

Reinforcements

Reinforcements related to drinking were measured using the following items. The responses were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.”

- At parties or at bars, when I drink too much
 - most of my friends see it as just having fun.
 - most of my friends disapprove of it.

Additional items used to measure reinforcement included, “I am often challenged by my friends to drink more alcohol at social gatherings,” “I am called names when I don’t drink alcohol,” “I have been complimented on how well I can ‘hold my liquor’ when I have had several glasses of alcohol.”

Reinforcements related to outrageous behaviors were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented “Strongly disagree” and 5 represented “Strongly agree.”

1. At parties or at bars, when I do anything “wild”
 - most of my friends see it as just having fun.
 - most of my friends disapprove of it.
2. I am cheered and applauded by my friends when I do anything “wild” at parties

Sensation Seeking

The variable degree of *sensation seeking* was of interest based on previous studies as explained in Chapter Four. These variables were thus measured to provide additional information on “who behaves wildly.” If these variables were found to be of interest in this study, it can be explored in detail in later studies.

Sensation seeking was measured using seven items of the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire and has been tested for their reliability and validity (ZKPQ; Zuckerman, 2007; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta & Kraft, 1993). The full version of ZKPQ contains 50 items. Considering the length of the questionnaire and the centrality of this variable, only seven items that directly corresponded to the party behaviors were selected for this study. The adapted scales internal consistency (α) was 0.62, the original sensation seeking scales internal consistency (α) ranges from 0.70 to 0.86 (Joireman & Kuhlman, 2004). The responses are made on values “true” and “false.” It contains items such as,

I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening. True_____ False_____

Social Self-Esteem

Social Self-Esteem was measured using the Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI Form A; Helmreich & Stapp, 1974), a 16-item measure of social self-confidence. The TSBI items address the respondent's degree of self-confidence in groups of people, ability to deal with strangers, and sense of comfort in social situations. The TSBI's internal consistency (α) ranges between 0.89 to 0.92 (Helmreich & Stapp, 1974; Manohan & Lannutti, 2000). Responses are made on values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For example, "I am not likely to speak to people until they speak to me."

Gender Equality

The desire for *gender equality* was measured using a five-item *gender equality* scale developed for this study. The internal consistency (α) for the *gender equality* scale was calculated to be 0.90. Responses were measured on a five point Likert scale where 1 represented "Strongly disagree" and 5 represented "Strongly agree." One item from the Attitudes toward Feminism (ATF; Smith, Ferree, & Miller, 1975) scale was used to create a new scale. The item is "Men and women are equal in all respect." Other items that were added to develop the *gender equality scale* are, "I consider myself a feminist," "I often challenge traditional gender norms and roles," "I believe that "appropriate behaviors" for women and men are different," "I dislike that men and women are judged differently by the society for the same action."

Attitudes and Behavior Related to Alcohol Consumption

In the survey, additional questions on attitudes and behavior related to alcohol consumption and prevention strategies most effective among young women were also measured (see Appendix D). Information on drinking-related behaviors and demographic variables were gathered using items from the Student Alcohol Questionnaire (SAQ; Engs, 2002). The original SAQ contains 23 questions on drinking-related behavior, 36 on knowledge of alcohol and its effects and 11 on demographic variables. The SAQ was adapted to better suit this study on alcohol consumption among women. Examples of some of the items from the questionnaire are,

In the past two weeks, I have

1. had a hangover _____ times.
2. gotten nauseated and vomited from drinking _____ times.
3. driven a car after having several drinks _____ times.

Media Messages and Prevention Strategies

Information on media messages to curb drinking among women was gathered using items such,

Please rank the top 5 strategies that are likely to be most effective for you or someone like you in reducing alcohol consumption. Write 1 next to the strategy that you think would be most effective, followed by the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 next to the strategies that are likely to be less and less effective.

Messages

1. Show explicit images of drunk driving accidents
2. Stress how many calories alcohol has and how it leads to weight gain
3. Show risks of date rape incidents
4. Show women being stupid under the influence of alcohol
5. Share stories of poor decision making under the influence

6. Show drunk women looking very un-classy, “easy” and unsophisticated
7. Show friends discouraging friends from drinking
8. Talk about health problems related to drinking
9. Teach women how to love and respect themselves and their bodies
10. Show parents talking to girls about how to avoid peer pressure

Demographics

Information on demographic characteristics of individuals such as age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, year in school and organization memberships were also assessed (see Appendix D).

Research Design

Participants

Undergraduate students from five universities located in four states in the Northeast of the United States took part in the survey. Female undergraduate students (N=449) from five college campuses filled out an online survey. The aim was to get a sample size of 400, which is the number statistically determined for a survey when the population is greater than 100,000 and the desired confidence level is 95% (Israel, 2009). In addition, 174 men filled out a part of the survey so that a comparison could be made between men’s and women’s attitude and perceptions towards party portrayals in the media as well as attitudes towards women who behave wildly in real life.

Procedure

The data for the study were gathered using an online survey. The online survey offered great flexibility for the participants as they could do it anywhere and anytime. The online survey also allowed the option of incorporating a video which would not have been possible in a paper survey. The survey was constructed to allow students to complete the survey within 30-40 minutes. Once the survey was designed, the web link to

the survey was put on the social networking website facebook.com, which could be accessed by instructors and undergraduate students. A convenience sampling method was used in the study. Instructors in several universities were informed about the study through the social networking web site. Several instructors were also approached personally. Some instructors provided an extra credit opportunity for students to take part in the study and others just let the students know about the study. Instructors who provided students with an extra credit opportunity also gave the option of an assignment of equal magnitude to students who did not wish to take part in the study.

The survey was conducted in the months of March and April 2009. The instructors were sent a web link in an email to pass on to their students. The research participants clicked on the web link to access the survey. They first filled out a consent form online before proceeding with the survey questions (see Appendix C). The participants were screened based on their age as discussed in study 1. Only participants 18 years and older were considered for the study. The research participants filled out the survey in their own time, however the survey was to be completed in one sitting. They were given a week to complete the survey by the instructors providing extra credit.

The survey relies on self-report and thus the willingness of respondents to share accurate information was very important. Attempts were made to draw accurate information from the respondents by asking a question in multiple ways. For example, first, the respondents were asked to write their own opinions on the topic, and then write about the opinions of “other” college students. This indirect method of inquiry helps to gather better information on what people actually think rather than giving a socially desirable answer (Fisher, 1993). In addition, counter biasing information was also

provided during the survey such as “below are some common reasons why people drink,” “below are some reasons given by other college students for party behaviors,” to let respondents know that they are not the only one drinking and behaving outrageously thus making the questions appear less threatening (Sudman & Bradburn, 1974).

Once the survey data were collected, they were cleaned and coded for data analysis. For example, gender was coded as 0 for “female” and 1 for “male.” For questions using the five-point Likert scale, “strongly disagree” was coded as 1, “disagree” was coded as 2, “neutral” was 3, “agree” was 4, and 5 was used for “strongly agree.” Open-ended questions were coded by first reading through all the responses and identifying the major themes in the responses. Based on the themes categories were created. Then the answers were reread and the response was put into relevant category and assigned a number for statistical analysis. Missing data was coded as “99.” Data were analyzed using the SPSS software.

Summary

In this chapter, operationalization of dependent variables alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors was discussed. Operationalization of SCT variables such as environment, outcomes expectations and expectancies, self-control, observational learning, reinforcement and emotional coping responses were also discussed along with non SCT variables sensation seeking, social self-esteem and gender equality. In addition, participant and procedure for study 2 was also discussed. In the next chapter (Chapter 7), results from study 2 are discussed.

CHAPTER 7

STUDY 2: SURVEY-RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings from study 2, an online survey of undergraduate college students about drinking and outrageous behaviors. It first presents demographic characteristics of the sample, then provides information on alcohol initiation and why some women do not drink alcohol. Finally it presents research questions results.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study included undergraduate students (N=623) from five different universities/colleges in the northeastern United States. A total of 449 female and 174 male college students took part in the study. The universities and colleges were of different sizes and were located in both urban and suburban regions. Thus, the data gathered were from a varied geographic population even though a convenience sampling method was used in the study. The research participants were also in different years in school and were undertaking different academic majors. Both of these factors added to the diversity of the sample pool. Table 7-1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample. Though both men and women accessed the survey, men did not answer questions related to alcohol consumption since the focus of the study was on understanding alcohol consumption among college women.

In the sample, 59.7% (N=268) of the women and 47.7% (N=83) of the men were under the legal drinking age (see Table 7-1). Students in their junior level in the college

constituted the largest percentage (31.2%, N=194) in the sample. White or Caucasian students made up 73.4% (N=457) of the sample. In the sample 89.8% (N=403) of the women and 82.8% (N=144) of the men consumed alcohol.

Table 7-1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable		Frequency (Percent)					
Gender		Female	449 (72.1)	Male	174 (27.9)	Total	623 (100)
			Female		Male		All
Age	18- 20 (underage)	268	(59.7)	83	(47.7)	351	(56.3)
	21-24	165	(36.8)	73	(42.0)	238	(38.3)
	>=25	16	(3.5)	18	(10.3)	34	(5.4)
	Total	449	(100.0)	174	(100.0)	623	(100.0)
Academic Level	Freshman	70	(15.6)	25	(14.4)	95	(15.3)
	Sophomore	126	(28.1)	52	(29.9)	178	(28.6)
	Junior	143	(31.9)	51	(29.3)	194	(31.2)
	Senior	105	(23.4)	44	(25.3)	149	(23.9)
	Other	2	(0.4)	0	(0.0)	2	(0.2)
	Missing	3	(0.6)	2	(1.1)	5	(0.8)
Total	449	(100.0)	174	(100.0)	623	(100.0)	
Race/Ethnicity	White or Caucasian	332	(74.0)	125	(71.8)	457	(73.4)
	Black/African-American	71	(15.8)	27	(15.5)	98	(15.7)
	Latino/Hispanic	11	(2.4)	7	(4.0)	18	(2.9)
	Asian	13	(3.0)	11	(6.3)	24	(3.9)
	Other (Mixed Race)	17	(3.8)	2	(1.2)	19	(3.0)
	Missing	5	(1.0)	2	(1.2)	7	(1.1)
	Total	449	(100.0)	174	(100.0)	623	(100.0)
Annual Income	Less than \$ 40,000	91	(20.3)	29	(16.7)	120	(19.3)
	\$40,001 - \$60,000	83	(18.5)	37	(21.3)	120	(19.3)
	\$60,001 - \$80,000	102	(22.7)	31	(17.8)	133	(21.4)
	\$80,001 - \$100,000	71	(15.8)	27	(15.5)	98	(15.7)
	Greater than \$100,000	85	(18.9)	47	(27.0)	132	(21.2)
	Missing	17	(3.8)	3	(1.7)	20	(3.2)
	Total	449	(100.0)	174	(100.0)	623	(100.0)

Table 7-1. (continued).

Variable		Frequency (Percent)			
		Female		Male	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Organization Membership	Fraternities/Sororities	32 (7.1)		9 (5.2)	
	Athletics	37 (8.2)		25 (14.4)	
	Religious Groups	28 (6.2)		6 (3.4)	
	Women's organization	23 (5.1)		0 (0.0)	
	Academic/Honors Groups	93 (20.7)		20 (11.5)	
	Special Interests Groups	78 (17.4)		9 (5.2)	
	Performing Groups	25 (5.6)		1 (0.0)	
	No memberships	162 (36.1)		82 (47.1)	
	Other	75 (16.7)		21 (12.1)	
Work to Support in School		262 (58.4)	182 (40.5)	83 (47.7)	89 (51.1)
		Total (616); Missing (7)			
Work in Restaurant/Bar		89 (19.8)	354 (78.8)	19 (10.9)	152 (87.4)
		Total (614); Missing (9)			
Drink alcohol		403 (89.8)	46 (10.2)	144 (82.8)	28 (16.1)
		Total (618); Missing (5)			

Alcohol Initiation among Women

Alcohol consumption among women starts well before they enter college. In the survey results 54.8% (N=221) of women reported their alcohol initiation age to be between 15 and 17 years old (see Table 7-2). The next highest number for alcohol initiation was found in the age category of 12-14 (24.6%, N=99).

Table 7-2. Descriptive Statistics on Alcohol Initiation among College Women

Variable	Frequency*	Percent (%)
Alcohol Initiation at (Age in years)		
=<12	13	3.2
12-14	99	24.6
15-17	221	54.8
18-20	56	13.9
>=21	3	0.1
Missing data	11	2.7
Total	403	100.0

* Frequency does not include the number of women who do not drink (N=46).

Why Some Women Do Not Drink Alcohol

The study focuses on college women who drink alcohol. However, it is important to report that 10.2% (N=46) of the college women in the sample did not drink alcohol. Among the women surveyed, 89.8% (N=403) consumed alcohol. The primary reason given by women who did not drink was the taste of alcohol (34.8%, N=16), followed by 26.1% (N=12) of women who stated health reasons for abstaining from alcohol, 13% (N=6) stated religious reasons, 6.5% (N=3) stated being underage for drinking alcohol and 13% (N=6) stated “other” reasons. Women who chose “other reasons” for not

drinking stated two reasons, one witnessing the ill effects of alcoholism in their families and two, that they themselves were recovering alcoholics.

After presenting the demographic characteristics of the sample, age of alcohol initiation among women and information on women who do not consume alcohol, the attention is now focused on women who do consume alcohol. In the following paragraphs, the answers to the research question are provided that were formulated based on SCT and non SCT concepts explained in Chapter Four.

Research Question Results

In the following paragraphs answers to the research questions have been provided. It should be noted that most items on the questionnaire were measured on a five-point Likert scale. If the mean responses were between 1 and 2, they are reported as “strongly disagreed,” responses greater than 2 and below 3 are reported as “disagreed;” similarly, mean responses greater than 3 and below 4 are reported as “agreed,” and responses above 4 are reported as “strongly agreed.” Three is considered a neutral response. Throughout this chapter the results are reported and described in a similar way unless noted otherwise.

Since the focus of the study is to understand drinking and drinking-related behaviors of women who drink alcohol, women who do not consume alcohol are excluded from the calculations of the percentages related to drinking. For example, if the result is reported as “40.2% (N=162) of college women who drink alcohol reported drinking alcohol once during the weekend,” the calculation uses the sample size of 403, which is the number of women who reported that they drink alcohol, not 449, which is

the total number of women participants in the study. Women who did not drink alcohol were guided to skip all questions related to drinking and drinking related behaviors but they did answer questions related to media influence and thus the percentage reported in that section includes all women in the calculation. All men answered the questions related to media influence, so men's responses and percentages calculated are out of 174.

On the survey there were some open-ended questions. Open-ended questions have been analyzed in the following way. All responses were first read. Then different response categories were created based on the key words or themes that emerged through the responses. Then each response was read and put in at least one category. When the responses contained more than one theme, they were put in more than one category. The frequency in each category was then calculated and is reported. This was done for all open-ended questions in this study unless noted otherwise. Some verbatim quotes from the respondents have also been presented to provide an understanding of how the categories were created. Respondents' verbatim quotes have not been corrected for grammar and other writing errors as explained in study 1.

In the following paragraphs, research questions related to environment, situations, observational learning, outcome expectations and expectancies, self-control, reinforcements, sensation seeking tendencies, social self-esteem and gender equality are presented.

Environment

RQ 1: Do peers and friends influence alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women?

College women agreed that they drank more alcohol when they were around friends ($M=3.97$, $SD=0.87$). However, they disagreed that they felt pressured to keep up with their friends' drinking ($M=2.06$, $SD=0.94$), or drink as much alcohol as their male friends ($M=2.25$, $SD=1.05$), or are cheered when they do anything outrageous at parties ($M=2.31$, $SD=1.05$), and are complimented on how well they hold their liquor ($M=2.71$, $SD=1.28$), and they strongly disagreed that they were called names when they did not drink alcohol ($M=1.68$, $SD=0.78$).

College women surveyed also agreed that when they drank too much alcohol most of their friends saw it as having fun ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.04$) and did not disapprove. In addition, when they did anything outrageous at parties, that was also seen as having fun ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.05$) and was not disapproved of by their friends.

RQ 2: Do media portrayals in general and “girls gone wild” portrayals in particular have an influence on alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women?

The college women agreed that media do have an influence on alcohol consumption among college women ($M=3.66$, $SD=0.94$). Women respondents mentioned some of the television programs that have an influence on alcohol consumption among women. Some of the television programs mentioned in open-ended responses were, *Sex and the City*, *O.C.*, *The Hills*, MTV reality shows, *Gossip Girls*, *Real World*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *90210*, *Laguna Beach*, and *One Tree Hill*. MTV and VH1 were the two television channels which were mentioned by the respondents as channels that show greater alcohol consumption in their programming. Among the movies recalled and mentioned as having influence on college students drinking were, *American Pie* trilogy

(1999, 2001, 2003), *Beerfest* (2006), *Animal House* (1978), *EuroTrip* (2004), *Superbad* (2007), *Van Wilder* (2002), *Old School* (2003), *Dazed and Confused* (1993), *Coyote Ugly* (2000), and *Wedding Crashers* (2005).

When college women were asked if “girls gone wild” kinds of media images made them party hard, on average the respondents disagreed ($M=2.03$, $SD=1.01$). Respondents disagreed that these kind of images influenced their party behaviors ($M=2.34$, $SD=1.17$) and affected their alcohol consumption ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.14$). However, they agreed to the statements that party portrayals influence “other” college women in their alcohol consumption ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.07$) and wild party behaviors ($M=3.39$, $SD=1.06$).

Situations

RQ 3: When, where, what, and how much do college women drink?

In the sample, a large proportion of the college women (40.2%, $N=162$) who drink alcohol reported drinking alcohol once during the weekend, 29.5% ($N=119$) reported getting drunk once every weekend, 9.4% ($N=38$) reported drinking at least two days during the week, and 7.9% ($N=32$) reported drinking three days in a week from Thursday to Saturday (see Table 7-3).

The place women tend to drink more was reported to be at house parties (48.4%, $N=195$), followed by drinks at restaurants and bars (34%, $N=137$) (see Table 7-3).

Alcohol consumption was not affected by the kind of place women work. Women who worked in places that served alcohol did not consume any more or less alcohol than women who worked in other places. An independent samples *t*-test was calculated comparing the mean scores of drinking among women who worked in bars or restaurants

that served alcohol ($M=4.73$, $SD=2.29$) to the mean scores of drinking among women who did not work at bars or restaurants ($M=4.27$, $SD=2.62$). No significant difference was found ($t(386) = 1.44$, $p > .05$). This question was explored after study 1 because many women mentioned in study 1 that they drank more alcohol because they worked in bars and restaurants that served alcohol and thus alcohol was easily accessible to them.

The largest proportion of the women (31.3%, $N=126$) in the sample reported that they usually drank beer in a social setting. Cocktails were the close second reported (30%, $N=121$). College women reported drinking an average of 4.32 drinks in a single social setting. A large proportion of the women consumed three to four drinks (42%, $N=169$) in a single social setting, and 20.4% ($N=82$) of the women reported consuming five to six drinks in a single social setting (see Table 7-3). Binge drinking has been defined as four or more drinks in a row by women at least once in the previous two weeks (Wechsler et al., 1995). By this definition, 53.1% ($N=214$) of the women who drink alcohol report binge drinking; that is, to have four or more drinks in a single social setting and to drink at least once every weekend. The NIAAA (2004) now defines binge drinking as “a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram percent or above. For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming five or more drinks (male), or four or more drinks (female), in about two hours” (p. 3). By this definition, most college women in the study could be categorized as engaging in binge drinking or at least heavy episodic every weekend.

A large number of women (38.2%, $N=154$) in the study reported that three alcoholic drinks made them feel buzzed. The average number of drinks for buzz reported was $M=3.10$ ($SD=1.32$) (see Table 7-3). Many women reported five drinks made them

lose control (20.3%, N=82), and a very similar number of the respondents reported six alcoholic drinks made them lose control (19.6%, N=79). On average women reported approximately seven drinks made them lose control ($M=6.80$, $SD=2.46$). One drink was defined in the study as twelve ounces of beer, five ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits. It is possible that many women drink different kinds of drinks in a single social setting, for example they might drink a beer and a cocktail and mention that as two drinks. For this study, it was not important to get into the finer details of mixed drinks, rather the aim was to get some idea of what alcoholic beverage women “usually” drink in a social setting, which has been provided in table 7-3.

Table 7-3. Descriptive Statistics on Alcohol Use among College Women

Variable		Frequency	Percent (%)
Drink alcohol	Yes	403	89.8
	No	46	10.2
How often do you drink	Every single day	2	0.5
	Every other day	31	7.7
	Once a week during a weekday	18	4.5
	Once a week during a weekend	162	40.2
	At least two days a week	38	9.4
	At least three days a week	32	7.9
	Once every 2 weeks	38	9.4
	Once every 3 weeks	13	3.2
	Once a month	38	9.4
	Other	22	5.5
	Missing data	9	2.2
	Total	403	100.0
Drink Preference	Beer	126	31.3
	Wine	51	12.7
	Cocktails	121	30.0
	Other hard liquors	93	23.0
	Missing data	12	3.0
	Total	403	100.0
Place Where Drink More Alcohol	A Bar/Restaurant	137	34.0
	House Party	195	48.4
	My Home	54	13.4
	Dance Club	4	1.0
	Other	3	0.7
	Missing data	10	2.5
	Total	403	100.0

Table 7-3 (continued)

Variable*		Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	SD
Number of Drinks in a Single Night	1-2	77	19.1	4.32	2.34
	3-4	169	42.0		
	5-6	82	20.4		
	7-8	39	9.7		
	9-12	21	4.7		
	Missing data	17	4.2		
Total		403	100.0		
Number of Drinks for Buzz	1	21	5.2	3.10	1.32
	2	104	25.8		
	3	154	38.2		
	4	59	14.6		
	5	26	6.5		
	=>6	24	5.8		
	Missing data	15	3.7		
Total		403	100.0		
Number of Drinks to Lose Control	1-2	2	0.4	6.80	2.46
	3-4	39	9.7		
	5-6	161	40.0		
	7-8	86	21.3		
	>8	76	18.9		
	Don't know*	25	6.2		
	Missing data	15	3.7		
Total		403	100.0		

*Note: The number of drinks was collected at the ratio level; however they have been put into categories in the table for reporting purposes.

** "Don't know" describes people who reported that they did not know their limits for losing control.

RQ 4: What problems do college women face because of their drinking?

College women face many problems because of their drinking. In a typical two-week period 41.4% (N=167) of college women reported being hung over one to two times. The average number of times they reported being hung over in a typical two-week period was close to 1 (M=0.97, SD=1.23). In addition, 16.9% (N=68) of women reported getting nauseated and vomiting after alcohol consumption at least once, 12.4% (N=50) reported missing at least one class after a night of drinking, 12.2% (N= 49) reported getting into fights at least once after drinking in a typical two-week period during school, and 7.7% (N=31) reported driving at least once after drinking (see Table 7-4). It should be noted that the averages calculated for hangover, nausea and vomiting, drunk driving, missing a class, and fights after consuming alcohol are low because the majority of women did not report these problems. This skews the mean to a much lower number, even though there is a sizable percentage of women who reported having these problems.

Table 7-4. Descriptive Statistics of Drinking Related Problems
In a Typical Two-Week Period

Variable*		Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	SD
No. of Social Gatherings Attended	<=2	125	31.0	3.80	2.97
	3-4	125	31.0		
	5-6	66	16.4		
	=>7	37	9.2		
	Missing data	50	12.4		
Total	403	100.0			
Times had Hangover	0	187	46.4	0.97	1.23
	1-2	167	41.4		
	3-4	34	8.4		
	5-6	7	1.7		
	=>7	1	0.2		
	Missing data	13	3.2		
Total	403	100.0			
Times Nauseated and Vomited from Drinking	0	307	76.2	0.26	0.57
	1	68	16.9		
	2	11	2.7		
	3	3	0.1		
	=>4	1	0.0		
	Missing data	12	3.0		
Total	403	100.0			
Times Missed a Class Because of Hangover	0	327	81.1	0.20	0.50
	1	50	12.4		
	2	12	3.0		
	3	2	0.5		
	Missing data	12	3.0		
Total	403	100.0			

Table 7-4. (continued).

Variable*		Frequency	Percent (%)	Mean	SD
Times Got into a Fight after Drinking	0	320	79.4	0.26	0.63
	1	49	12.2		
	2	18	4.5		
	3	2	0.5		
	=>4	2	0.5		
	Missing data	12	3.0		
	Total	403	100.0		
Times Drove a Car after Drinking	0	346	85.9	0.17	0.58
	1	31	7.7		
	2	10	2.5		
	3	2	0.5		
	=>4	2	0.5		
	Missing data	12	3.0		
	Total	403	100.0		

** The number of drinks and number of incidences were collected at the ratio level; however they have been condensed into categories in the table for reporting purposes.*

Besides the above problems there were other problems also reported (see Table 7-5), 13.7% (N=55) of the college women reported being sexually assaulted while they were drunk, 13.7% (N=55) of the college women reported problems with the law, 11.7% (N=47) reported damaging property while they were drunk, 6.2% (N=25) reported trouble with school administration, 5.5 % (N=22) have been hospitalized after drinking, 1.2% (N=5) had DUI arrests. In addition, college women also agreed with the statement that men make unwanted sexual advances towards them when they are drunk (M=3.01, SD=1.24).

Table 7-5. Descriptive Statistics of Drinking Related Problems

Variable		Frequency	Percent (%)
Sexually Assaulted	Yes	55	13.7
	No	323	80.2
	Missing data	25	6.2
	Total	403	100.0
Trouble with the Law	Yes	55	13.7
	No	336	83.4
	Missing data	12	3.0
	Total	403	100.0
Damaged Property	Yes	47	11.7
	No	341	84.6
	Missing data	15	3.7
	Total	403	100.0
Trouble with School Admin	Yes	25	6.2
	No	366	90.8
	Missing data	12	3.0
	Total	403	100.0
Hospitalized after Drinking	Yes	22	5.5
	No	367	91.1
	Missing data	14	3.5
	Total	403	100.0
Arrested for DWI/ DUI	Yes	5	1.2
	No	386	95.8
	Missing data	12	3.0
	Total	403	100.0

Observational Learning

RQ 5: To what extent have college students been exposed to images of drunkenness and outrageous behaviors of women through the media?

Most college women in this study have been exposed to images of drunkenness and wild behavior of women through the media; 88.4% (N=397) of the women had seen images of women partying similar to the ones seen in *Girls Gone Wild* infomercials. A majority of women (84%, N=377) reported seeing outrageous behaviors on MTV spring break and 78.6% (N=353) reported seeing something similar in *Girls Gone Wild* infomercials. A relatively smaller percentage, reported seeing it on television shows (29.8%, N=134) and movies (27%, N=121). The first exposure to wild party images of women similar to the one seen in the video was reported by the respondents to be at the age of 13 (M=13.05, SD=3.08).

RQ 6: Do college women behave outrageously when they drink?

When college women were asked if they had engaged in any of the outrageous behaviors that they had seen in the video clip, 39.9% (N=179) reported that they had. When asked about specific outrageous behaviors most college women agreed that they often engaged in some wild behaviors at parties such as drinking games (M=3.46, SD=1.34). However, they disagreed about engaging in other behaviors like dirty dancing (M=2.94, SD=1.29), and strongly disagreed regarding dancing on the bar table (M=1.88, SD=1.03), showing “private parts” (M=1.37, SD=0.76), “making out” in public (M=1.96, SD=1.12) and with girl friends (M=1.68, SD=0.99), participating in wet-t-shirt contests (M=1.22, SD=0.57), getting into physical fights (M=1.31, SD=0.68), verbal fights (M=1.98, SD=1.1), and using drugs (M=1.90, SD=1.18).

RQ 7: How do college women view the outrageous drunken behavior(s) of young women in the media? As positive, negative, or neutral?

The reactions of the respondents to the “girls gone wild” portrayals are in general negative. Most college women strongly agreed or agreed with negative statements such as “these girls are acting stupidly” ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.93$), “these girls are ‘trashy’” ($M=4.0$, $SD=1.02$), and “these girls have low self-esteem” ($M=3.60$, $SD=1.03$). However, they also agreed with the statement that the girls in the video were having fun ($M=3.26$, $SD=0.91$). They disagreed with positive statements that the girls were cool and sexy ($M=1.82$, $SD=0.84$), had guts ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.06$), showed girl power ($M=1.68$, $SD=0.79$), and were self-confident ($M=2.10$, $SD=1.01$).

RQ 8: How do college men view the wild drunken behavior(s) of young women in the media? As positive, negative, or neutral?

Men were asked to write their reaction to the “girls gone wild” portrayal in the video. Men reported their reaction in an open-ended question. As stated before, open-ended questions were analyzed by reading all the responses first, and then creating categories based themes that emerged. Then coding was done, and frequencies were calculated and reported. Most college men had a positive or neutral reaction to the video. Men’s responses varied from “want to be with them” (that is, with the women in the video), to neutral, to being embarrassed for the women in the video. The positive responses were “makes me want to be them” (25.3%, $N=44$), “seems like fun” (9.8%, $N=17$), and “feel sexually aroused” (5.2%, $N=9$). Examples of these views appear in these verbatim statements:

Participant: *I thought that the females were having a good time and felt like I should be there.*

Participant: *I felt like I should find out where that bar is it looked like a blast!*

Participant: *Wishing I was there dancing with some of those girls.*

Participant: *The girls were hot and now I am horny.*

Participant: *I think of sex and felt excited*

The neutral responses (23.6%, N=41) referred to the behavior as “normal party behavior.” For example:

Participant: *Some stuff isn't any different then you would find a regular party on campus.*

Participant: *I felt like it was a normal club environment.*

Participant: *I feel like that is normal in that type of setting.*

The negative reactions to the women in the video labeled them as “slutty” or sexually loose (4%, N=7), drunk and out of control (11.5%, N=20), stupid and sloppy (9.2%, N=16), being uncomfortable and embarrassed (8.1%, N=14), and lacking self-respect (1.7%, N=3). For example:

Participant: *disgusted, embarrassed for the people involved*

Participant: *I felt like the girls were slutty from alcohol.*

Participant: *That they have low-self esteem, stupid behavior and will likely have sex with people they normally would not sleep with.*

Participant: *slutty girls, drinking typical college throwdown.*

Participant: *That is not how I or my friends socialize and/or drink.*

Even though men’s reaction to the video seemed mostly positive or neutral, when asked to comment in an open-ended question about men’s conversations among

themselves about women who behave like the women in the video, the men's comments similar to study 1 were mostly negative. Most men (53.5%, N=93) mentioned when men see a drunk woman behaving wildly or outrageously, they perceive her as being promiscuous, loose and easily available. Some men try to "hook up" with them for sex and a "one night stand" (16.1%, N=28). Some men also see them as being "hot" and sexy (9.8%, N=17) and enjoy having fun with them (22.4%, N=39) but would not like to date them. Some of the verbatim comments from men are presented below to give a better sense of the categorical information provided above. When multiple ideas were presented they were put into more than one category. Comments on promiscuity, loose and easy included,

Participant: *I think a lot of guys would describe girls like that as "easy". They'd be interested in hooking up, but not actual relationships or anything serious.*

Participant: *That all women are easy and sexually conquerable when they drink and act like in the video.*

Comments mentioning "hook-ups" and one night stands included,

Participant: *Men talk bad about those types behind their back, but when it comes to getting "action," they say nice things. They know this is part of the game. Guys and girls get drunk, get sexy, and hook up. It's normal.*

Participant: *These women are trashy and easy to get. These women aren't the type you would bring home to mom and dad but the type you have a one night stand with.*

Participant: *Many men seem to think woman who act like this are sluts and have no respect for them. If they interact with these women, it is solely in an attempt to gain sex.*

An example of a comment mentioning "hot" and "sexy" is,

Participant: *It won't be negative necessarily. They might pursue them and think it's sexy. Guys may view it as a normal behavior.*

An example of a comment that mentioned having fun with women who behave outrageously but not date them is,

Participant: They say those girls are fun to hang out with or easy to hook up with but not a girl who is really worth investing any time or emotion into. She'll probably move on to the next guy by the end of the weekend anyway.

Participant: Some men would refer to them as "sluts." I wouldn't date them but don't hold anything against them for partying and having fun. If they want to embarrass themselves then that's on them.

Young men's comments above clearly show that men see a difference between behaviors of women with whom they want to have a physical relationship and those with whom they want to have a longer term and more emotionally involved relationship. The age old perceptions of a "drinking woman" are still very much present in the Millennium men. It is obvious through the quotes that women who drink and party are viewed negatively. When positive comments are made, it is only meant to say "we like them because they entertain us and we see ourselves having fun with them." Women become purely sex objects in the minds of men when they behave outrageously. However, there is also ambivalence in some men's minds about women who drink and behave outrageously. This ambivalence can be best encapsulated in a respondent's words "they are hot sluts." On one hand the word "hot" is used which indicates they are very desirable. On the other hand the word "slut" is used which is negative and derogatory. The ambivalence towards wild behavior is also well stated by this respondent's comment:

Participant: They [men] want them to act that way, unless it's their sister, girlfriend, cousin, etc. and then all of a sudden it's a problem. It's a double edged sword, they are thought of as slutty by behaving that way, but not desired if they don't.

Men's comments affirm the beliefs and drinking norms of the American society. Even though drinking among women is much more accepted now, a "drinking woman" is still considered loose and promiscuous. This is further confirmed through a projective technique used to uncover the underlying beliefs of men about college women who drink in the following question.

RQ 9: What do young college men think about college women who drink alcohol?

A projective technique was used to gather information from college men about women who drink. This method of gathering information has been explained in chapter 5. Men were asked to write down three things that came to their mind when they heard the words "women and alcohol." Since there were few specific words used by men to write their thoughts, the best analysis that captured the responses of men in general was to count the frequency of occurrence of the most commonly used descriptive term. Thus, an online software program that analyzes frequency of words in a text was used for this analysis ("Wordle," 2009). Men's responses are presented visually in Figure 7-1 in which the words most frequently used by the respondents appear in larger fonts. The size of the font in the picture depicts the frequency of occurrence of those words in the text. As one can see in Figure 7-1, some of the words frequently used by men in responding to the phrase "women and alcohol" were *sex, party, drunk, rape, fun, wild, men, pregnant, drugs, vulnerable, dangerous, easy, drama, loose, loud, sloppy, annoying, and stupid.*

Figure 7-1. Men's Perception of "Women and Alcohol"



The next few research questions deal with outcome expectations and expectancies.

Outcome Expectations and Expectancies

RQ 10: What kinds of outcomes expectations are there among college women regarding spring break parties in terms of drinking, social and sexual behaviors?

Most people in college associate spring break with heavy drinking and partying. In the sample 55.1% (N=222) of college women who drank alcohol said that they had gone on a spring break trip with friends to another city and 40.9 % (N=165) said that they drank a lot of alcohol, 29% (N=117) said that they went to clubs and attended parties. Going to the beach (23.8%, N=96), shopping (4%, N=16), and meeting new people (3.5%, N=14) were some of the other activities mentioned. Very few mentioned having sex with a stranger (0.5%, N=2), taking drugs (0.7%, N=3), or gambling (0.2%, N=8).

When asked to write about “other” college students’ activities during the spring break, heavy drinking described as “getting wasted” was reported by 73.2 % (N=295) of the respondents. In addition, 22.8% (N=92) mentioned sex with strangers, and 6.2% (N=25) reported “others” taking drugs. These numbers about “others” are much higher than the numbers about self. When asked about the source of information for other college students’ activities during the spring break, 73.9% (N=298) of the college women mentioned hearing accounts from their friends, 12.7% (N=52) mentioned the media, and 2% (N=8) mentioned observing friends themselves.

RQ 11: What positive outcomes (benefits) do college women expect from drinking alcohol?

The top five reasons given by college women for drinking are 1) to socialize (50.1%, N=202); 2) to “loosen up” (31.5%, N=127); 3) to relieve stress and anxiety

(22.3%, N=90); 4) to just get drunk (22.3%, N=90); and 5) to escape boredom or loneliness (15.9%, N=64).

RQ 12: What positive outcomes (if any) do women expect from outrageous behaviors?

Women expect to have fun (M= 3.94, SD=1.04), be able to belong to a group (M=2.72, SD=1.22), be able to “hook up” with someone (M=2.47, SD=1.23), get attention (M=2.24, SD=1.21), be able to show guts (M=2.13, SD 1.15), have a wild college experience (M=2.55, SD=1.25), be able to show their wild and sexy side (M=2.36, SD =1.23), be able to prove equality with men (M=2.25, SD =1.28), be able to show girl power (M=1.99, SD=1.12), and be able to avoid their friends getting disappointed with them (M=1.62, SD=0.88) when they behave outrageously.

Respondents were also asked to provide reasons why some women behave wildly at parties. Their responses can be best summed up through a comment from a respondent: “[to gain] attention, acceptance, [and] popularity.” Women mentioned that many women behave wildly at parties to gain attention (50.6%, N=227), because they are drunk (18.3%, N=83), have low self-esteem (15.1%, N=68), just to have fun (13.8%, N=63), want to look cool, sexy and desirable (12.5%, N=56), and because of social norm and peer pressure (12.2%, N=55). Some insightful comments from the respondents are mentioned below. These comments help the reader to better understand what was said, and why and how the above categories were created. Some comments were put in more than one category as they included more than one reason for outrageous behaviors. For example, the comment below mentions two reasons, self-esteem and getting attention, so it was assigned to both the category “self-esteem” and the category “to get attention.”

Participant: *They behave like this because they have low self esteem and they want to have attention.*

Respondents who mentioned that women behave wildly to gain attention said,

Participant: *Striving to get attention. [Girls] Think guys like girls who are bold & daring. Want to have fun or fit in.*

Participant: *I think young girls like to get attention from guys. Even if the girl is going to turn down the guy and has no intention of hooking up with him, it can be fun to know that you can attract someone when you're out drinking and dancing.*

Examples of comments that mentioned both the desire to look cool and sexy and to just have fun were included these,

Participant: *They are drunk and feel the need to be sexy and alluring. Alcohol gives some women an excuse to let out their naughty side because any regrets they may have they can use alcohol as an excuse to their behavior, because society would look down upon them otherwise.*

Participant: *A lot of young women who behave in the manner presented in the video do so because they claim they "just want to have fun," they think that men find it attractive, and they think they look sexy.*

Examples of comments that mentioned social norms and peer pressure included,

Participant: *I think a lot of women behave that way because they think that is what is expected of them when they are drinking at parties. Most girls have seen images like that by the time they are old enough to drink, so they think that is how men want you to behave.*

Participant: *I think that young women who see this at a young age act this way because they think that they are supposed to act that way when intoxicated.*

Participant: *Girls think that is what they are supposed to act like because their friends are doing it. Girls also like the attention that they get from it. I guarantee you that if they weren't getting attention and reinforcement from friends that they would stop immediately.*

RQ 13: What negative outcomes (if any) do women perceive in imitating the behavior(s) portrayed in the media of drunkenness and outrageous behavior?

When asked if the respondents thought that college women could get into problems if they behaved outrageously like the women in the video, 87.8% (N=394) replied “yes.” Most women seem to be very aware of the problems they can get into when they drink and behave outrageously.

In an open-ended question, when respondents were asked to state what potential problems women can get into, the three most common responses were sexual assaults and getting raped or date raped (49.0%, N=220), unplanned and unprotected sex (19.2%, N=86), and getting a bad reputation of being “easy” (16%, N=72). The other, less common responses were getting STDs, getting pregnant, being taken advantage of, alcohol poisoning, fights, and problems with the law. Some insightful comments from the respondents, again in verbatim, are presented below. Those who mentioned sexual assaults and rape said,

Participant: I think they could potentially be raped and then they would not even be able to press charges because they would not win because they were drinking. It sucks really.

Participant: Date rape is a big problem with out of control drinking. I did have a summer when I was 17 when I drank too much, as a means to cover depression and also to make myself feel cool, and it resulted in being date raped. Most girls, when they are date raped while drinking, do not think it is rape, and this causes major issues with self confidence, which leads to more drinking.

An example of a comment related to unplanned sex was,

Participant: Guys can get the wrong idea about these things... and sometimes when girls start they don't stop. It comes in stages, first you dance, then you grind, then it gets heated, before you know it you're making big mistakes that you'll regret the next day but none of the actions seem bad at the time because they're taken in steps.

Examples of comments that mentioned getting a bad reputation of being “easy” are:

Participant: *They could ruin their reputation forever.*

Participant: *They can be put in situations where men believe they are "easy" by the way they are dressed or the way they were behaving and those same men might expect these women to be open to sexual acts when they are not.*

RQ 14: What social and sexual outcomes (if any) do college women expect when they drink alcohol?

College women agreed with the statement that alcohol makes them sexually less inhibited ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.15$). However, they disagreed with the statements that they drink alcohol to feel sexually less inhibited ($M= 1.95$, $SD=1.15$), enjoy sex more when they are drunk ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.33$), often have unplanned sex when they are drunk ($M=1.82$, $SD=1.22$), take sexual risks ($M=1.81$, $SD=1.25$), and make sexual advances when they are drunk ($M=2.69$, $SD=1.49$).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, outcome expectancies were measured but not as a separate research question. There is a high value placed on having a social life among college women. College women strongly agreed or agreed that it was important for them to have a social life ($M=4.43$, $SD=0.65$), have lots of friends ($M=3.32$, $SD=1.02$), and be connected with their friends ($M=3.97$, $SD=0.87$).

In order to understand the relationship of expectancies of social life on drinking and outrageous behaviors, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. A weak, statistically significant positive correlation was found ($r(375) = 0.249$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship. The higher the value placed on having a social life the greater is the outrageous behavior. A weak but statistically significant correlation was

also found between the value placed on having a social life and alcohol consumption among the female respondents ($r(378) = .261, p < .001$).

Self-control

RQ15: How much self-control do college women feel in a social gathering when they are with their peers and friends?

College women reported that they felt very much in control when around friends in social gatherings ($M=4.04, SD=0.76$). The women reported that they did not do things that their friends were doing when they did not like it or agree with it ($M=1.84, SD=0.80$). They also reported that they did not feel the pressure to drink more alcohol in company of their friends ($M=2.23, SD=1.04$). College women disagreed that they felt the pressure to be “wild” at parties when they were with friends ($M=1.78, SD=0.83$). These statements further suggest that women feel in control of themselves and are not swayed by their friends.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the relationships between an index of self-control and amount of alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior. A moderate negative correlation was found between self-control and wild behavior ($r(374) = -0.406, p < .001$), indicating a significant negative relationship between the two variables. When college women feel more in control they behave less wildly. However, a very weak negative relationship was found between self-control and alcohol consumption ($r(377) = -0.130, p < .05$), indicating greater the self-control, the less women drink.

Reinforcements

RQ 16: Do reinforcements from peers and friends affect drinking and outrageous behaviors?

College women agreed that when they drink too much alcohol at parties or at bars, most of their friends see it as having fun ($M=3.22$, $SD=1.04$) and do not disapprove of it. In addition, when they did anything wild at parties that was also seen as having fun ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.05$) and they did not feel disapproved of by their friends.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to note the relationship between reinforcements and drinking and outrageous behaviors. A very weak but significantly positive correlation was found between reinforcement and drinking ($r(379) = 0.160$, $p < .01$), and outrageous behaviors ($r(403) = 0.179$, $p < .001$).

Sensation seeking tendencies

RQ 17: How do women with different levels of sensation seeking tendencies evaluate “girls gone wild” portrayals in the media?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationships between an index of respondents’ reported sensation seeking tendencies and an index of positive evaluations of the party portrayals. A moderate to weak positive correlation was found ($r(403) = 0.298$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. The higher the sensation seeking tendencies, the more positive are the evaluation of the party portrayals and lower the sensation seeking tendencies less positive is the evaluation of the party portrayals.

RQ 18: Do sensation seeking tendencies affect alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors in an individual?

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the relationship between respondents' reported sensation seeking tendencies and alcohol consumption and wild behavior. A relatively weak positive correlation was found between an index sensation seeking tendencies and alcohol consumption ($r(405) = 0.219, p < .001$) and a moderate positive correlation was found between index of sensation seeking tendencies and an index of wild behaviors ($r(359) = 0.369, p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. This indicates that the higher the sensation seeking tendencies, the more likely are the wild behaviors at parties.

Social Self-esteem

RQ 19: How does social self-esteem affect alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women?

Social self-esteem index was found to have a weak but significant negative association with an index of positive evaluation of party portrayals ($r(410) = -0.126, p < .05$), i.e. the higher the social self-esteem the less positive was the evaluation of party portrayals. So the more socially comfortable or confident women are the less likely are they to view the party portrayals as positive. No relationships were found between social self-esteem and wild behavior, or amount of alcohol consumed and social self-esteem.

Gender Equality

RQ 20: How does the desire for gender equality affect the amount of alcohol women consume, how wildly they behave, and their views of the “girls gone wild” portrayals in the media?

There was a weak positive correlation found between the index of desire for gender equality and amount of alcohol consumption ($r(369) = 0.11, p < .05$). However when a correlation was calculated with individual items of the gender equality scale, a moderate correlation was found. Amount of alcohol positively correlated with “I consider men and women to be equal in all respects” ($r(423) = 0.352, p < .001$), “I often challenge traditional gender norms and roles” ($r(423) = 0.340, p < .001$), “I dislike that men and women are judged differently by the society for the same action” ($r(423) = 0.433, p < .001$), “I believe that “appropriate behaviors” for women and men are different” ($r(423) = 0.385, p < .001$), and “I consider myself a feminist” ($r(423) = 0.298, p < .001$).

Individual items of the desire for gender equality scale and the desire for gender equality scale did not show any relationship with outrageous behaviors.

Additional Question: Media Messages

RQ 21: What kind of messages would be most effective in curbing alcohol consumption?

Women who drank alcohol ranked the top five messages that they thought would be most effective in curbing alcohol consumption among young college women like themselves. These were 1) show risks of date rape incidents (86.8%, N=350); 2) stress the high calorie content of alcoholic drinks (77.9%, N=314), 3) show drunk women

looking very un-classy, “easy” and unsophisticated (71.5%, N=288); 4) show women acting stupidly under the influence of alcohol (69%, N=278); and 5) share stories of some poor decision making while under the influence (64.8%, N=261).

In addition to research question results, few more analyses were done to better understand the topic.

Comparison of Independent Variables on Self vs. Others

As noted before, college women reported more influence on “other” college women than themselves. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to understand the association between several variables and how they related to media influence on self versus others. Moderate to weak but significant relationships were found among some of the variables (see Table 7-6). College women for whom social life was more important emphasized greater influence of party portrayals on self. On the other hand, women with higher social self-esteem emphasized greater influence of party portrayals on others. Women who perceived they had more self control emphasized less influence of the portrayals on their drinking as well as their wild behavior. Women for whom gender equality was important emphasized influence of the portrayals on their drinking but not on their wild behavior and the influence on wild behaviors of others.

Table 7-6. Comparison Independent Variables on Self vs. Others

Variables	Self		Others	
	Outrageous Behaviors	Drinking	Outrageous Behaviors	Drinking
Value Placed on Social life	0.13** (N=370)	0.14** (N=369)	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>
Social Self-esteem	0.11* (N=412)	<i>ns</i>	0.19** (N=410)	0.14** (N=412)
Sensation Seeking	0.14** (N=410)	<i>ns</i>	0.14** (N=410)	<i>ns</i>
Self Control	-0.31** (N=370)	-0.35** (N=369)	- 0.126* (N=368)	<i>ns</i>
Gender equality	<i>ns</i>	0.11* (N=369)	0.12* (N=368)	<i>ns</i>

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *ns*: not significant

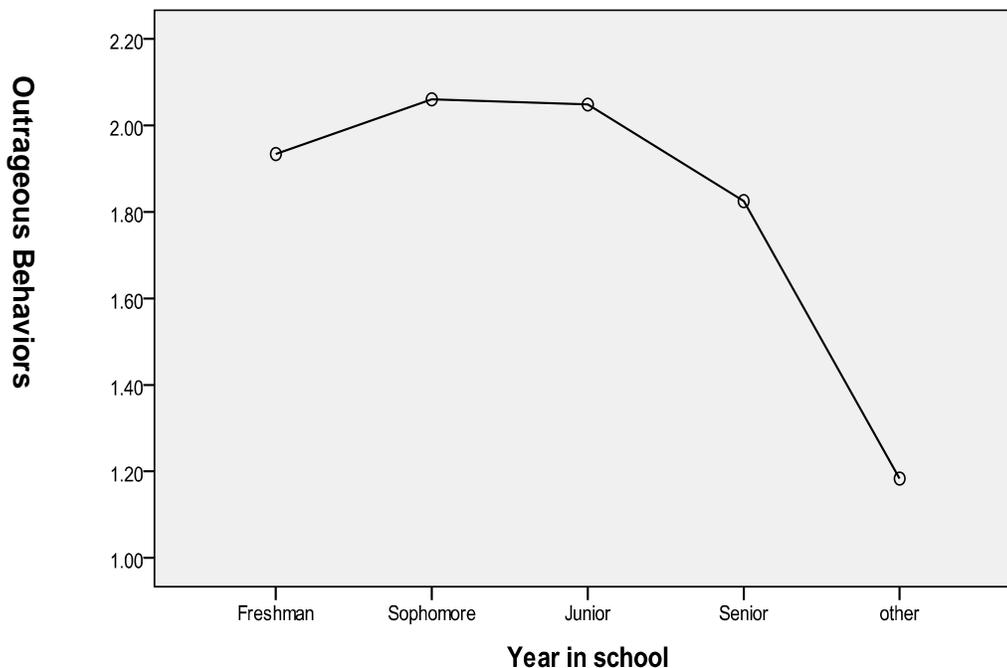
Relationship between and Among Independent and Dependent Variables

In the study there are two dependent variables, outrageous behaviors and amount of alcohol consumption. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to note the relationship between outrageous behaviors and alcohol consumption. A very weak but significant association was found between the two dependent variables ($r(388) = 0.182$, $p < .001$). This indicates that outrageous behaviors can take place without drinking alcohol.

Since the dependent variables seem to correlate, a one-way between subjects ANCOVA was calculated to examine outrageous behaviors among women in different years in school, controlling for the role of amount of alcohol consumption. As a covariate, amount of alcohol was significantly related to wild behavior ($F(1, 371) = 12.50, p < .001$). The main effect for year in school was significant ($F(1, 371) = 3.05, p < .05$), with wild behavior low in the freshman year ($M=1.94, SD=0.57$), increasing in the sophomore year ($M=2.06, SD=0.60$), then slightly decreasing in the junior year ($M=2.05, SD=0.62$), and decreasing further in the senior year of college ($M=1.81, SD=0.57$) and going down even further beyond senior years ($M=1.20, SD=0.4$) (see Figure 7-2).

An ANOVA did not show significant differences in drinking in different years of school ($F(1, 385) = 0.095, p > .05$) among women. The average number of drinks in the freshman year was $M=3.78 (SD=1.82)$, it is highest in the sophomore year ($M=4.40, SD=2.24$) and remains high in the junior ($M=4.30, SD=2.36$) and the senior year ($M=4.34, SD=2.27$) of college.

Figure 7-2. Years in School and Outrageous Behaviors



An ANCOVA was also calculated to examine the role of race and ethnicity in wild behavior. Amount of alcohol as a covariate was significantly related to wild behavior ($F(1, 376) = 10.10, p < .01$). The main effect for race/ethnicity was significant ($F(1, 376) = 7.49, p < .001$), with wild behavior highest among Whites/Caucasians ($M = 2.06, SD = 0.60$), followed by Latino/Hispanics ($M = 1.99, SD = 0.50$), Others (Mixed Race) ($M = 1.90, SD = 0.62$), Asians ($M = 1.85, SD = 0.92$), and lowest among African-Americans ($M = 1.57, SD = 0.50$). An ANCOVA calculated to examine income levels and wild behaviors revealed no statistically significant results.

In order to understand which SCT and non SCT variables best predicted drinking and outrageous behaviors a regression analysis was conducted. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the value of the independent variables

(value placed on social life, positive evaluation of the party portrayals, sensation seeking tendencies, self control, reinforcements, and sexual outcome expected) in predicting outrageous behaviors (see Table 7.7). Variables which did not show correlation with the outrageous behaviors in the previous analysis such as gender equality and social self-esteem were not included in the analysis. Evaluation of linearity led to the natural log transformation of positive evaluation of the party portrayals, sexual outcome expected, self-control, and sensation seeking tendencies. The analysis eliminated two variables (reinforcements and value placed on social life). Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts outrageous behaviors, $R=0.631$, $R^2= 0.399$, Adjusted $R^2= 0.392$; $F(4, 356) = 58.96$, $p<.001$. The model accounts for 39.2% of variance in outrageous behaviors. A summary of the regression coefficients is presented in Table 7-7 and represents stepwise elimination of variables that did not contribute significantly to the model. See Figure 7-3 for the visual representation of the model.

Table 7-7. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Outrageous Behavior

Variables	B	SE	β
Step 1			
Sexual Outcome Expected	0.25	0.02	0.50**
R= 0.504, R ² = 0.254, Adjusted R ² = 0.252 F (1, 359) = 122.35**			
Step 2			
Sexual Outcome Expected	0.20	0.02	0.50**
Positive Evaluation of Portrayals	0.28	0.04	0.50**
R= 0.581, R ² = 0.334, Adjusted R ² = 0.333 F (2, 358) = 90.99**			
Step 3			
Sexual Outcome Expected	0.19	0.02	0.38**
Positive Evaluation of Portrayals	0.23	0.04	0.25**
Sensation Seeking Tendencies	0.07	0.02	0.19**
R= 0.608, R ² = 0.370, Adjusted R ² = 0.365 F (3, 357) = 69.90**			
Step 4			
Sexual Outcome Expected	0.16	0.02	0.32**
Positive Evaluation of Portrayals	0.19	0.04	0.21**
Sensation Seeking Tendencies	0.07	0.02	0.18**
Self-Control	-0.15	0.04	-0.19**
R=0.631, R ² = 0.399, Adjusted R ² = 0.392 F (4, 356) = 58.96**			

Note: *p<.05, **p<.001.

B- Unstandardized coefficient; β - Standardized coefficient.

A similar stepwise regression analysis were done to understand which variables best predict alcohol consumption among college women. The set of variables that predicted alcohol consumption has been mentioned in Table 7-8. Independent variables (value placed on social life, positive evaluation of party portrayals, sensation seeking tendencies, self-control, reinforcements and sexual outcome) were used in the regression analysis to predict alcohol consumption. Evaluation of linearity led to the natural log transformation of value placed on social life and sensation seeking tendencies. The analysis led to elimination of four variables, positive evaluation of the party portrayals, self-control, reinforcements and sexual outcomes. Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts alcohol consumption, $R = 0.286^b$, $R^2 = 0.082$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.077$, $F(2, 357) = 15.86$, $p < .001$. The model accounts for only 7.7% of variance in drinking. A summary of the regression coefficients is presented in Table 7-8 and represents the variables that contributed significantly to the model.

Table 7-8. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis Predicting Alcohol Consumption

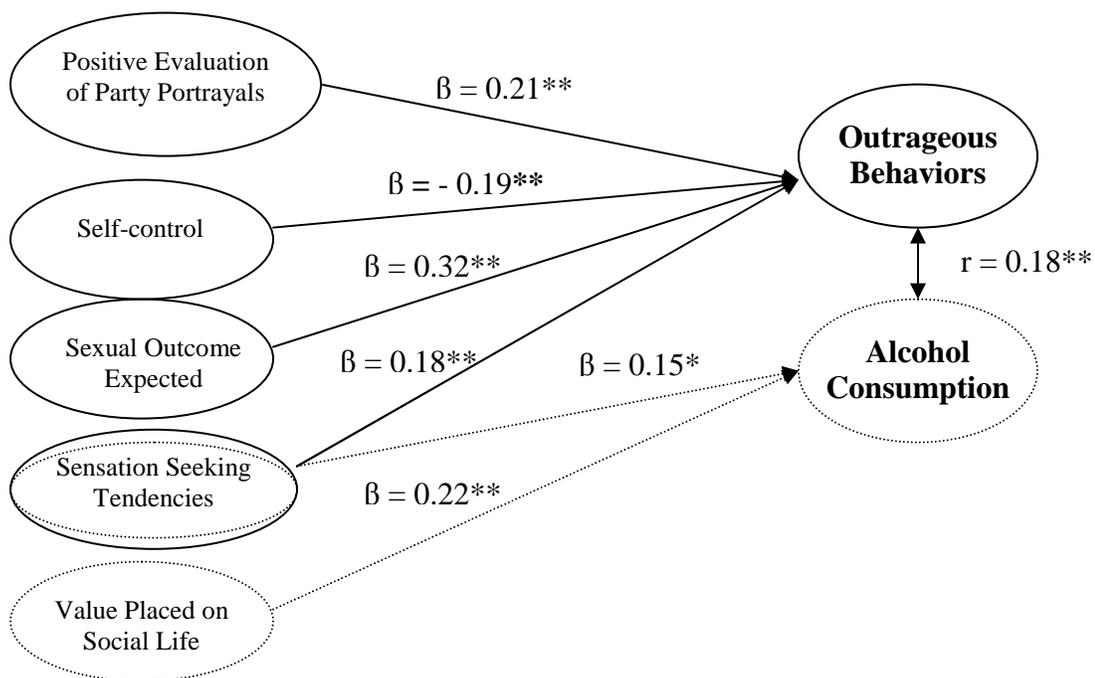
Variables	B	SE	β
Step 1			
Value placed on social life	0.85	0.18	0.25**
R= 0.246, R ² = 0.060, Adjusted R ² = 0.058 F (1, 358) = 22.94**			
Step 2			
Value placed on social life	0.77	0.18	0.22**
Sensation Seeking Tendencies	0.21	0.07	0.15*
R= 0.286, R ² = 0.082, Adjusted R ² = 0.077 F (2, 357) = 15.86**			

Note: *p<.01, **p<.001

B- Unstandardized coefficient; β - Standardized coefficient.

Figure 7-3 shows the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables in the study. The results from the regression analyses show that outrageous behaviors positively correlate with sexual outcomes expected, positive evaluation of the party portrayals, sensation seeking tendencies, and self-control. Outrageous behaviors however, negatively correlate with self-control. Alcohol consumption positively correlates with value placed on social life and sensation seeking tendencies. Since there is a very weak correlation between the two dependent variables, outrageous behaviors and alcohol consumption, it is likely that outrageous behaviors take place even without alcohol consumption.

Figure 7-3. Relationship between Independent and Dependent Variables



The coefficients (β) are standardized. Relationships represented by arrows are significant at $p < .01$ or better ($*p < .01$; $**p < .001$)

Summary

The study finds that alcohol consumption among college women is quite prevalent. A majority of college women (89.8%, N=403) drink alcohol. College women drink an average of four drinks in a single social setting. Depending on the definition of binge drinking, women are either binge drinking or engaging in heavy episodic drinking. College women drink more heavily on weekends, during house parties, and at times like spring break (RQ3).

Most college women drink to socialize. Many drink to “loosen up,” relieve stress and anxiety, to just get drunk, and to escape boredom or loneliness (RQ 11). Even though most college women did not report major problems because of their drinking, some college women however did report problems. In a typical two-week period, the problems reported were getting into verbal and physical fights, vomiting and hangovers, missing classes, and drunk driving. Trouble with the law, trouble with the school administration, damaging property, and hospitalization after heavy drinking were also reported by a relatively smaller but noteworthy minority. Almost 14% (N=55) of the women in the study reported being sexually assaulted while they were drunk, raising some serious concerns (RQ 4).

Most women do not engage in outrageous behaviors such as “making out” in public and public nudity (RQ 6). Among the outrageous behaviors, drinking games are the most common behavior that women engage in during social gatherings. Outrageous behavior is highest in the sophomore and junior year of college and decreases sharply in the senior year and there after. Women with high sensation seeking tendencies, less self-

control, and who anticipate positive sexual outcomes are likely to indulge in behaviors that are more outrageous. (RQ 8, RQ 11, RQ18).

Most women have been exposed to images of drunkenness and outrageous behavior of women through the media (RQ 5) and they view outrageous behaviors of the women as negative (RQ 7). College men on the other hand see the outrageous behaviors of women as fun and something which they would like to be a part of, however when asked to state “other” men’s opinions about women who behave outrageously, their comments were very negative. Men mentioned that they could have casual sex with these women but would not pursue a serious relationship (RQ 8, RQ 9).

“Girls gone wild” portrayals in the media are likely to influence outrageous behaviors among college women depending on how the portrayals are perceived. Women who evaluate party portrayals as more positive are likely to behave more outrageously (RQ 7). Positive evaluation of party portrayals correlates with outrageous behaviors but not with alcohol consumption.

The findings indicate that college women believed that the influence of “girls gone wild” portrayals was greater on other women than themselves. The perception gap not only appears between self and others, but also seems to appear between the “real self” and the perceived “ideal self.” Most women were very critical of women who behave outrageously, calling them “sluts,” “stupid,” women with low self-esteem, and with “no self-respect.” However some women explain their own similar behavior as something done “just for fun.”

Alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior among college women is a complex topic as it is affected by many environmental and individual factors. Several

independent variables were tested in this study to understand their relationship with the dependent variables alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors of women. The findings of the study suggest that self-control, sensation seeking tendencies, positive evaluation of the party portrayals, value placed on having a social life, and anticipated sexual outcomes significantly predict outrageous behaviors (RQ 7, RQ 14, RQ 15, RQ 17, RQ 18). Alcohol consumption was best predicted by the variables value placed on social life and sensation seeking tendencies. Several independent variables of interest such as desire for gender equality and social self-esteem did not have significant relationship with alcohol consumption or outrageous behaviors (RQ 19, RQ 20).

In order to curb alcohol consumption among women, women suggested several media communication strategies that they thought would be effective for someone like themselves. The top five strategies suggested were to show risks of date rape incidents, stress the high calorie content of alcoholic drinks, show drunk women looking very unclassy, “easy” and unsophisticated, show women acting stupidly under the influence of alcohol and share stories of some poor decision making under the influence of alcohol (RQ 21).

This chapter presented the findings from study 2. In the next chapter (Chapter 8), various implications, conclusions and limitations of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

This research had two aims. First, to provide detailed information on alcohol consumption among college women and second, to understand how various individual and environmental factors influence alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women, with special emphasis on “girls gone wild” portrayals and their influence. Through study 1 and study 2, a comprehensive data set was obtained on alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. The study helped to answer 21 research questions that are reported in Chapter 7. As a result of this study, several things have been learned about alcohol consumption, outrageous behaviors, and media influence among college women. These are:

Who and what: College women who place high value on being social, have high sensation seeking tendencies and tend to drink more alcohol. Women with low self-control and high sensation seeking tendencies tend to behave more outrageously.

When: College women drink more when they are around friends. They usually drink one-two times during the weekend. Alcohol consumption among women is less likely to be influenced by “girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals. However, observational learning through media portrayals influence outrageous behaviors among college women when they view the portrayals as fun and positive.

Where: College women tend to drink more at house parties followed by drinking at clubs and bars.

Why: College women drink mostly to socialize, to “loosen up,” to relieve stress and anxiety, to just get drunk, and to escape boredom or loneliness. They behave outrageously to get attention and for sexual outcomes.

How much: College women drink more than four drinks in a single social setting. They report being buzzed after three drinks and losing control after six drinks.

In this chapter, the implications of the study are presented. In the following sections, alcohol consumption among college women is discussed first. This is followed by a discussion on outrageous behaviors. Then, influence of “girls gone wild” or party portrayals in alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors are discussed. Theoretical implications, methodological implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research follow. Finally, major implications and conclusions are discussed.

Alcohol Consumption among College Women

In the last few years alcohol consumption among college women has risen (“psychcentral,” 2009; Reed, 2009; “sciencedaily,” 2009). The findings of this study show that 89.8% (N=403) of the college women drink alcohol. In addition, a troubling statistic is that a majority of underage women 86.6% (N=232) consume alcohol. This high percentage of women drinking raises concern. It also raises questions about the enforcement of the legal drinking age law. Alcohol consumption among young women in college is a problem that needs attention especially as many women are drinking at an early age, college women including women below the age of 21 are drinking heavily, and some are getting into serious problems. The findings of this study show that drinking and drinking related problems are no longer just an issue for young men in college; it is also a

problem among college women. Alcohol related experiences of women presented in study 1, and the statistics reported in study 2 show similar results. Each study provides a unique insight into drinking and drinking related problems among college women.

College Women are Drinking at an Early Age

The results showed that a majority (56.4%, N=221) of college women start drinking between the ages of 15 and 17 years, however 25.3% (N=99) of the women reported drinking initiation between the ages of 12 and 14 years and 3.3% (N=13) below the age of 12 years. Previous studies have shown that early alcohol use is a predictor for problem drinking and problem behaviors (Grant & Dawson, 1997; "NSDUH Report", 2004; Warner & White, 2003; Warner, White, & Johnson, 2007) and that delaying the alcohol initiation age is likely to reduce the risk of alcohol abuse later in life (Gruber, DeClemente, Anderson, & Lodico, 1996). The percentage of women drinking alcohol at an early age is much higher in this study than those reported in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health ("NSDUH Report," 2004). The NSDUH reports 28.7% of females first drank between ages 15 and 17 years, 23.6% first drank between the ages of 18 and 20, 10.2% of first drank alcohol between the ages of 12 and 14, and 2.4% below the age of 12. Though the results from this study cannot be compared with the results of the national survey as it is based on a much smaller convenience sample of 449 women, one can safely say that many women are drinking at a very early age. A more recent national survey could determine if more women are drinking at an earlier age than before. These statistics no doubt raise concerns and call for early interventions, including educational interventions that would delay the age of alcohol initiation. It also calls for further exploration of the factors that are giving rise to early initiation of alcohol among women.

College Women Engage in Heavy Episodic Drinking

College women attend an average of four social gatherings in a two week period and drink an average of four drinks in each social setting. This means that at least twice a week college women are drinking four drinks. It should also be noted that 36.8% (N=142) of the women who drink alcohol drink five or more drinks in a single social setting. The NIAAA (2006) reported that 26.7% of college women engaged in heavy drinking (defined in that study as five or more drinks on one occasion). While this number may or may not reflect binge drinking depending on the current binge drinking definition of four or more drinks consumed within two hours for women, it is still a high number and should raise concerns. The numbers from the study indicate that there is a need for designing programs and interventions that cater to the unique needs of women based on women's experiences with alcohol to help them reduce drinking especially when there are both short-term consequences such as hangover, vomiting, fights, missing classes, and drunk driving, and long-term problems of alcohol dependence and various health problems such as liver damage, brain damage, cancer and heart disease (NIAAA, 2008). It is also important to note that the data collected were not from the top 20 party schools mentioned in Princeton's review of colleges and universities where alcohol consumption is a known problem ("campusgrotto," 2009; Kiewra, 2009). These numbers might be even higher in these colleges where drinking and partying is more prevalent.

College Women Might be Overestimating their Alcohol Consumption Capacity

A previous study (Woznicki, 2005) reported that men overestimate their alcohol consumption capacity. The results of this study show that women might also be overestimating their drinking capacity. College women in the study reported that three alcoholic drinks made them feel buzzed ($M=3.10$; $SD=1.32$) and approximately six to seven drinks made women feel a loss of control ($M=6.80$, $SD=2.46$). This is a very high number and again suggests that it is possible that women are overestimating their alcohol drinking capacity. This overestimation can be problematic as this can lead to more drinking and higher blood alcohol levels in the body which can further lead to problems. Many women might be getting behind the wheel thinking that they are still capable of controlling a vehicle based on an overly optimistic estimate of their capacity based upon a mistaken assumption about how a perhaps arbitrarily assumed number of drinks changes their motor skills and alertness. This information, concerning the *perception* of a base line sobriety level and actual sobriety, can be important for public health professionals to know especially when they are designing educational interventions and communicating to women about alcohol tolerance limit.

College Women Drink More at House Parties

Heavy episodic drinking among college women usually occurs in a social setting, during the weekends at house parties and in bars and nightclubs. The largest percentage (48.4%, $N=195$) in the sample reported drinking more alcohol at house parties. The price of drinks in bars and restaurants may be a deterrent for some college women so they drink less in these places compared to house parties, as mentioned by some respondents in study 1 and in a previous study (Chaloupka & Wechsler, 1996).

A majority of women under the legal age of drinking reported drinking more at house parties (67%, N=156) as opposed to only 24.1% (N=39) over the age of 21. This is not surprising since underage women might find it hard to get alcohol at bars and restaurants without age verification. A majority of 21 years and older women reported drinking more at bars and restaurants (59.4%, N=95) and only 18% of underage women (N=42) reported drinking more at bars. This shows that legal age limit to drink are still not fully enforced at bars and restaurants. Strict enforcement of the law at bars and restaurants might further deter some underage women from drinking. However, it is possible that this might increase the number of underage women drinking in private places like homes and house parties. Many college women are choosing to stay in homes and outside the campus because they can drink without running into problems with school administration (Zamboanga, Olthuis, Horton, McCollum, Lee, & Shaw, 2009). Since the underage drinking takes place at house parties, a crackdown on house parties by law enforcement agencies in places where they suspect underage drinking might deter underage drinkers. Apart from the crackdown by law enforcement it is also necessary to educate college women through workshops and seminars about problems associated with drinking. External pressures can work only to an extent. The choice to drink and drink moderately should be made by women themselves and thus should be encouraged to do so for achieving a long lasting solution to this problem.

College Women Drink Mainly to Socialize; Many Also Drink to Just Get Drunk

Klein reported (1992) several reasons for drinking among college students such as to celebrate occasions, enjoy the taste of alcohol, to relieve tension, to relax, to feel comfortable in social settings, to get drunk, to relieve boredom, just something to do and

to forget about homework. Brennan, Walfish, and AuBuchon (1986) identified two main reasons for drinking, for social purposes and emotional escape. In this study, the top five reasons given by women for drinking were to socialize, to “loosen up,” to relieve stress and anxieties, to just get drunk, and to escape boredom or loneliness. Though most of the young women drink to socialize (50.1%, N=202), the concern is that many also drink to just get drunk (22.3%, N=90).

The culture of drinking on college campuses and drinking as an integral part of fun and entertainment lends itself to excessive drinking and alcohol abuse among college women. Thus, it is important to address the social environment and context of drinking in order to make changes. If more social events are planned on college campuses that are fun and do not involve drinking, it might appeal to some students who might opt for these activities instead of going out and drinking. Since, many women in the study mentioned that they drank to relieve stress, it is also important to teach women how to manage stress and anxieties without using alcohol. This study shows that it is important to address the problem of alcohol consumption at the environmental level as well as at the individual level.

Top Two Reasons for Not Drinking Alcohol, Taste and Health

In the study, the top two reasons given for not drinking alcohol was the taste of alcohol (37.2%, N=16) and for health reasons (27.8%, N=12). There isn't much that can be done to discourage women from drinking by talking about the bad taste of alcohol as taste is very subjective. However, highlighting the negative effects of drinking on health might deter more college women from drinking. Today, there are conflicting reports on health benefits of alcohol (Paul, 1998; Rabin, 2009). Some reports suggest that alcohol,

particularly wine in moderation, might be good for the heart (“Mayo Clinic,” 2009), while others suggest that alcohol increases the risks of cancer especially among women (Allen, Beral, Casabonne, Kan, Reeves, Brown, & Green, 2009). These kinds of reports are no doubt confusing and might be further adding to the problem of alcohol consumption. A study on alcohol initiation as well as alcohol consumption among women based on perceived health benefits should be explored in future studies to understand if and how many women drink for health benefits.

Peer Pressure and Reinforcements Do Not Influence Drinking Among College Women

As mentioned earlier drinking takes place in a social setting, so the presence of peers and friends do influence alcohol consumption. However, the influence seems to me indirect. Women in the study reported that they did not feel peer pressure to drink alcohol. Borasai and Carey (2001) suggest that by the time women reach college they learn how to resist peer pressure. This was confirmed in this study. Drinking is a part of socialization and thus is done more voluntarily by college women than out of peer pressure. Similar to peer pressure reinforcements from friends did not influence college women’s drinking in this study. Peer pressure might be an important variable to study for middle and high school girls but it does not seem to be an important variable for college women. In teenage years, girls are still developing a sense of identity and trying to understand who they are. They often do not having a strong sense of self and as a result succumb to peer pressure much easily than in later years. Girls act and behave more to fit-in with peers and friends (Borasai & Carey, 2001), this might also include drinking. Thus, studies on teenage girls should focus on peer pressures and how to deal with them. This is not so much of a problem at the college level.

Many College Women Face Serious Problems Because of their Drinking

Even though the majority of the women did not report any serious problems related to alcohol consumption, some did. In a typical two-week period during school the common problems reported by women were hangovers (41.4%, N=167), nausea and vomiting (N=16.9%, N=68), physical and verbal fights (12.2%, N=49), missing classes (12.4%, N=50), and drunk driving (7.7%, N=31). These percentages might not look serious on their own, however if seen as problems that are encountered on a regular basis i.e. in a typical two week period, it does warrant attention. Trouble with the law (13.7%, N=55), damaging property (11.7%, N=27), and hospitalization after heavy drinking (5.5%, N=22) were also reported by many women. The findings of the study suggest that these are no longer just problems associated with college men when they drink. Women today are drinking heavily and getting into similar problems. Public health professionals should try to design interventions for women to reduce alcohol consumption and alcohol related problems.

Nearly 14% of Women Were Sexually Assaulted While They Were Drunk

It was surprising to note that nearly 14% (N=55) of the women in the sample reported being sexually assaulted while they were drunk. This is definitely a reason for concern. Even more concerning is the fact that many women do not report these assaults to the police. Many women may fear that they would not be able to prove their case because they were drunk when the assaults happened. For example,

Participant: I think they could potentially be raped and then they would not even be able to press charges because they would not win because they were drinking. It sucks really.

These kinds of fears among women are likely to result in them suffering in silence and frustration. This calls for education and training of young women entering college on how to avoid getting into risky situations. It also calls for special action by law enforcement to provide young women with information on what to do if they are sexually assaulted and how to file their complaints to have a fair hearing.

Men's Perceptions of a "Drinking Woman" Remain Negative

The study finds that the perceptions of men about "drinking women" are as negative as they were in the past (Plant, 1997; Ricciardelli, Connor, Williams, & Young, 2001). Some of the common words used by men in response to the statement "women and alcohol" were *sex, party, drunk, rape, fun, wild, pregnant, drugs, vulnerable, dangerous, easy, drama, loose, loud, sloppy, annoying, and stupid*. This shows that some of the age old perceptions of a "drinking woman" among men have still not changed. It was surprising to note that the perception held by young men of women who consume alcohol is still negative even after so much progress has been in the society in terms of equality of men and women.

The study suggests that men and women both need to be educated not just about alcohol consumption but also about stereotypes and perceptions they hold of each other in order to negate the myths and social beliefs that exists. It has been noted that the biased perceptions held by men can be dangerous or at least problematic as they can lead to unwanted sexual advances being made by men towards women who drink because they perceive them as being weak, vulnerable and easy (George, Skinner, & Marlatt, 1986).

Society does have a different standard for men and women who drink, however social attitudes and beliefs take time to change. Educating young men and women is the best way to make progress in the society.

Heavy Drinking a Norm during Spring Break; A Norm Established through Stories from Peers and through the Media

Spring break is a period of heavy drinking and partying for many college women as noted in Chapter 7. This study confirms previous reports of heavy drinking (NIAAA, 2007; “PolicyMD,” 2007). Even though most women in the study reported drinking and clubbing during spring break, they reported “other” women’s drinking and outrageous behaviors as greater than theirs. These included activities such as having sex with strangers, getting into fights, “getting wasted,” and taking drugs. It is possible that myths and perceived norms surrounding spring break make women over report other women’s drinking and outrageous behaviors. It is also possible that there are many women who are drinking in excess during spring break. Women in this study mentioned that they heard about drinking and outrageous behaviors during spring break from their friends, which suggests that there are many women who are engaging in these behaviors and should be a concern for public health professionals.

It is important to note that drinking during spring break takes place mostly on beaches and in clubs/bars and it also takes place on “booze cruises.” Several respondents mentioned heavy drinking on “booze cruises.” These are basically boats and cruises that provide young people an opportunity to drink heavily and party within a two-four hour period (“Newyorkboozecruise,” 2009). How much oversight law enforcements have on these cruises should be investigated, especially for underage drinking.

The findings from the study show that the perceived norms about drinking and outrageous behaviors during spring break are established mostly through wild stories of friends and peers, and also to a small extent through the media through its various programs and reporting on spring-break that show little or no negative consequences of drinking and wild behaviors.

Thus, in order to reduce alcohol consumption among college students and women especially during spring break, an alternative to drinking and partying need to be suggested to students who do not spend time at home during the spring break. At some universities an “alternative spring break” initiative has been undertaken which suggests volunteer work for students during that time in the U.S. and abroad (MSU, 2009). Encouraging more students to participate in such programs is likely to keep them away from binge drinking.

In workshops, women should be encouraged to share their stories of fun things that they did during spring break that did not involve drinking, to show that there are alternative things to do during spring break besides drinking and that not all college students drink excessively during spring break. Media should also be encouraged to show more negative experiences of drinking during spring break and should also cover alternatives activities that students undertake during spring break to reduce misperceptions.

Outrageous Behaviors

Women Behave Outrageously to Get Attention from Men and for Positive Sexual Outcomes.

Most women do not engage in outrageous behaviors. On average women do engage in outrageous behaviors such as drinking games ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.34$) but few do engage in dirty dancing, dancing on the bars tables, and “making out” in public. The motivation behind outrageous behaviors is to get attention of men (50.6%, $N=227$). Women agreed that they engaged in outrageous behaviors just for fun ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.04$) and because they were drunk ($M=3.37$, $SD=1.2$). The study shows that expectation of positive sexual outcome is a predictor in outrageous behaviors. Many women expect to date and meet “Mr. Right” in college, however reduction in initiative from men and a culture of “hook ups” (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001) might be further contributing to outrageous behaviors among women.

It should also be noted that not all women are looking to “hook up”; some women just love to dance, however they find men to be reluctant partners in dancing but more willing partners in “grinding,” a form of dirty dancing. This encourages some women to engage in this behavior. For example,

Participant: I love to dance. I know why women dance like that. It is easy. Most women want to attract men but men just don't dance anymore and the music is not conducive to it. Grinding requires no skill and is erotic.

This sexual dancing is likely to lead to sexual arousal. With alcohol in the mix, and lack of self-control or self-regulation might lead some women to make risky choices that they otherwise would not have made. As one respondent stated,

Participant: *Guys can get the wrong idea about these things... and sometimes when girls start they don't stop. It comes in stages, first you dance, then you grind, then it gets heated, before you know it you're making big mistakes that you'll regret the next day but none of the actions seem bad at the time because they're taken in steps.*

An early educational intervention that teaches young women strategies for better self-regulation might prove to be beneficial not only in terms of reducing excessive alcohol consumption but also avoiding risky behaviors and decisions.

Media Influence in Alcohol Consumption and Outrageous Behaviors

Girls Gone Wild Behaviors in the Media Reported as "Normal Party" Behaviors

The findings suggest that the behaviors and activities of drunken college women on *Girls Gone Wild* and MTV's spring break coverage on television that were once thought to be shocking are no longer shocking for college students. They refer to it as "normal party" behaviors or "nothing unusual." It is possible that people have become desensitized to the "girls gone wild" portrayals as many have to other media images of violence (Comstock, 1989). "Girls gone wild" portrayals might have led to more acceptance of deviant behaviors and more acceptance of the behaviors as "normal." Bandura's social learning theory and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura 2001) suggest that the more people see the portrayals in the media as normal, the more likely they are to emulate the behaviors seen in the media. This can be problematic, especially in terms of negative or risky behaviors. Whether one considers "girls gone wild" kind of portrayals as negative or risky or not, it certainly seems to have pushed the limits of what is acceptable or unacceptable. It should be noted that the *Girls Gone Wild* video was first released in 1998 and that more than ten years has passed since then.

College students have seen these images for quite sometime now, and thus were less likely to be shocked by it. However, it was surprising to note that it wasn't seen as a deviant behavior.

The deviant behaviors shown in the media are not always negative, however, media producers should consciously think about the desensitizing effect of the content they produce and not just create content to shock, entertain, and earn profits. This is possible if teachers in high school and in universities teach their students, who might be future media producers, to consider the impact of their work on the society.

Women Say: Girls Gone Wild Portrayals Have an Influence but the Influence is Greater on "Others"

The findings of the study suggest that most college women believe that "girls gone wild" portrayals do have an influence on alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. However, the influence is greater on "other" women than themselves. This difference between the influence on self versus others may be a third person effect (Davison, 1983), that is, reporting the influence of media portrayals on others to be greater than the influence on self. College women might be overstating the influence on others, or might be denying the influence on self. The study asks questions about "other" women's behaviors to avoid socially desirable answers. As mentioned before, this method has been reported to yield accurate information about a behavior. Thus, it is likely that some women are denying the influence of the media on self. The study shows that 39.9% (N=179) of the women admitted that they had engaged in outrageous behaviors similar to the ones seen in the video. This study shows that there is a correlation between positive evaluation of the party portrayals and enactment of

outrageous behaviors but it is very difficult to quantify the extent of influence as it is mediated by many individual and environmental factors.

In women, the perception gap not only appears between self and others, but also seem to appear between the “real self” and the perceived “ideal self.” Many women were very critical of women who behave outrageously, calling them “sluts,” “stupid,” women with low self-esteem, and with “no self-respect.” However, for some women their own similar behavior was taken much more lightly and explained as something done “just for fun.” This perception gap can be explained as a result of strongly held social beliefs that dictate appropriate behavior for women. The societal beliefs define the “ideal self” or a “good woman” and a deviation from the ideal is looked down upon by women themselves. However, it is possible that some women behave in a deviant way because of the prevalence and glamorization of the bad girl image in the media which makes those behaviors more acceptable (Garbarino, 2006; Ischkin, 2009).

Girls Gone Wild Portrayals are Less Likely to Influence Alcohol Consumption among Women

In this study most women saw “girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals as negative and referred to women in the videos as “trashy.” Thus, it was not surprising to find that their behaviors including drinking were seen less appealing and attractive to most young women in college. “Girls gone wild” kinds of portrayals do not influence alcohol consumption among women. However, this does not mean that other media portrayals do not have an influence. Media’s role in promoting alcohol consumption among women should be investigated especially since many women have mentioned specific television programs and films that appeal to young women and show high incidences of drinking.

Sex and the City is one such television program that was mentioned by many women in this study and thus should be investigated for its appeal to young and underage women in their drinking. *Sex and the City* particularly seems to have glamorized drinking and casual sex among young women. Women in *Sex and the City* are considered “sexy,” and thus their behaviors are likely to appeal to many young women. In a news report, several experts have been quoted who blame the rise in drinking among women because of low self-esteem and the media (Feldman, 2008). Anne Bobrick, a licensed clinical social worker was quoted in the report as, “I have lot of young patients who watch *Sex and the City* – and they drink a lot on that show...On *Sex and the City* it’s like, ‘I have a problem, I need a drink’” (Feldman, 2008, ¶ 10). Even though this might be anecdotal or an expert observation, an empirical study would provide better evidence if glamorized portrayals of drinking in television programs do influence young women in their drinking.

Positive Evaluation of Girls Gone Wild Portrayals is Likely to Influence Outrageous Behaviors among Women

The findings of the study suggest that party portrayals are likely to influence outrageous behaviors of a few women who see the portrayals as positive. When the portrayals are seen as negative, which most women do, the behaviors depicted in the media are less likely to be emulated.

The study suggests that portrayals in the media are interpreted in multiple ways and the influence of the portrayal depends on how it is evaluated and interpreted by the viewer. This is consistent with some previous studies (Hansen, 1988). Thus, media influence studies should not assume a single influence of the media and should focus on exploring the diversity of interpretations of the messages as well as varying influence.

It would also be worthwhile for media scholars to investigate various underlying factors that contribute to a particular kind of interpretation. For example, in this study, it was determined that some women interpreted the portrayals as positive and others as negative, in part because of their sensation seeking tendencies. Different evaluations of the portrayals might be due to other aspects of the social and psychological reasons. Social and cultural norms might influence how these images are interpreted. Individual factors such as religious and moral beliefs, critical thinking abilities, age, experience and psychological make-up of an individual might influence the interpretation of the images. However, these factors need to be further investigated through empirical research.

Men's Reaction to Girls Gone Wild Portrayals Different from Women; Women more Critical

The reactions of men and women to “girls gone wild” portrayals were different. Women were more critical of party portrayals than men. In the study, most women’s reactions to party portrayals were negative. Men on the other hand saw party portrayals as fun, they felt like partying, and/or were sexually aroused. While men saw themselves as having fun in those party situations, they were also very critical of the women with whom they wanted to party hard and called them “sluts.” They wanted to have casual sex with them but were not interested in any long term relationship. Most men apparently assume that women act outrageously because they want attention and sex, which might not always be the case. It is quite likely that many men act under this assumption and make unwelcome sexual advances towards women who are drunk and are behaving outrageously.

Previous studies suggest that women tend to be more critical of drinking because of previous societal sanctions (Breed & DeFoe, 1981; Greenberg, Fernandez-Collado, Graef, Korzenny, & Atkin, 1979). A similar argument can be made for the difference in reaction of men and women to wild party portrayals in the media. Society has long dictated what an appropriate behavior is for women and men, what is lady-like and what is un-lady like. The social norms and morals that have long governed women's lives make women extremely critical of other women's deviant behaviors, much more so than men. While outrageous behaviors by men under the influence of alcohol are more acceptable by the society, these behaviors are looked down upon when women enact them.

Media Messages of Rapes/Date Rape might Deter Risky Drinking Behaviors among Women

In order to curb alcohol consumption among women, there were many suggestions made by the respondents in the study. The top three suggestions were 1) to show risks of rape/date rape 2) stress high calorie content of alcohol, and 3) show drunken women looking un-classy, "easy" and unsophisticated. While each of these suggestions might work, more research needs to be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of each of these media strategies.

The first suggestion made was that of showing risks of rape/ date rape. This kind of fear appeal might be effective. News stories such as those of Natalee Ann Holloway, a high school student who disappeared while on a five-day graduation trip to Aruba ("Cbsnews," 2009), do get the attention of young people and might discourage some from taking part in risky behaviors. Some students in the study mentioned this specific

case. When asked about what problems college women can get into when they drink and behave outrageously most women mentioned the fear of getting raped or killed. Media attention to stories like these can counterbalance “girls gone wild” portrayals which do not show dangerous negative consequences of drinking and outrageous behaviors.

The second strategy mentioned was to highlight calories in an alcoholic drink to discourage young women from drinking. College women are very conscious about their weight and there is a drive for thinness and fear of fat (Levitt, 2004), thus stressing calories in alcoholic drinks might discourage many college women from drinking alcohol. However, there can be a downside to this approach. It is likely that women who want to drink and get buzzed might eat even less to balance their calorie intake when they consume alcohol. This can lead to short term and long term problems. In the short-term they might get drunk very fast because of less food intake, and in the long term many might end up with problems such as anorexia and bulimia. Women might also opt for drugs and other substances that do not have calorie implications to get the high. So this strategy should be used with caution.

The third strategy mentioned by the respondents was to show drunken women looking un-classy, “easy,” and unsophisticated. Respondents in study 1 mentioned that young women are influenced by glamorous and sophisticated portrayals of women in the media and their lifestyle of drinking and partying as seen in the television series *Sex and the City*. Media portrayals tend to glamorize alcohol consumption as previously reported. An attempt should be made to balance the glamorized images of alcohol portrayals in the media with un-glamorized images of drunkenness and other problems that arise when someone is drunk such as accidents, vomiting, assaults and rape. It should be noted that

media is just one of the sources of influence in alcohol consumption among college women; peer and various individual factors contribute to drinking and drinking related problematic behaviors.

The above mentioned media messages were self-reported by women. More research and experimental studies in this area will help to determine the effectiveness of these messages. This initial exploration of media strategies to curb alcohol consumption among women will give public health professionals a starting point on which they can further build upon.

Theoretical Implications

This study examined individual and environmental factors that contribute to alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among women using drench hypothesis and social cognitive theory as the guiding framework. Drench hypothesis and social cognitive theory helped in understanding drinking and outrageous behaviors among college women in a more complex and comprehensive manner.

The fact that *Girls Gone Wild* was instantly mentioned by a majority of the respondents when they saw a video of women partying shows the validity of the drench hypothesis in this study. There might be many such portrayals that are not being studied by media scholars because their frequency of occurrence is low but might be having a negative influence on the audience. Drench hypothesis needs a fresh look by media scholars. Since the drench hypothesis has not been given much attention, the hypothesis remains under developed. More research is required to define the constructs of drench hypothesis to make it more useful for research, starting with the very definition of what

makes an image “critical.” What is a dramatic portrayal? How does one identify these images? In addition, more research should be undertaken to identify and define the constructs for drench hypothesis. For example, constructs such as *intensity of emotional reaction produced* and *deviancy of the image from the norm* might be useful constructs for drench hypothesis. More studies on drench hypothesis will be very valuable for media scholars so they can better study the influence of several images which one often knows intuitively to be powerful but finds it hard to demonstrate empirically.

The findings of this study also show support for social cognitive theory. Drinking and outrageous behaviors among college women are shaped by their social environment i.e. presence of friends and peers and also by the physical environment such as a club/bar or a house party. In addition, media portrayals of women partying, is another environmental factor that influences outrageous behaviors through observational learning. Individual factors such as self-control, expected positive sexual outcomes and value placed on being social were other SCT constructs that were found to be useful in understanding drinking and outrageous behaviors.

Social cognitive theory is a comprehensive theory and has many concepts that help to understand complex behaviors. In this study, social cognitive theory helped to explore multiple factors of influence on drinking and drinking related behaviors. However, SCT’s strength is also its biggest weakness. It has so many constructs that it is quite challenging to include all the constructs in one study and keep the measurement instruments within a practical length. Further simplification of SCT would help many researchers confidently use the theory without getting lost in all the constructs. This study has used SCT and provided a broad and comprehensive understanding of alcohol

consumption and outrageous behaviors. In the studies that follow this research, it would be advisable to look at one or two constructs in depth and determine their importance in studying alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors.

In order to understand a topic better, this study also suggests exploring additional variables based on previous studies and not just be limited to the theory. Non SCT variables that further informed the study were sensation seeking tendencies, social self-esteem and desire for gender equality. Sensation seeking tendencies were found to be an important variable in the study as it predicted alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. Sensation seeking tendencies has predicted alcohol consumption and risky behaviors in previous studies (Cohen & Fromme, 2002; Norris, Stoner, Hessler, Zawacki, Davis, George, Morrison, Parkhill, & Abdallah, 2009; Zuckerman, 1994), its importance was further established in this study.

Social self-esteem and gender equality variables did not significantly predict alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. It is possible that the enactments of drinking and outrageous behaviors are not governed by social self-esteem, which is a need to enhance one's external image among peers, but is more governed by internal feelings, such as a feeling of self-worth. Thus it might be useful to measure self-esteem rather than social self-esteem.

The variable desire for gender equality did not influence alcohol consumption or outrageous behavior in women. However, when the relationship of individual items of the gender equality scale and alcohol consumption was tested a positive significantly moderate correlation was found. However, no such relationship was found between individual items of the gender equality scale and outrageous behaviors. Thus in future

research this variable should be considered especially in understanding alcohol consumption among women. The desire for gender equality was suggested by some participants in study 1 and moderate correlations found in study 2 shows the relevance of this variable in the study of alcohol consumption among women and should be considered in future studies as some women do drink to prove equality with men. In the study even though most women agreed to equality of men and women, they did not identify themselves as “feminists” and disagreed with the statement “I consider myself a feminist.” It is possible that the term feminist conjures in many women’s mind a radical woman (Rhodes, 2004). It is also possible that living in the post feminism era, these young women can no longer relate to the female activists of the 1960s. They take equality of men and women to be a given. This topic might be of interest for investigation for feminist scholars.

Methodological Implications

The study was conducted in two stages. First study 1, which was a structured interview, was conducted. At the beginning of the study there was not much information on the topic to make hypotheses and thus several research questions were formulated. Study 1 helped to gather information anonymously from the college students about their alcohol consumption and alcohol related behaviors. It was extremely useful to gather both in-depth responses as well as a variety of responses from the students in their own words. It helped gather rich personal stories of alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior from college women. In addition, it helped to provide deeper understanding of how media portrayals and peers influence college women in their alcohol consumption

and outrageous behaviors. The depth and breadth of information gathered through study 1 also helped to design a detailed survey for study 2. Study 2 helped to gather mostly quantitative data. The results from both these studies are very similar and thus have provided rich information. Both these studies are likely to inform future researchers in their hypothesis building and their understanding alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. Future researchers should consider this approach of gathering qualitative and quantitative data to provide richer information and better understanding of a topic.

Study 2 used several different data analysis methods to summarize and draw inferences from the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Frequencies, T-tests, Ancovas, correlations and regression analysis were used. Even though many of the correlation analyses showed weak to moderate relationships, these relationships were significant. This shows that human behavior is complex and that there are many influencing factors that shape behaviors in small ways.

In this study, by specially focusing on women, it was possible to ask specific questions relating to women and women's experiences with alcohol in detail that are often missed out in surveys that focus on college students in general. These surveys often capture the experiences of men better than they do women. They often do not ask questions related to problems specifically faced by women when they drink. For example, the Student Alcohol Questionnaire (SAQ, Engs, 2002), which is a very comprehensive questionnaire on alcohol consumption and alcohol related behaviors, does not ask questions related to sexual advances made at women and about sexual assaults. This leaves out important problems faced by women when they drink.

Limitations

Study 1 and study 2 used convenience sampling methods to gather information about alcohol consumption among women. Results from convenience samples have limitations in terms of the extent to which they can be generalized and thus must be used with caution. Even though the samples were varied in terms of having students from different colleges, majors, and year in school, the generalizability of this study is limited. This was an exploratory study and has helped to gather useful information on alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among women. This study can be used by future researchers to build their own studies using a larger nationally representative sample to gather results that have better generalizability.

It should also be noted that the sample contained 20.7% (N=93) academic honors students who are likely to be serious about academic life and less likely to be partying in an out-of-control manner and getting into problems. Thus, it is possible that the results of this study show relatively less problems than it would otherwise be if there were less academically high achieving students in the sample.

The studies rely on self-report. Though self-report measures have been supported by researchers and have been found to be reliable and valid (Glass & Arnkoff, 1997), it is still possible to get socially desirable answers from the respondents especially on a sensitive topic.

In addition, there might be a self-selection bias (Bethlehem, 2008; Bifulco, 2002). Even though all women were given the opportunity to take part in the study, women who drink alcohol might have been more (or less) interested in taking part in the study.

Media influence studies are often difficult to conduct because human beings are influenced by so many factors in their real lives and to identify each of these factors and measure their effect is fairly difficult, so most researchers choose one or two variables to study. This allows understanding few variables in depth but does not provide a bigger picture of a topic. This study does provide a broader perspective on alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors however, a larger study with more in-depth examination of individual and environmental variables could provide more information on the topic.

The study uses correlations in the analysis, which does not sufficiently address causality (Heppner, Kivlinghan, & Wampold, 1999). It might be useful to use other research designs such as true experiment to determine the causal relationships between the dependent and the independent variables. For example, an experiment can be conducted with people with different sensation seeking tendencies. The participants can be subjected to different test conditions. The test conditions could include outrageous behaviors shown with negative consequences, outrageous behaviors shown with positive consequences, and outrageous behaviors show with no consequences and measure their intentions for the outrageous behaviors. Many such experiments are possible and should be undertaken to prove causality.

It should also be noted that the study was conducted in March-April, 2009, during a period of recession, a time of job losses and other economic hardships. It is possible that many college women were drinking and partying less than usual for economic reasons. Alcohol sales, which are usually considered to be somewhat recession proof, were reported to have gone down significantly during this period (Nielsen, 2009; Wilson, 2009).

Future Research

Through out this chapter, there have been suggestions made for future research. In addition to those there can be more research conducted in the area of alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among women. More suggestions for future research are mentioned in this section.

This study examines alcohol consumption in a comprehensive manner using social cognitive theory. However, there is still much to be done in this area. Future researchers should identify which communication strategies would be most effective in reducing alcohol consumption among college women. This study provides a starting point for future studies by identifying several media strategies that women think would be most effective for someone like them. Experimental studies need to be conducted to know which of these messages are the most effective in curbing alcohol consumption among women. In addition more research is needed to identify what other strategies and interventions besides media messages can be effective in reducing alcohol consumption among college women. For example, preventive strategies like group workshops and individual counseling should also be explored to note which one is more effective.

Future research should also measure self-esteem to know how it relates to alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors. Social self-esteem was measured in this study but was not found to significantly correlate with the dependent variables. As mentioned before, it is possible that some women are drinking and behaving outrageously not to enhance their external image but they may do so based on how they feel inside. Self-esteem or attitude towards self is worth exploring (Rosenberg, 1965).

In this study, sensation seeking tendencies were measured using seven items from the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire that related to the party behaviors. The complete scale has 50 items. All items could not be included in this study as it would have made the questionnaire extremely lengthy. There were many variables tested in this study, sensation seeking was just one of them. Future researchers can test this variable with all 50 items, especially because sensation seeking tendencies did show a significant correlation with alcohol consumption in this study as reported in previous studies, and it also showed a significant relationship with outrageous behaviors.

Alcohol consumption among women starts between the ages of 12 and 14 for many and for a majority between the ages of 15 and 17. Media literacy and educational intervention at these ages should also be studied in the future to note how they affect the outcomes of alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among women.

In the study of alcohol consumption and outrageous behavior, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; 1991) should also be considered as it includes some important concepts such as behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs that are likely to explain drinking and outrageous behaviors among women. It is a useful and less complicated theory and has been used in the study of alcohol consumption before (Conner, Warren, Close, & Sparks, 2006; Wall, Hinson, & Mckee, 1998).

Summary of Major Implications and Conclusion

This study has seven major implications. First, alcohol consumption among young women is a problem that needs attention. Women are drinking heavily, more women are drinking at a younger age, and many are getting into serious problems. Recent reports and

a few studies have given a voice to this growing problem. This study further highlights the problem. The experiences of women presented in study 1 and the statistics reported in study 2 give a unique insight into the issue of alcohol consumption among college women and highlights the problem.

Second, media influence studies are heavily focused on examining the extent, the content, and the influence of advertising portrayals in alcohol consumption. This study shows that researchers should go beyond advertising and examine the content of television programs and other media content that target youth and young adults. Many of these television programs and films that were reported by the respondents to have an influence are mentioned in Chapter 7. In addition, studies should also go beyond measuring the quantity of content such as measuring incidences of alcohol on television, radio and magazines, and measure the quality of content and explore its influence. Media scholars should identify and examine “critical” portrayals and their influence even if their numbers are not high, they still can have influence as this study shows with the “girls gone wild” portrayals.

Third, “girls gone wild” portrayals are no longer seen as shocking, they are referred as “normal party” behaviors by students which can be problematic especially when women take risks that can get women into serious problems. Understanding media desensitization issues should be a topic of discussion among students, teachers and media producers.

Fourth, college drinking studies should not use gender as just another variable to explore alcohol consumption on college campuses, instead should focus on each gender

separately. This is likely to provide an opportunity to collect comprehensive data on alcohol consumption and problems faced by each gender.

Fifth, more studies on of alcohol consumption among college students should use more than one method to collect data. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods does provide deeper understanding of the topic. In understanding alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors among college women, two studies were conducted. Each study provided an important set of information that researchers can use to understand the topic better. Thus, researchers should consider using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Sixth, drench hypothesis and social cognitive theory are useful guiding frameworks that help to understand alcohol consumption and outrageous behaviors in a comprehensive manner. Even though it is cumbersome to use SCT as it has so many constructs, it is worth using as it does provide a breadth of information that wouldn't have been possible with any other theory. Researchers can now use the knowledge gained through this study to explore specific variables identified in this study in more detail.

Seventh, "girls gone wild" portrayals influence on outrageous behavior of women is supported in this research. The influence of these portrayals on alcohol consumption was not supported. Alcohol consumption is better predicted by sensation seeking tendencies and how much value respondents placed on being social. Thus, social and cultural factors, and individual factors should be explored in-depth to better understand the problem of alcohol consumption. Women learn by observing behaviors of other women in the media. Media are just one source of influence, individual characteristics and other environmental factors play an important role and thus should be explored.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Media portrayals and alcohol consumption among college women

Principal Investigator: Mathew Lombard (Ph.D.)
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Student Investigator: Suman Mishra (Ph.D. Candidate)
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In this study, we are particularly interested in understanding media influence in alcohol consumption and alcohol related behavior among college students. To help us gain further understanding of this issue, we would like to ask you to provide your experiences, feeling and/or opinions related to alcohol consumption and alcohol related behaviors. Your honest responses are valuable and of great importance for us to understand the issue of college drinking. However, at any point during the study if you feel discomfort or stress in answering any particular question, you do not have to answer it.

Your participation and anything you write in the questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence. Pseudonyms such as participant A, B, C will be used when reporting data. We will use the opinions and experience that you write to develop a questionnaire instrument, which will be used to gather survey data from other college students like you. While answering the questions, you are welcome to make any suggestions and comments to improve the questions, especially if they are not clear to you. There is no payment to give with regard to your participation except you will receive credits from your class. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate at any time without consequence or prejudice. The questions given to you will take approximately 30-40 minutes to write. You have to be 18 years or older to take part in this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project you can contact the researchers mentioned above. Questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Mr. Richard Throm, IRB Coordinator, 3400 N. Broad Street, Hudson Building 3, Philadelphia, PA 19140, 215-707-8757.

Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Signature Date

Investigator's Signature Date

APPENDIX B

STUDY 1

Questions for women

[Open -ended questions]

Students will be first asked questions related to their alcohol consumption, and this will be followed by specific questions about media portrayals and their influence.

1. Do you drink alcohol?
2. When and where did you first drink alcohol?
3. When and where do you tend to drink more alcohol?
4. Why do you drink alcohol? Why do you think other college women drink alcohol?
5. Do you think alcohol makes you open up when you are in a group?
6. How many glasses of alcohol can you drink before you feel buzzed?
7. What do you do when you think you might be drunk?
8. Tell me an incident when you (or your friends) might have had a little too much to drink?
9. Have you or any of your girlfriends had a problem because you or they had too much to drink?
10. Have you ever done something when you were drunk that you would normally not do? Please be as specific as possible.
11. Does the presence of friends influence your drinking pattern?
12. Is your alcohol consumption affected by the kinds of people in the group, for example, if you are in all girls company or in groups where there are more men? In which group are you likely to drink more and why?
13. Do you think your friends encourage you to drink more than you would normally? If yes, what do they say or do that encourages you to drink a little more?

14. Have you ever taken part in a drinking competition? If yes, why did you take part in it?
15. Have your friends ever commented on “how well you can hold your liquor” or something similar when you have had several glasses of alcohol? How did that make you feel?
16. What to you is a “wild behavior” that some women engage in at a party or a bar? What is the wildest thing that you or someone you know might have done at a party?
17. Why do you think that the person might have behaved like that?
18. What were some of the reactions of people present at the party?
19. Do you think when you drink alcohol you feel sexually less inhibited than you would otherwise?
20. Do you think you are likely to enjoy sex more when you are drunk?
21. Have you taken sexual risk when you were drunk?
22. Do you think television programs, videos, films, etc. have any influence on people’s behavior especially as it relates to alcohol consumption?
23. Do you think television programs, videos, and films have ever influenced you or your friends in acting in a certain way when you were drunk?
24. How do you decide when you should stop drinking?
25. What would be your suggestions to the people who might want to reduce excessive drinking among college women? What kind of programs and strategies should they have to help college women who might be drinking excessively?

Female participants were shown a video clip and were asked the following questions:

1. Have you seen similar images of women partying as you see in this video clip?
2. Where have you seen these kinds of images?
3. Do you remember when you might have first seen these kinds of images?

4. Did you see these kinds of videos before you joined the university? If yes, what did you think when you saw these images of young women partying?
5. Do you remember any particular image/s about drinking that has really stuck with you?
6. When you see this video, what do you think and feel?
7. Do you think college women are influenced by these kinds of images? If yes, in what ways do you think women are influenced.
8. Have you or anyone you know ever done any of the things that you see in the video?
9. Why do you think some girls might behave like this?
10. What benefits do you think that someone might be getting in behaving like this?
11. Do you think that there might be any negative consequences in behaving like this?
12. Do you think that college women would face any kind of problem if they behaved like this? If yes, what potential problems can they get into.

Questions for men

1. When I say “college women and alcohol” what thoughts come to your mind?

Male participants were shown a video clip and asked the following questions:

2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the women you see in this video?
3. Do you have female friends who behave like the women you see in the video?
4. Why do you think some women behave in this manner?
5. Would you approach any of the women you see in the video?
6. What do men say among themselves when they see some woman behaving like the women in the video?
7. Can you provide any additional insight into the topic of how men think or feel when they see women behaving like this in their real life scenario?

APPENDIX C

SURVEY CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Media portrayals and alcohol consumption among college women

Principal Investigator: Mathew Lombard (Ph.D.)
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Student Investigator: Suman Mishra (Ph.D. Candidate)
 Mass Media & Communication, Temple University
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In this study, we are particularly interested in understanding media influence in alcohol consumption and alcohol related behavior among college students. To help us gain further understanding of this issue, we would like to ask you to provide your experiences, feeling and/or opinions related to alcohol consumption and alcohol related behaviors. Your honest responses are valuable and of great importance for us to understand the issue of college drinking. However, at any point during the study if you feel discomfort or stress in answering any particular question, you do not have to answer it.

The information you will provide will be recorded anonymously. Your participation and anything you write in the questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence. Individual participants will not be identified in the survey. Pseudonyms such as participant A, B, C will be used when reporting data. The data will be reported in summary form. The survey will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. You have to be 18 years or older to take part in this survey.

We welcome questions about this survey at any time. There is no payment to give with regard to your participation. Your participation in this study is on voluntary basis. You may refuse to participate at any time without consequence or prejudice.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project you can contact the researchers mentioned above. Questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Mr. Richard Throm, IRB Coordinator, 3400 N. Broad Street, Hudson Building 3, Philadelphia, PA 19140, 215-707-8757.

Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Signature

Date

Investigator's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

STUDY 2

SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 1

[Demographic information]

1. Your gender: 1. Male ____ 2. Female_____
2. Your age: (write in) _____
3. Your major: (write in) _____ (if undecided, write “undecided”)
4. Name of your college or university _____
5. Please select your year in school:
 1. Freshman
 2. Sophomore
 3. Junior
 4. Senior
 5. Other _____(please write in)
6. Please select your race/ethnicity:
 1. White or Caucasian
 2. Black or African-American
 3. Latino/ Hispanic
 4. Asian
 5. Native American (Indian)
 6. Other _____ (please write in)
7. The approximate **annual income** of your family is:
 1. less than \$ 40,000 _____
 2. \$ 40,001 - \$60,000 _____
 3. \$ 60,001 - \$80,000 _____
 4. \$ 80,001 - \$100,000 _____
 5. greater than \$100,000 _____
8. Do you belong to any on or off-campus clubs or organization? If so, please check all that apply to you.
 1. _____ Fraternities/Sororities (Example: Alpha Phi, Delta Gamma, etc.)
 2. _____ Athletics (Examples: University basketball team, Baseball etc.)
 3. _____ Religious Groups (Example: Baptist Student Union, Northwestern University Council of Religions (NUCOR), etc.)

4. _____ Women's organization or groups (Examples: Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, University Women's Organizations (UWO), etc.)
 5. _____ Academic/Honors Groups (Examples: Alpha Chi, Psychology Club, Phi Sigma Pi, Golden Key International, etc.)
 6. _____ Special Interests Groups (Examples: Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Non-Traditional Students, Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT), etc.)
 7. _____ Performing Groups (Examples: Marching Band, Cheer Leading Squads, etc.)
 8. Any other group (please write down) _____
 9. _____ Don't belong to any group
10. Do you currently work to support yourself in college? Yes ___ No ___
11. Do you currently work at a restaurant or a bar that serves alcohol? Yes ___ No ___

SECTION 2

Below are some questions related to alcohol consumption. Please answer to the best of your ability. All your responses in the questionnaire are anonymous and complete confidentiality will be maintained. Your honest answers will truly help us to understand the topic of alcohol consumption among college students.

I. [Alcohol related questions]

1. Please describe three words or images that come to your mind when you hear the words "women and alcohol."

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. Do you drink alcohol? Yes ___ No ___

3. If you do not drink alcohol at all, please tell us the reasons why you do not drink alcohol. Please check all that apply to you. (*Non drinkers directed to Section 2 of the questionnaire*)

1. _____ Don't like the taste of alcohol
2. _____ Religious reasons
3. _____ Health reasons
4. _____ Underage
5. Other: _____ (write in)

4. How often do you drink?
 9. Every single day
 10. Every other day
 11. Once a week during a weekday
 12. Once a week during a weekend
 13. Once every 2 weeks
 14. Once every 3 weeks
 15. Once a month
 16. At least two days a week
 17. At least three days a week
 18. Other (please specify)

5. How often do you get drunk?
 1. Every single day
 2. Every other day
 3. Once a week during a weekday
 4. Once a week during a weekend
 5. Once every 2 weeks
 6. Once every 3 weeks
 7. Once a month
 8. Other (please specify) _____

6. Please pick the kind of alcoholic drink you usually drink or prefer to drink at social gatherings.
 - a. Beer
 - b. Wine
 - c. Cocktails
 - d. Other hard liquors

Based on your preference of alcoholic drink, please answer the questions below. Please note that a drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.

7. I usually drink _____ number of my above mentioned alcoholic drinks in a single night or in one social setting.

8. I feel buzzed (state of pleasant intoxication) after _____ number of my above mentioned alcoholic drink.

9. I lose control after _____ number of my above mentioned alcoholic drink.

10. Please choose one place where you tend to drink more alcohol

- e. _____ A bar
- f. _____ House party
- g. _____ My home
- h. Other _____ (write in)

12. How old were you when you had your first alcoholic drink? _____ years old

13. Please tell us three main reasons why you usually drink alcohol.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Below are some common reasons why people drink. Please select your top 5 reasons for drinking. We understand that there might be different reasons to drink at different times. Please rank your reasons using numbers 1 to 5. Write 1 next to the strategy that you think would be most effective, followed by the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 next to the strategies that are likely to be relatively less effective.

14. I drink alcohol most of the times because:

- 1. I want to just get drunk _____
- 2. I want to socialize _____
- 3. I want to “loosen up” or “open up” in a social setting _____
- 4. I like the taste of alcohol _____
- 5. I want to escape boredom or loneliness _____
- 6. I want to relieve stress and anxiety _____
- 7. I want to feel less sexually inhibited _____
- 8. I feel pressure from my friends _____
- 9. I want to get over depression _____

Below are some alcohol related questions. Please put the number corresponding to the number of the occurrences in the empty space beside it to the best of your recollection. Again, your responses are anonymous.

15. In a typical two week period during the semester,

I attended _____ (number) social gatherings (get-together with friends, parties, out to the bar with friends, etc.) and in each social setting, I have had approximately _____ (number) alcoholic drinks.

16. In a typical two week period during a semester, I ...

1. have a hangover _____ times
2. get nauseated and vomited from drinking _____ times
3. drive a car after having several drinks _____ times
4. miss a class because of a hangover _____ times
5. get into a fight after drinking _____ times

17. Have you ever done something that you normally would not do but you did because you were drunk? Please share with us what it was. Please note that this survey will not identify you in any way as it does not collect names. We are only interested in knowing and understanding the experiences of college students.

II. [Problems with law enforcement]

18. Have you ever

1. gotten in trouble with school administration because of behavior resulting from drinking too much? Yes ___ No ___
2. had trouble with the law because of drinking? Yes ___ No ___
3. been arrested for DWI/ DUI (Driving While Intoxicated)? Yes ___ No ___
4. been hospitalized because you had too much alcohol? Yes ___ No ___
5. damaged property (pulled a false fire alarm, broken doors or windows, etc.) or other similar things after drinking? Yes ___ No ___

III. [Spring-break questions]

19. Have you gone to a different city with your friends on a spring break or any other times? Yes ___ No ___

(If the response is no, directed to Section IV)

20. Please list some of the activities that you participated in during the spring-break

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

21. Please describe some of the activities that you know other college students engage in during their spring-break. Please identify your source of information, such as first hand narration from friends, from various media sources or any other.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IV. [Outrageous behavior questions]

Please choose the answer that describes you best on a scale of 1 to 5. If you strongly agree with the statement choose the number 5, if you just agree with the statement choose 4, if you neither agree nor disagree with the statement choose 3, if you disagree choose 2 and if you strongly disagree with the statement choose the number 1. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential.

22. In a “typical” party scenario,

1. I often participate in a drinking game (beer pongs etc.)
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. I often dance on the bar table
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. I often do what some would call “dirty dancing” or “grinding”
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. I often flash my body parts (breast, buttocks etc)
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. I often “make out” (i.e. kissing and heavy petting) in a public place like a bar or a house party with someone I hardly know
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
6. I often “make out” with girlfriends when men are watching even though I am not a lesbian or gay
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
7. I often participate in a wet t-shirt contest
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
8. I often get into physical fights when I get drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

9. I often get into verbal fights when I get drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
10. I often use drugs or another substance along with alcohol
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
23. If you have done any of the things in the previous section, please tell us why you did it. We do not intend to judge you in any way. This study is only an attempt to understand college students' behaviors. Your insight will be extremely valuable for the study.
-

24. Below are some reasons given by other college students for party behaviors. Choose the reasons that apply to you by choosing a number on the scale. On a scale of 1-5, 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree with the statement.

I participated in party behaviors...

1. just for fun
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. because I was drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. was encouraged by my friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. most of my friends were doing it
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. wanted to "hook up" with someone
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
6. to get attention
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
7. to show that I have guts
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
8. to show "girl power"
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

9. to show my wild and sexy side
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
10. just to be a part of a wild college experience
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
11. to show that I can beat men in any competition including drinking alcohol
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
12. to avoid my friends being disappointed and unhappy with me
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

V. [Social life]

25. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting the number on the scale of 1-5 that best describes your opinion. 1 on the scale means that you strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 on the scale means you strongly agree with the statement.

1. It is important for me to have a social life
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. It is important for me to have lot of friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. It is important for me to be always connected with my friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

VI. [Self Control]

26. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statement on a scale of 1-5. 1 on the scale means that strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 on the scale means you strongly agree with the statement.

1. It is often difficult for me to say “no” to my friends when they ask me to do something
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. I often do things that my friends are doing even if I don’t like it or agree with it
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. I often feel the pressure to drink more alcohol when I am with my friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. I often feel the pressure to be “wild” at parties when I am with my friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

VII. [Reinforcements]

27. At parties or at bars, when I drink too much

1. most of my friends see it as just having fun
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

2. most of my friends disapprove of it
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

28. At parties or at bars, when I do anything “wild”

1. most of my friends see it as just having fun
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

2. most of my friends disapprove of it
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

VIII. [Peers and drinking]

29. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statement on a scale of 1-5. 1 on the scale means that strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 on the scale means you strongly agree with the statement.

1. I drink more when I am around friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

2. I believe that I can drink as much alcohol as any of my male friends
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

3. I am cheered and applauded by my friends when I do anything “wild” at parties
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

4. I am often challenged by my friends to drink more alcohol at social gatherings
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

5. I am called names when I don't drink alcohol
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

6. I have been complimented on how well I can “hold my liquor” when I have had several glasses of alcohol
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

IX. [Drinking and sex]

30. I often consume alcohol to feel sexually less inhibited
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
31. Alcohol makes me sexually less inhibited
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
32. I enjoy sex more when I have had alcohol
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
33. I often have unplanned sex when I get drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
34. I often take sexual risks (e.g. having sex without condoms) when I get drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
35. People often make unwanted sexual advances toward me when I am drunk
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
36. Have you ever been a victim of sexual assault when you were drunk? Yes _ No _

X. [Drinking prevention media strategy for women]

37. What would you suggest should the colleges do in order to curb excessive alcohol consumption among college women?

38. In order to curb excessive alcohol consumption among college women, different colleges are trying out different strategies. **Please rank the top 5 strategies** that are likely to be most effective for you or someone like you in reducing alcohol consumption. Write 1 next to the strategy that you think would be most effective, followed by the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 next to the strategies that are likely to be less and less effective.

Message

Rank

- Show explicit images of drunk driving accidents
- Stress how many calories alcohol has and how it leads to weight gain
- Show risks of date rape incidents
- Show women being stupid under the influence of alcohol
- Share stories of poor decision making under the influence
- Show drunk women looking very un-classy, "easy" and unsophisticated
- Show friends discouraging friends from drinking

Talk about health problems related to drinking
 Teach women how to love and respect themselves and their bodies
 Show parents talking to girls about how to avoid peer pressure

XI. [Desire for gender equality]

39. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. I consider men and women to be equal in all respects
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. I consider myself a feminist
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. I often challenge traditional gender norms and roles
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. I believe that “appropriate behaviors” for women and men are different
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. I dislike that men and women are judged differently by the society for the same action
 Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

SECTION 3

[Media portrayals]

1. Do you think television programs, videos, films, etc. influence young people in their alcohol consumption?

a) Definitely NO 1 2 3 4 5 Definitely YES

2. Please name some *television programs* that you think might influence someone like you in their alcohol consumption.

3. Please name some *films* that you think might influence someone like you in their alcohol consumption.

4. Please click on the link below and watch a video, and answer the questions that follow. Your responses are very valuable to us, so please take the time to write in as much detail as you can. [Video link]

1. When you were watching the video, what did you think and feel?

2. Have you seen similar kinds of images before? Yes ___ No__

3. Where have you seen these kinds of images? Check all that apply.

a. MTV spring break special

b. Girls Gone Wild infomercial

c. Movies (please specify the name/s) _____

d. Television shows (please specify the name/s) _____

4. If you remember, how old were you when you first saw these kinds of images?
_____ years old.

5. If you remember, what did you think about these kinds of images when you first saw these kinds of images?

6. Have you ever done any of the things that you see in the video? Yes___ No_____

7. Do you believe these kinds of media images affect or influence you in any way in how you behave at parties? Yes__ No__

5. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting the number on the scale of 1-5 that best describes your opinion. 1 on the scale means that you strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 on the scale means you strongly agree with the statement.

1. These kind of media images make me want to party hard

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

2. These kinds of media images influence me in how I behave at parties

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

3. These kinds of media images influence me in my alcohol consumption

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

4. These kinds of media images influence many college women in their alcohol consumption
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. These kinds of media images influence many college women in how they behave at parties
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
6. Below are some responses given by other college students in response to the women in the video. Please choose your response on a scale of 1- 5. 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.
1. These girls are self-confident
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. These girls are cool and sexy
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. These girls are acting stupidly
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. These girls are “trashy”
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. These girls have low self-esteem
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
6. These girls are just having fun
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
7. These girls have guts
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
8. These girls show “girl power”
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
7. Why do you think some girls might behave like this?

8. What do you think men think about women who behave like the women in the video?

9. Do you think college women get into problems when they behave like this? Yes _No_

a. If yes, what potential problems can they get into?

b. If no, tell us why you think so?

SECTION 4

[Sensation Seeking -Adapted from Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire]

Please complete the following questions. There is no right or wrong answer, just respond to the statement based on what you think. For each statement, choose either true or false. If you do not like either choice, mark the choice you dislike the least.

1. I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening. True____ False____
2. I like doing things just for the thrill of it. True____ False____
3. I sometimes do “crazy” things just for fun. True____ False____
4. I prefer friends who are excitingly and unpredictable. True____ False____
5. I like “wild” uninhibited parties. True____ False____
6. I usually think about what I am going to do before doing it. True____ False____
7. I often do things on impulse. True____ False____

2. [Social Self-esteem (Texas Social Behavior Inventory, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974)]

Please answer each of the following questions by selecting the number on the scale of 1-5 that best describes your opinion. 1 on the scale means that strongly disagree with the statement, and 5 on the scale means you strongly agree with the statement.

1. I am not likely to speak to people until they speak to me
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
2. I would describe myself as self-confident
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
3. I feel confident of my appearance
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
4. I am a good mixer
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
5. When in a group of people, I have trouble thinking of the right things to say.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
6. When in a group of people, I usually do what the others want rather than make suggestions.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
7. When I am in disagreement with other people, my opinion usually prevails.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
8. I would describe myself as one who attempts to master situations.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
9. Other people look up to me
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
10. I enjoy social gatherings just to be with people
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
11. I make a point of looking other people in the eye
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
12. I cannot seem to get others to notice me.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
13. I would rather not have very much responsibility for other people.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

14. I feel comfortable being approached by someone in a position of authority.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

15. I would describe myself as indecisive.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

16. I have no doubts about my social competence.
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Thank you for taking part in the survey.