

California Lutheran UNIVERSITY

Interpersonal Influences and Drinking Habits in a College Sample.

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INTRODUCTION

- There is an extensive body of literature that emphasizes the importance of interpersonal influences on college students' propensity for alcohol consumption (Van de Vorst, Engels, Meeus, Dekovic, & Van Leeuwe, 2005).
- Adolescents' transitions from high school to college have garnered special attention due to findings that first-year college students are at an increased risk for substantial elevations in both quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption (Hartzler & Fromme, 2003).
- Peer influences, namely social modeling and perceived norms, have been associated with heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems in college student samples (Borsari & Carey, 2001).
- Recent studies have demonstrated that parental factors are directly and indirectly linked to decreased alcohol use and consequences during the college years (Cail & Labrie, 2010; Abar & Turrisi, 2008).
- The current study has three initial hypotheses: 1) Female students will have more frequent parental contact than will male students, 2) There will be a significant positive association between reported levels of parental drinking permissiveness and social modeling scores, and 3) more frequent parent-child communication, coupled with low parental drinking permissiveness, will result in weaker positive associations between perceived descriptive norms and students' weekly alcohol intake.

METHOD

Participants: A total of 47 first-year CLU students completed the online survey measures. Participants' mean age was 18.6 years, with 28% of the sample being male and 72% of the sample being female. Of the 47 participants, 89% lived in campus housing, whereas 11% commuted to campus. The reported ethnic makeup of the sample was 47% Caucasian, 30% Hispanic, 15% Asian, 2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 2% American Indian, 2% other, and 2% Declined to State.

Recruitment: The principal investigator provided a brief summary of the current research in approved first-year classrooms. Individuals interested in participating visited an online survey link that was created by the principal investigator. Participation was incentivized by conducting a raffle to win a \$50 Amazon gift card, contingent upon completion of the survey measures.

Materials:

- Alcohol use over the past 30 days was assessed using the **Daily Drinking Questionnaire** (DDQ; Collins, Parks, & Marlatt, 1985). Participants' responses were summed to produce an average number of drinks per week that was used for analyses.
- **Social Modeling** was determined by averaging the responses from a 5-item measure that assessed peer and environmental influences on an individual's alcohol use.

METHOD (CONT.)

- **Parental Permissiveness** of participants' alcohol use was assessed using two open-ended questions that asked the respondents to indicate the number of drinks that their mother and father, asked separately, would consider to be an upper limit for the participants to consume on a specific occasion (Wood et al., 2004).
- To assess **Parent-Child Communication**, individuals were asked to indicate how often they either visited, talked to, or texted each parent during a typical week (Labrie & Cail, 2011).
- The **Drinking Norms Rating Form** (Baer, Stacy, & Larimer, 1991) asked students to estimate the number of drinks consumed by the typical member of specific reference groups (typical student and same sex) on their campus for a typical weekend evening.

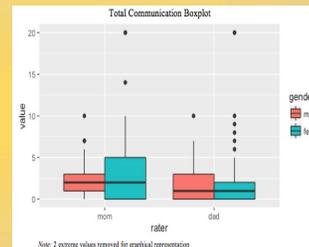
RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Table 1
Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Parent-Child Communication by Gender

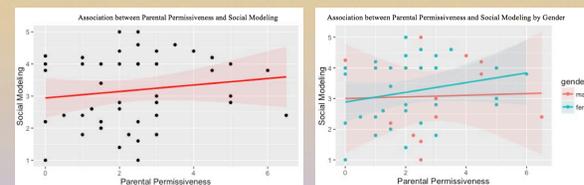
	Male		Female		t	p-value	Cohen's d		
	M	SD	M	SD					
Total Com.	25.58	41.52	12	19.91	31.52	.33	.43	0.67	0.15
Mon Visit	1.58	1.78	12	.78	1.95	.33	1.29	0.21	0.43
Dad Visit	1.33	1.56	12	.55	1.60	.33	1.49	0.15	0.49
Mon Call	2.25	2.18	12	2.91	2.77	.33	-.83	0.42	0.26
Dad Call	1.58	1.98	12	1.48	1.54	.33	.16	0.88	0.06
Mon Text	12.00	27.84	12	8.94	16.96	.33	.36	0.73	0.13
Dad Text	6.83	13.95	12	5.52	14.25	.33	.28	0.78	0.09

Note: Results significant at the p<0.05 level.



- An independent sample *t*-test showed that the difference in communication frequency between the female students ($M = 19.91$, $SD = 31.52$) and male students ($n = 12$, $M = 8.00$, $SD = .82$) was not statistically significant, $t = .43$, $p = .67$, and the effect size was small $d = .15$.

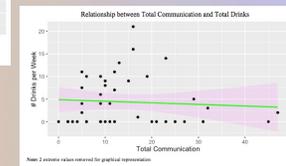
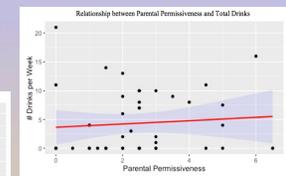
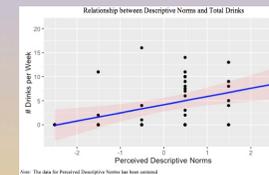
Hypothesis 2



- Parental Permissiveness and Social Modeling exhibited a non-significant positive association $r(41) = .15$, $p = n.s.$
- When gender was accounted for, males demonstrated a weaker positive association between these two variables $r(10) = .034$, $p = n.s.$, than did their female counterparts $r(29) = .23$, $p = n.s.$

RESULTS (CONT.)

Hypothesis 3



- Perceived Descriptive Norms significantly predicted participants' average number of drinks per week ($B = 1.70$, $SE = 0.57$, $t(45) = 2.96$, $p < .01$). Perceived Descriptive Norms also explained a significant proportion of variance in the responses for # Drinks per Week ($R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 45) = 8.77$, $p < .01$).
- Parental Permissiveness did not significantly predict participants' average number of drinks per week ($B = .28$, $SE = 0.52$, $t(45) = .55$, $p = .58$). Further, Parental Permissiveness did not explain a significant proportion of variance in the responses for # Drinks per Week ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 42) = .31$, $p = .58$).
- Total Communication did not significantly predict with participants' average number of drinks per week ($B = -.04$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(41) = -.46$, $p = .65$). Total Communication did not explain a significant proportion of variance in the responses for # Drinks per Week ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 41) = .21$, $p = .65$).

CONCLUSIONS

- There were no significant differences between males and females with regards to how frequently they communicated with their parents in a typical week; this finding does not support the initial hypothesis that females would be in more frequent contact with their parents than would males.
- Females' responses exhibited a stronger positive association between Parental Permissiveness scores and Social Modeling compared to did males' responses. This could suggest that females are more sensitive to parental influences than are males.
- The results from hypothesis 3 support past research in demonstrating the significance of Perceived Descriptive Norms in predicting college students' own alcohol consumption.
- Although Parental Permissiveness and Total Parent-Child Communication did not significantly predict drinking tendencies, each variable's relationship to # of Drinks per Week implies a weak protective effect against peer influences on an individual's alcohol consumption.
- Additional analyses of the predictor variables in hypothesis 3 will demonstrate how these factors interact to predict participants' weekly alcohol intake.

Request for copy, references, and questions can be sent to: zgraham@callutheran.edu