Prospectus

Factors Contributing to Binge Drinking among College Females

{Student Name}

Psychology program - Health Psychology specialization
Prospectus: Factors Contributing to Binge Drinking among College Females

Problem Statement

Research indicates an increase in alcohol binge drinking in college females (Hensel, Todd & Engs, 2014). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA, n.d.) defines binge drinking for women as four drinks in two hours to reach a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 g/dL. The current literature states that high-risk/binge drinking is linked to negative alcohol-related consequences among college women such as increased injuries, reduced academic performance, assaults, unsafe sex, health issues, alcohol blackouts, and overdoses (White & Hingson, 2013). Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA, 2013) report that 40.1 percent of 18-22 year-olds enrolled full time in college report current, binge and heavy drinking. In addition, 33.2 percent of females aged 18 to 25 reported binge-drinking behavior.

Several studies suggest the reasons for the rise in college female binge drinking. For example Lienemann and Lamb (2013) indicated that college females with positive expectations (e.g., beliefs that the consequence of drinking is beneficial), is a predictive factor of high alcohol use. Linden, Lau-Barraco, and Milletich (2014) found that (a) negative drinking motives (e.g., coping with stress and avoiding social rejection) and (b) positive alcohol expectancies (e.g., liquid courage, social disinhibition, and sexual attractiveness) were implicated in heavy alcohol use and alcohol-related problems. They suggest these variables are fertile ground for future research. The proposed study will advance this previous work by identifying which negative drinking motives in particular (e.g., coping with stress and social conformity) and which positive alcohol expectations (e.g., sociability and liquid courage) contribute to binge alcohol drinking among college females.
Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine whether increased binge drinking among college females is motivated by negative motives such as coping with stress and social conformity or positive expectations such as liquid courage. To address this gap, a quantitative methodology approach will be used to determine if negative drinking motives and/or positive drinking outcomes motivate binge drinking.

Significance

This research promotes positive social change for the college female population by increasing knowledge about drinking motives and peer influences with the potential to increase high-risk binge drinking. Because SAMSHA (2013) reported binge drinking at the rate of 39% for age 18-25 year old females, insight into any factors that motivate binge drinking would be beneficial for this population. Identifying the risk factors would equip college administrators and educators, psychologists, medical staff, policymakers and substance abuse counselors with information needed to reduce binge drinking among college females.

Background

The following articles outlining factors contributing to binge drinking among college females are as follows:

1. DeMartini and Carey (2009) correlated binge drinking female college students with psychosocial alcohol-related problems as a risk factor.
2. Hensel (2014) found in a cross-sectional serial survey that the number of female college students identified as binge drinkers increased from 46% to 52% as compared to 20 years ago.

4. Talbott, Wilkinson, Moore and Usdan (2014) found peer approval was a predictor for increased drinking in college females.

5. Wardell and Read (2013) reported looking at alcohol-use expectancies and descriptive norms (perception of peers drinking). They reported the actual drinking quantity of college drinkers was influenced by their perception of drinking norms. In other words, the students drinking behavior is influenced by what they perceive as normal drinking behavior for their peers.

6. White and Hingson (2013) reviewed findings of consequences, causes and results of excessive drinking in college students and reviewed the limitations of procedures used to collect data in these studies.

**Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is Bandura’s social learning theory (Bandura, 1973), and Aker’s social structure and social learning (SSSL) model (Akers, 1998). Social learning theory explains behavior as a learned action based on observations of others in a social setting. The observer may be likely to copy/repeat the observed behavior if it leads to positive outcomes; conversely, if the observed behavior leads to negative outcomes it will likely not be copied/repeated. Social learning theory suggests, then, that binge drinking is reinforced by peers whose popularity and acceptance increase with binge drinking. Aker’s SSSL model suggests that deviant behavior is learned mostly in peer groups. Durkin, Wolfe, and Clark (2005) found that
binge drinking in college was correlated with peer associations who were more likely to binge, and binge drinkers were more likely to perceive positive benefits to drinking.

**Research Questions**

RQ1 - Quantitative: Is there a relationship between associating with peers who binge drink and high-risk binge drinking?

\[ H_0: \text{There is no relationship between associating with peers who binge drink and high-risk binge drinking?} \]

\[ H_a: \text{There is a relationship between associating with peers who binge drink and high-risk binge drinking?} \]

RQ2 - Quantitative: Is there a relationship with being motivated to drink alcohol to cope with stress and high-risk binge drinking?

\[ H_0: \text{There is no relationship with being motivated to drink alcohol to cope with stress and high-risk binge drinking.} \]

\[ H_a: \text{There is a relationship with being motivated to drink alcohol to cope with stress and high-risk binge drinking.} \]

RQ3 - Quantitative: Is there a relationship between the motive to fit-in and high-risk binge drinking?

\[ H_0: \text{There is no relationship between the motive to fit-in and high-risk binge drinking.} \]

\[ H_a: \text{There is a relationship between the motive to fit-in and high-risk binge drinking.} \]

RQ4 - Quantitative: Is there a relationship between increasing positive social interactions as an expectancy from high-risk binge drinking?

\[ H_0: \text{There is no relationship between increasing positive social interactions as an expectancy from high-risk binge drinking.} \]
Ha4: There is a relationship between increasing positive social interactions as an expectancy from high-risk binge drinking.

RQ5 - Quantitative: Is there a relationship between rating liquid courage as a positive expectancy from consuming alcohol with high-risk binge drinking?

Ho5: There is no relationship between rating liquid courage as a positive expectancy from consuming alcohol with high-risk binge drinking.

Ha5: There is a relationship between rating liquid courage as a positive expectancy from consuming alcohol with high-risk binge drinking.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study will be a quantitative. Quantitative research is appropriate for establishing relationships among several variables (e.g. coping, sociability) and high-risk binge drinking among college females which is the goal of this study. White and Hingson (2013) stated that in researching college drinking, electronic surveys yielded more honest and higher reporting responses as compared with paper-and-pencil surveys. There is no exclusion of participants based on ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status. However, there will only be an English version of the survey which may limit some participation.

Possible Types and Sources of Information or Data

1.1. Alcohol Use Disorders Screening Test (AUDIT) self-reported alcohol use questionnaire to determine high alcohol use and binge drinking (Saunders, Aasland, Babor, de la Fuente, & Grant, 1993).

1.2. Comprehensive Effects of Alcohol (CEOA) self-reported questionnaire to measure an subject’s outcome expectancy of drinking alcohol in the areas of: sociability, tension
reduction, liquid courage, sexuality, cognitive and behavior impairment, aggression and self-perception (Fromme, Stroot, & Kaplan, 1993).

1.3. Drinking Motives Questionnaire (DMQ-R) self-reported Likert scale (1 - Never to 5 Always) indication of how often the subject is motivated to drink alcohol by each item listed focusing on coping and conformity scales (Cooper, 1994).

**Possible Analytic Strategy**

1.1. Regression analysis of descriptive norms, coping/social conformity of drinking motives, sociability/liquid courage of drinking expectancies, and its effect on reported binge drinking measures will be analyzed. The following variables will be used:

   **Outcome variables:** Overall alcohol use number (AUDIT)

   Score for binge drinking (AUDIT)

   **Predictor variables:** Sociability alcohol expectancy score (CEOA)

   Liquid courage alcohol expectancy score (CEOA)

   Coping drinking motive score (DMQ-R)

   Conformity drinking motive score (DMQ-R)
References


