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**THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL CONTEXT AND
SENSATION SEEKING TO INDICES
TO COLLEGE STUDENT ALCOHOL ABUSE**

by

Thomas D. Woodhams

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty, Department of Health Science of the State University of New York, College at Brockport, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Education

(Health Education)

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ABSTRACT

One hundred fifty three undergraduate male students at the State University of New York College at Brockport completed an anonymous questionnaire assessing the social context of college drinking and the personality trait known as sensation seeking. These measures were used to explain alcohol use intensity, frequency of alcohol impaired driving, and the frequency of riding with an impaired driver. It was found that during the twelve month period prior to the survey, eighty seven percent of the respondents had used alcohol on at least one occasion, sixty eight percent had driven a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, and forty four percent had ridden with an alcohol impaired driver. Results of multiple regression analyses showed that social context factors account for most of the variance in alcohol use intensity, frequency of driving while impaired, and frequency of riding with an impaired driver. The variable of Social Facilitation was significantly related to alcohol use intensity. The variable significantly related to driving under the influence of alcohol and riding with an impaired driver was that of Motor Vehicle. Sensation seeking was of lesser importance in accounting for variance in these three dependent variables. The implications of these findings for campus alcohol abuse intervention programs are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Dr. William Zimmerli, for his help and patience in completing this project. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Colleen Mahoney and Dr. Dennis Thombs for their participation and their wealth of knowledge on this project.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family whose love, support and patience has helped me reach this point in my life. An extra "thank you" to my dad who has logged many, many hours on the computer. And to Jeannine, who has stuck with me on this emotional roller coaster for the past year and a half. I love you all.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

An extensive body of research has examined the prevalence of alcohol consumption among college students. It appears that 85 to 95 percent of students at many of the Nation's larger universities use alcohol.¹ The high rate of alcohol use is due to the fact that the college student is faced with new freedom and new challenges that place the typical student at high risk for heavy drinking.² Without the restrictions on drinking they encountered as high school students and due to the need for social approval, alcohol abuse has become a normative behavior among college students.

First experiences with alcohol usually occur during adolescence.³ Johnston, O'Malley and Bachman⁴ found in their national survey of high-school seniors that 91 percent had tried alcohol at least once in their life, 62 percent of the girls and 69 percent of the boys had used alcohol in the past month, and 28 percent of the girls and 46 percent of the boys reported consuming five or more drinks at least once in the

¹Kaplan, M.S. (1979). Patterns of alcoholic beverage use among college students. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 24 (2), 26-40.

²Ewing, J.A. (1977) A biopsychological look at drinking and alcoholism. Journal of the American College Health Association, 25, 204-208.

³Kandel, D.B., & Logan, J.A. (1984). Periods of risk for initiation, stabilization, and decline in drug use from adolescence to early adulthood. American Journal of Public Health, 74, 660-666.

⁴Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., & Bachman, J.G. (1991). Drug use among American high school seniors, college students and young adults, 1975-1990. (DHHS Publication No. ADM 91-1813). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

preceding two weeks. Furthermore, as many as 8 percent of the students reported drinking daily during the previous month. Although drinking may be a normal "transition-marking" experience in adolescent development,⁵ teenage drinking is formally defined by society as illegal and a criminal matter,⁶ and it often accompanies other deviant behavior. For example, a great deal of empirical evidence supports a strong, positive correlation between alcohol use and general delinquent behavior such as cheating, lying, petty theft, vandalism, precocious sexual activity and rebellious behaviors. The data also suggest that the most frequently used drugs (cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana) constitute part of a general deviance syndrome, which involves a wide range of anti-social behaviors.⁷⁻¹¹

⁵Jessor, R., & Jessor, S.L. (1975). Adolescent development and the onset of drinking: A longitudinal study. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 36, 27-51.

⁶Humphrey, J.A., & Friedman, J. (1986). The onset of drinking and intoxication among university students. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 47, 455-458.

⁷Bachman, J.G., O'Malley, P.M., & Johnston, L.D. (1978). Adolescents to adulthood: Change and stability in the lives of young men. Youth in Transition, vol. 6. Ann Arbor, MI.: Institute for Social Research.

⁸Donovan, J.E., & Jessor, R. (1985). Structure of problem behavior in adolescence and young adulthood. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 53, 890-904.

⁹Elliot, D.S., & Ageton, S.S. (1976). The relationship between drug use and crime among adolescents. Drug Use and crime: Report of panel on drug use and criminal behavior. Research Triangle, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

¹⁰Jessor, R., & Jessor, S.L. (1977). Problem behavior and psychosocial development. New York, Academic Press.

¹¹Kandel, D.B. (1980). Drug and drinking behavior among youth. Annual Review of Sociology, 6, 235-285.

A variety of negative experiences may result from alcohol use among college students. These include disruptions in personal relationships, problems with authority figures, impaired academic performance, more frequent drunkenness, and for men in particular, increases in fighting, injuries, and property damage.¹² Furthermore, more men than women experience problems in relationships (forty one percent versus thirty four percent), engage in fighting (thirty eight percent versus twenty three percent), and are criticized for their drinking (twenty nine percent versus one percent).¹³

The involvement of college students in alcohol use has been explained by the personality trait of "sensation seeking."¹⁴ Over the past two decades, the sensation seeking trait has emerged as an important determinant of substance abuse, as well as a variety of other high-risk behaviors. Zuckerman has defined this trait 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."¹⁵ Sensation seeking is viewed as a general sensitivity to reinforcement and reinforcing ideals and behaviors.

¹²Berkowitz, A.D. & Perkins, H.W. (1987). Recent research on gender differences in collegiate alcohol use. Journal of American College Health, 36, 123-129.

¹³Hughes, S.P. & Dodder, R.A. (1983). Alcohol-related problems and collegiate drinking patterns. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 12, 65-76.

¹⁴Newcomb, M.D., & McGee, L. (1989). Adolescent alcohol use and other delinquent behaviors: a one-year longitudinal analysis controlling for sensation seeking. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 16 (3), 345-369.

¹⁵Zuckerman, M. (1979). Sensation seeking: Beyond the optimal level of arousal. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Several dimensions of sensation seeking have been identified. They include: thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility.¹⁶ Correlations between sensation seeking and a variety of alcohol measures have been reported.¹⁷ It has been found that students who use alcohol tend to be more sensation seeking, experience seeking, and uninhibited than alcohol non-users,¹⁸⁻¹⁹ and that heavier alcohol users scored higher on these variables than the lighter users.²⁰⁻²¹ Heavier alcohol users were also found to be more pleasure seeking, extraverted, impulsive, dominant, tough minded, non-conforming, radical and less committed to conventional values and they also tended to have more problems with authority than lighter alcohol users.²²⁻²⁴ In general, individuals who score high on the sensation

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Zuckerman, M. (1984). Sensation seeking: A comparative approach to a human trait. Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 7, 413-471.

¹⁸Segal, B., Huba, G.J., & Singer, J.L. (1980). Drugs, daydreaming, and personality: a study of college youth. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

¹⁹Segal, B., & Merenda, P. (1975). Locus of control, sensation seeking, and drug and alcohol use in college students. Drug Forum, 4 (4), 349-369.

²⁰Ratliff, K.G., & Burkhart, B.R. (1984). Sex differences in motivations for and effects of drinking among college students. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 45, 26-32.

²¹Schwartz, R.M., Burkhart, B.R., & Green, S.B. (1978). Turning on or turning off: sensation seeking or tension reduction as motivational determinants of alcohol use. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 40, 1144-1145.

²²Moos, R., & Igra, A. (1979). Alcohol use among college students: some competing hypotheses. Journal of Youth Adolescence, 8, 393-405.

²³Moos, R., Moos, B., & Kulik, J. (1976). College-student abstainers, moderate drinkers, and heavy drinkers: a comparative analysis. Journal of Youth Adolescence, 5, 349-360.

²⁴Ratliff & Burkhart. Sex differences in motivations for and effects of drinking among college students.

scales were more oriented toward bodily sensation, extraverted, thrill seeking, active, impulsive, antisocial, nonconformist; and less anxious.²⁵

A newer model for explaining alcohol problems in youth involves assessing the immediate social environment in which they are likely to occur.²⁶ The Social Context Model proposes that interactions between internal motivations and social-environmental variables influence alcohol consumption patterns among college students.²⁷ Social contexts are defined as patterns of internal motivations to drink as they exist in specific social situations.²⁸ In the college population, six social context factors have been identified. Social Facilitation pertains to drinking in a context of fun, conviviality, and disinhibition which typically occurs in bars or at parties, and often involves drinking games. The context of Emotional Pain describes drinking done help alleviate emotional problems and to cope with emotion-charged situations (e.g., "to get along better on a date"). The context in which alcohol is used to facilitate the search for a sex partner is that of Sex Seeking. The Motor Vehicle factor relates drinking in the context of a motor vehicle. That is, alcohol use which occurs while driving around,

²⁵Zuckerman, M., & Link, K. (1968). Construct validity for the sensation seeking scale. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 32, 420-426.

²⁶Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Pleace, D. (in print). The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds. Addiction Research.

²⁷Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Mahoney, C.A. (in print). The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults. Journal of Counseling Psychology.

²⁸Thombs, et al., in print.

or in or around a motor vehicle. The drinking context of Communion consists of drinking with family and friends. It is drinking done for the purpose of enhancing intimacy. The last context is Peer Pressure. Simply stated, this is a drinking context that allows one to "fit-in" and conform to group norms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is widely recognized that drinking is commonplace in the college setting.²⁹ Alcohol abuse on university campuses is a major student health problem. There is some evidence to show that once students arrive at college, their alcohol consumption increases.³⁰ With this increase in consumption, there is a much higher risk of academic problems, relationship problems, adjustment difficulties, injuries and even deaths.

The purpose of this study was to test the relative ability of the social context scales and the sensation seeking scales to explain alcohol use intensity in a 18-23 year-old college sample. The sensation seeking scales were pitted against the social context scales in an effort to determine which model presents a superior framework for understanding alcohol use and abuse in a college sample.

²⁹Engs, R.C., & Hanson, D.J. (1987). College students' Drinking patterns and problems, in Sherwood, J.(ed). Alcohol Policies and Practices on College and University Campuses. NASPA Monograph Series, vol 7. Washington, DC, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 57-68.

³⁰Friend, K.E. & Koushka, P.A. (1984). Student substance use: Stability and change across college years. International Journal of the Addictions, 19, 571-575.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

College Student

For this study, defined as a male undergraduate age 18-23 years.

Convenience sample:

Samples composed of those elements that are readily available or convenient to the researcher.³¹

Multiple Regression:

Involves estimating the effect of multiple independent variables. Able to handle a large number of independent variables simultaneously.³²

Reliability:

A measure's ability to yield consistent results each time it is applied.³³

Scale

A measurement technique similar to an index, that combines a number of items into a composite score.³⁴

³¹Monette, D.R., Sullivan, T.J., & Dejong, C.R. (1990). Applied social research: Tool for human services. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

³²Monette, et al., Applied social research: Tool for human services.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

Sensation Seeking:

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.³⁵

Social Context:

Psycho-social patterns, comprised of internal motivations and social situations, that influence adolescent and young adult drinking behavior.³⁶

³⁵Zuckerman, Sensation seeking: Beyond the optimal level of arousal.

³⁶Thombs, et al., The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

Delimitations:

The study seeks to explain alcohol use among traditional age (18-23) college males. Thus, a sample of approximately 150 male college drinkers (ages 18-23) will be relied upon. Data collected from those over the age of 23 will be excluded from the statistical analyses.

Limitations:

The sample used in this study will be one of convenience. Thus, any generalizations of the findings to the larger college age population must be done with caution. A second limitation of this study is that it relies solely upon self-reports of alcohol use and abuse. Though self-reports of alcohol use from college students are considered to be reasonably valid, some respondents may under-report their drinking behavior.³⁷

Research Question:

With respect to accounting for the variance in measures of alcohol use/abuse, are social context or sensation seeking measures superior?

³⁷Johnston, L.D., & O'Malley, P.M. (1985). Issues of validity and population coverage in student surveys of drug use. In B.A. Rouse, N.J. Kozel, & L.G. Richards (Eds.), Self-Report Methods of Estimating Drug Use, (pp.31-54), (DHHS Publication No. ADM 85-1402). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alcohol Consumption Among College Students

There is much documentation that indicates that alcohol use among college students is a major health problem: Even though alcohol is illegal to purchase for nearly all college students, approximately ninety percent of these students report using alcohol before entering college.³⁸ Seventy four point five percent of students reported having consumed alcohol within the past thirty days, and forty one percent reported participating in occasional heavy drinking (five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks). Also, seventy point seven percent of young adults not attending college reported having consumed alcohol within the past thirty days, and thirty three percent reported participating in occasional heavy drinking. This author also indicates that alcohol use exceeds the use of all illicit drugs combined.³⁹

There exists high prevalence of alcohol use among college students. Fifty one percent of drinkers reported consuming alcohol at least four times per week and fifty percent reported consuming an average of five drinks on a drinking day.⁴⁰ Snodgrass

³⁸ Johnson et al. (1991). Drug use among American high school seniors, college students and young adults, 1975-1990.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kandel, D.B., & Logan, J.A. (1984). Periods of risk for initiation, stabilization, and decline in drug use from adolescence to early adulthood.

and Wright⁴¹ found that fifty one point two percent of their respondents reported drinking four or more drinks at one sitting. Kozicki⁴² reported that 72 percent of her respondents had scored at or above the level considered to indicate problem drinking on the Calahan Scale of Problem Drinking.

Wechsler and Rohman⁴³ found that ninety five percent of respondents report drinking within the past year, and that six point seven percent of their total sample could be classified as frequent-heavy-intoxicated (FHI) drinkers (those who consume four or more drinks of 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, four or more glasses of wine, or five or more cans of beer at one sitting one or more times per week, and report becoming intoxicated at least one time per week). FHI drinkers reported having behaviors which are often regarded as signs of problem drinking, such as drinking before noon or drinking alone. FHI drinkers also reported having experienced adverse consequences, such as saying or doing something that they would not normally say or do without drinking, forgetting what they did or where they were when drinking, and doing without things because of the cost of alcohol.⁴⁴ FHI type drinking was also

⁴¹Snodgrass, G., & Wright, L.S. (1983). Alcohol and polydrug use among college undergraduates. NASPA Journal, 21 (2), 26-35.

⁴²Kozicki, Z.A. (1982). The measurement of drinking problems among college students at a midwestern university. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 27 (3), 61-72.

⁴³Wechsler, H. & Rohman, M. (1981). Extensive users of alcohol among college students. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 42 (1), 149-155.

⁴⁴Ibid.

found to be closely associated with the use of illicit drugs.⁴⁵

The general acceptance of alcohol use among college life has allowed alcohol-related problems to go relatively unnoticed for years.⁴⁶ For example, eight point eight percent of college students who drank reported causing property damage during the preceding twelve months, nine point one percent had fights, and fifty one percent drove a motor vehicle after drinking.⁴⁷

There have been numerous negative problems and consequences often associated with alcohol use and college life. These include disruptions in personal relationships, problems with authority figures, impaired academic performance, more frequent drunkenness, and for men in particular, increases in fighting, injuries, and property damage.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Wright, L.S. (1983). Correlates of reported drinking problems among male and female college students. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 28 (3), 47-57.

⁴⁷Engs, R.C. (1977). Drinking patterns and drinking problems of college students. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 38, 2144-2156.

⁴⁸Berkowitz, A.D. & Perkins, H.W. (1987). Recent research on gender differences in collegiate alcohol use.

Alcohol Consumption Differences Between Males and Females

Studies show that a major difference in alcohol consumption between males and females are the amount of alcohol consumed and the frequency in which it is consumed. One study found that sixty five percent of male respondents drank four or more drinks per sitting compared to thirty percent of females, and males were more than five times as likely to report drinking eight or more drinks per sitting than females.⁴⁹

Wechsler and McFadden⁵⁰ revealed that beer was the most widely used alcoholic beverage on campus with fifty percent of male drinkers and thirteen percent of female drinkers making it their drink of choice. Approximately fifty five percent of males reported drinking beer from one to four times per week compared to twenty six point six percent of females, while twenty four percent of males reported drinking six or more bottles of beer per drinking occasion compared to six percent of females. Approximately eighty four percent of males and seventy one percent of females reported being drunk at least once in their lifetime, and seventy one percent of males and fifty four percent of females had done so within the previous year.⁵¹

⁴⁹Snodgrass, G., & Wright, L.S. (1983). Alcohol and polydrug use among college undergraduates.

⁵⁰Wechsler, H. & McFadden, J.D. (1979). Drinking among college students in New England. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 40 (11), 969-996.

⁵¹Ibid.

Who drinks more Men and Women and why?

Kandel and Logan⁵² state that ninety percent of males reported consistent use (on a weekly basis) of alcohol, while eighty percent of females reported consistent use. Male respondents scored significantly higher on the Calahan Scale of Problem Drinking (ninety one percent) than did females (fifty three percent).⁵³ Another study found that fifty percent of males reported drinking five or more drinks in a row within the previous month, while only thirty four percent of females reported doing so.⁵⁴ This study also stated that drinking five or more drinks at a time within the past two weeks was reported by forty four percent of the males and by twenty two percent of the females. Daily alcohol use was reported by five point eight percent of the males and by two point two percent of the females: Men may also expect drinking to disinhibit socially inappropriate or aggressive behavior, and they may drink in order to decrease their sense of responsibility, social inhibitions and personal control.⁵⁵

Use in
Paper?

These findings indicate that the male college population drinks more frequently and with more intensity than does the female college population.

⁵²Kandel, D.B., & Logan, J.A. (1984). Periods of risk for initiation, stabilization, and decline in drug use from adolescence to early adulthood.

⁵³Kozicki, Z.A. (1982). The measurement of drinking problems among college students at a midwestern university.

⁵⁴Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., & Bachman, J.G. (1991). Drug use among American high school seniors, college students and young adults, 1975-1990.

⁵⁵Ratliff & Burkhart. Sex differences in motivations for and effects of drinking among college students.

Alcohol Consumption and Medical Complications Among College Students

Researchers have studied the relationship between alcohol consumption and the need for medical treatment among college students. In one study, students were categorized into one of three groups: 1) chronic heavy drinkers, 2) occasional drinkers, and 3) non-drinkers.⁵⁶ The classification was done by voluntary testing of the victims blood no more than three hours from the time of the accident, and from self reports of how much alcohol each accident victim consumed on a regular basis. The accidents were separated into five classifications: 1) traffic accidents, 2) accidents at work, 3) accidents at home, 4) accidents during leisure or sports activities, and 5) injuries due to fighting. Twenty seven percent of male accident victims and thirty two percent of female accident victims were classified as chronic heavy drinkers. Eleven percent of male accident victims and two percent of female accident victims were classified as occasional drinkers. Those classified as non-drinkers were not included in this study.

Twenty nine percent of the males and six percent of the females that were injured due to fighting were classified as occasional drinkers, and fifteen percent of males involved in traffic accidents were classified as occasional drinkers. Occasional drinking was seldom associated with accidents at work or at home.

⁵⁶Papoz, L., Weill, J., L'Hoste, J., Chich, Y., Got, C., & Gohers, Y. (1986). Biological markers of alcohol intake among 4796 subjects injured in accidents. British Medical Journal, 292, 1234-1237.

Thirty five percent of males and forty nine percent of females that were injured due to fighting were classified as chronic heavy drinkers and thirty five percent of males and thirty nine percent of females involved in accidents at their home were chronic heavy drinkers. Chronic heavy drinking was least associated with accidents at work and accidents during sports activities.

The Social Context Model of Alcohol Consumption

The Social Context Model of Drinking organizes internal motivations and social-environmental variables associated with alcohol consumption into a theoretical framework that can be used as a guide for future research.⁵⁷ Research has found that there are correlations between context factors and alcohol consumption. For example, it has been found that most drinking among college students occurs on weekends with friends.⁵⁸ Women tend to drink abusively most often to manage emotional stress while men tend to drink abusively most often in order to feel more sociable or rebel.⁵⁹⁻⁶¹

Use in
Paper

⁵⁷Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Pleace, D. (in press). The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds.

⁵⁸Reiskin, H. & Wechsler, H. (1981). Drinking among college students using a campus mental health center. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 42 (9), 716-724.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Mahoney, C.A. (in print). The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

⁶¹Wright, L.S. (1983). Correlates of reported drinking problems among male and female college students.

Parental attitudes and drinking practices, as well as alcohol abusing peers, may be strong predictors of a young person's drinking behavior.⁶²⁻⁶³

Previous social context research among college students using a factor analysis revealed six social contexts. They were: Social Facilitation, Emotional Pain, Relaxation, Motor Vehicle, Communion, and Peer Acceptance.⁶⁴ Subjects were classified on a drinking intensity scale, relying on measures of frequency drinking, frequency of drunkenness, and quantity of consumption. The context of Social Facilitation was most clearly associated with drinking intensity. Overall, the social context set accounted for nearly seventy percent of the variance in drinking intensity.

The same six social context subscales were used in another study to classify students as either high intensity drinkers or low intensity drinkers.⁶⁵ Differences between male and female drinkers were examined by using the Social Context Model. *Use in paper*
Of the six social context variables, five of them (Motor Vehicle, Social Facilitation, Relaxation, Emotional Pain, and Peer Acceptance) distinguished between high intensity and low intensity drinking females. Social Facilitation and Relaxation were the only

⁶²Deakin, S. & Cohen, E. (1986). Alcohol attitudes and behaviors of freshmen and their Parents. Journal of College Student Personnel, 27 (6), 490-495.

⁶³Kodman, F. & Sturmark, M. (1984). Drinking patterns among college fraternities: A report. Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 29 (3), 65-69.

⁶⁴Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Pleace, D. (in print). The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds.

⁶⁵Thombs, D.L., Beck, K.H., & Mahoney, C.A. (in print). The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

two variables that distinguished significantly between high intensity and low intensity drinking males. The results from this study indicate that there are different motivating factors between men and women and their consumption of alcohol. Use in paper

The Emergence of Sensation Seeking

Adolescent involvement in delinquency and alcohol use can be explained in terms of an underlying need or personality predisposition.⁶⁶ One such predisposition is the need for sensation seeking. The term sensation seeking was derived by Zuckerman to understand the degree to which individuals are drawn to risky and challenging activities and behavior. During the past twenty years, this personality trait has emerged as an important construct in explaining a variety of behavior problems. Of all personality inventories, sensation seeking was found to have the strongest correlations with alcohol and drug use.⁶⁷

Definition of Sensation Seeking and its Subscales

Zuckerman has defined sensation seeking as a human trait characterized by "the

⁶⁶Newcomb, M.D., & McGee, L., Adolescent alcohol use and other delinquent behaviors: a one-year longitudinal analysis controlling for sensation seeking.

⁶⁷Jaffee, L., & Archer, R. (1987). The prediction of drug use among college students from MMPI, MCMI, and sensation seeking scales. Journal of Personality Assessment, 51, 243-253.

need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences." ⁶⁸ Zuckerman has identified four distinct subscales in the Sensation Seeking instrument that measure different dimensions of this personality trait. The four subscales are: 1) Thrill and Adventure Seeking (the desire to engage in risky physical activities or sports providing unusual sensations), 2) Experience Seeking (the desire to seek new experience through the mind and senses, and through an unconventional life-style and travel), 3) Disinhibition (the seeking of sensation through other people or "partying", social drinking, and sex), and 4) Boredom Susceptibility (an aversion for unchanging or unstimulating environments or persons).

Relationships Between the Sensation Seeking Subscales

Zuckerman has found relationships between the Sensation Seeking Scale and a variety of psychological measures. ⁶⁹ For example, individuals high on the Sensation Seeking Scales are more oriented to bodily sensation, extraverted, impulsive, antisocial, nonconformist, and less anxious. ⁷⁰ The Sensation Seeking Scale has been significantly

⁶⁸Zuckerman, Sensation seeking: beyond the optimal level of arousal.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Zuckerman and Link, Construct validity for the sensation seeking scale.

related to many diverse behaviors, such as drug use, alcohol use, and criminality.⁷¹⁻⁷³

Zuckerman asserts that persons who tend to enjoy new and arousing experiences would also be more inclined to experiment with alcohol and drugs.⁷⁴

Cloninger suggests a comparable relation between a desire for diverse sensations and alcohol consumption. He describes a characteristic of personality quite similar to Zuckerman's sensation seeking labeled "novelty seeking."⁷⁵ He views drinking as comparable to any other appetitive behavior, and suggests that individuals who show heightened levels of exploration and large responses to novel stimuli would also be more likely to consume alcohol. Zuckerman and Cloninger imply that drinking is simply one type of behavior that reflects a tendency to take risks and enjoy complex or varied stimulation.⁷⁶⁻⁷⁷ Zuckerman also reports that in studies using multiple personality measures, sensation seeking accounts for most of the variance in drug use,

⁷¹Bates, M.E., White, H.R., & Labouvie, E.W. (1985). A longitudinal study of sensation seeking needs and drug use. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles.

⁷²Huba, G.J., Newcomb, M.D., & Bentler, P.M. (1981). Comparison of canonical correlation and interbattery factor analysis on sensation seeking and drug abuse domains. Applied Psychological Measurement, 5, 291-306.

⁷³Zuckerman, M. (1983). A biological theory of sensation seeking. In M. Zuckerman (Ed.), Biological bases of sensation seeking, impulsivity, and anxiety. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

⁷⁴Ibid

⁷⁵Cloninger, C.R. (1987). Neurogenetic adaptive mechanisms in alcoholism. Science, 23, 410-436.

⁷⁶Ibid

⁷⁷Zuckerman, A biological theory of sensation seeking.

particularly the experience-seeking and disinhibition subscales.⁷⁸ Jaffee and Archer also found sensation seeking to be the most powerful predictor of substance use compared to other personality scales.⁷⁹

Validity of Self-Reported Data

Much of social science research relies upon self-reports of behavior. Researchers can go about collecting self-reported data in a variety of ways including surveys, phone interviews, and personal interviews.⁸⁰ Self-reported data is easily collected and it gives the researcher flexibility when designing studies. Also, with many research problems, data can only be obtained via self-reports.⁸¹

The possibility of invalid data due to underreporting is a major concern.⁸² However, when certain testing conditions are met, the probability of obtaining valid data can be increased. These testing conditions include: 1) assuring the respondent

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Jaffee, L., Archer, R., The prediction of drug use among college students from MMPI, MCMI, and sensation seeking scales.

⁸⁰Monette, D.R., Sullivan, T.J., & Dejong, C.R. (1990). Applied social research: Tool for human services. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Johnston & O'Malley, Issues of validity and population coverage in student surveys of drug use.

that there is a legitimate scientific reason for gathering the data, 2) administering the questionnaire in a situation that provides suitable privacy, 3) assuring the respondent that there are adequate procedures in place to protect confidentiality, and 4) showing that those people responsible for gathering and handling the data can be trusted.⁸³

Even though no objective way to validate self-reported data exists, it is reasonable to assume that self-reports of drug use are generally valid. First, self-report data have been shown to have a high degree of reliability which is necessary for validity. Second, self-report data have been found to have a high degree of consistency among related measures within the same questionnaire. Third, self-report data have been found to be consistent in expected ways with many other self-reported attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs. For example, high school seniors report drug use by their friends (which they would have little reason to exaggerate or underreport) in a way that is consistent with reported drug use prevalence and trends in the same population. Finally when asked most respondents indicate that they would answer questions honestly.⁸⁴

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Johnston, et al., Drug use among American high school seniors, college students and young adults, 1975-1990.

Summary

Alcohol consumption is a major problem among the college population. The risks of alcohol use are enormous and the beliefs held by students in regards to alcohol are not necessarily accurate. As a result of this alcohol abuse, several research models have been developed to help understand drinking motivations of college students. Two of these models will be used in this study. The social context of alcohol consumption involves the social and motivational aspects of drinking, whereas the concept of sensation seeking relates alcohol use and abuse to a personality trait. These two models may lead to a better understanding of the rationale behind alcohol consumption among college students, thus resulting in effective campus programs to help alleviate and combat this problem.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for this study was one of convenience. It consisted of 150 male college-age students (18-23 years-old) from an urban university. The data were collected during the Spring Semester of 1994. The anonymous questionnaire was administered in military science and physical education classes. In addition, sixty four questionnaires were administered to the SUNY Brockport football team. Human subjects approval was obtained by the institutional review board (see appendix C).

Procedures

The revised College Social Context of Drinking Scales was administered to approximately 150 traditional, male college-aged students (those 18-23 years old) enrolled in college courses at an urban university during the Spring Semester of 1994. The survey took approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Students were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, and they were assured that there was no way to connect them to their responses. Responses were recorded on optical scan answer sheets. None of the students overtly refused to complete the

questionnaire and none of the answer sheets had to be discarded because of frivolous or largely incomplete responses. Efforts were made to allow students privacy in completing the questionnaire. For example, students were instructed not to talk to each other or examine each others' answer sheets during the administration of the survey. Furthermore, completed answer sheets were placed in a large envelope by the student after completing the questionnaire. The participants were instructed not to include their names on the optical scan sheets.

Instruments

Respondents completed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) in 10-20 minutes that consisted of three distinct instruments, five demographic items (age, gender, race, type of residence, and religiosity), and two alcohol-related single item measures (frequency of driving under the influence and frequency of riding with a driver under the influence). The first instrument was the Social Context of Drinking Scale (Appendix A - items #6-62). This instrument uses the question stem: "How often do you drink alcohol?". It is followed by a set of 57 items (e.g., "at a bar", "at a party with friends", "for a sense of well-being", "as part of a drinking game"). The items assess the contexts of male college student (18-23 year-olds) drinking that arise from the interactive influence of both intrapersonal and social-environmental factors.⁸⁵ The

⁸⁵Thombs, et al., The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds.

frequency of drinking in these contexts was measured by a four-point scale ("never" - scored as 0, "seldom" - scored as 1, "occasionally" - scored as 2, or "frequently" - scored as 3). The Social Context Scales possess suitable reliability. A previous study using college students found the coefficient alphas for each of the scales to be as follows: Social Facilitation (.92), Emotional Pain (.76), Sex Seeking (.76), Motor Vehicle (.68), Communion (.70), and Peer Acceptance (.72). Previous social context research in a college sample found that the scales have the ability to discriminate between lower and higher intensity drinkers.⁸⁶

The second instrument, consisting of three items, measured alcohol use intensity (see Appendix A - items #64-66). The first item assessed frequency of alcohol use on a seven-point scale ranging from "less than once a month" (scored as 0) to "everyday" (scored as 6). The quantity of alcohol consumed (on a typical occasion) was measured on a ten-point scale ranging from "less than one whole drink" (scored as 0) to "thirteen or more drinks" (scored as 9). The third item of the alcohol use intensity scale assessed frequency of drunkenness. It was measured on a ten-point scale ranging from "never" (scored as 0) to "everyday" (scored as 9). For each respondent, an alcohol use intensity score was derived by summing their responses to the three items. The possible range of scores for the alcohol use intensity scale was from 0-24.

The third instrument was Form V of the Sensation Seeking Scale,⁸⁷ (see

⁸⁶Thombs, et al., The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

⁸⁷Zuckerman, Sensation seeking: Beyond the optimal level of arousal.

Appendix A - items #69-108). The 40-item scale consists of 20 pairs of statements presented in a forced-choice format. The instrument consists of four subscales: Thrill/Adventure Seeking, Experience Seeking, Boredom Susceptibility, and Disinhibition. In a college study by Beck, Thombs, Mahoney, and Fingar (1994),⁸⁸ the coefficient alphas for each of the scales were found to be as follows: Thrill/Adventure Seeking (.79) , Experience Seeking (.50), Boredom Susceptibility (.57), and Disinhibition (.72). Sensation seeking has also been associated with many alcohol-related behaviors such as fights and aggression, theft, vandalism, disciplinary problems in school, precocious sexual activity, and "run-ins" with the police.⁸⁹

Statistical Analysis

The data analyses in this study was conducted in three steps. First, simple frequency analyses of selected items were performed. Second, the scales used in this study were subjected to a reliability analysis to determine their degree of internal consistency in a male college (18-23 year-old) sample. Third, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the amount of variance the Social

⁸⁸Beck, K.H., Thombs, D.L., Mahoney, C.A., & Fingar, K.M. (1994). Social context and sensation seeking: gender differences in college student drinking motivations. Manuscript submitted for publication.

⁸⁹Newcomb, et al., Adolescent alcohol use and other delinquent behaviors: a one-year longitudinal analysis controlling for sensation seeking.

Context and Sensation Seeking Scales account for in measures of alcohol use intensity, frequency of alcohol impaired driving, and frequency of riding with an impaired driver.

The SPSS computer program was used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sample

The convenience sample used in this study consisted of 153 male students enrolled at the State University of New York at Brockport. The mean age in the sample was slightly older than twenty one and a half years. Eight point five percent of the students were eighteen years old, and 18 percent were nineteen years old. Thirty two percent were twenty two years of age or older. In regard to race, 85.6 percent were white, 7.8 percent were black, 2.6 percent were Asian, 2.0 percent were Hispanic, and 2.0 percent were classified as "other". The largest proportion of students resided in on-campus residence halls (64.1 percent), followed by off-campus apartment/rented house (25.5 percent), at home with parents (5.2 percent), "other off-campus" (3.9 percent); and fraternity house (1.3 percent). Most of the students (68.6 percent) reported attending church or synagogue six times a year or less. Fifteen percent indicated never attending religious services, whereas 10.5 percent did so at least one time per week.

Frequency Analyses of Drinking Behavior

Five items in the questionnaire assessed alcohol consumption practices in the sample. Item #63 which asks "During the past twelve months, have you had one or

more drinks of alcohol?". Eighty six point nine percent of the sample responded "yes". The frequency of consumption measure (questionnaire item #64) revealed that among those who have used alcohol in the previous year, 14.4 percent drank "once a month" or less, whereas 67.5 percent drank on at least a weekly basis. Item #65 measured quantity of consumption among the drinkers. Almost 7 percent (6.9 percent) reported consuming one drink or less on a typical drinking occasion, whereas 74.0 percent indicated that five or more drinks were the norm. Furthermore, 14.5 percent reported typically consuming thirteen or more drinks on those occasions when engaging in drinking behaviors. Item #66 assessed the number of times that students perceived themselves to have been "drunk". Just under 4 percent (3.8 percent) indicated "never" becoming drunk. Nineteen point five percent reported drunkenness "once" or "a few times" a year, compared to almost 40.0 percent who reported being drunk "once a week" or more. Item #67 asked "During the past twelve months, on how many occasions have you driven a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol?" Approximately 32.0 percent stated not doing so during this time period. Item #68 asked how many times in the preceding twelve months were you a passenger in a motor vehicle with an impaired driver. Forty three point nine percent of the entire sample (including both drinkers and abstainers) had ridden with an impaired driver on one to three occasions in the previous twelve months, and 14.4 percent had done so more than ten times in the same period.

Subscale Reliabilities

Subscales were formed by summing responses to specific sets of questionnaire items. The item to scale assignment appears in Appendix B. The coefficient alphas of the social context, sensation seeking, and alcohol use intensity scales appear in Table 1. The reliability estimates ranged from .30 (Experience Seeking) to .94 (Social Facilitation) in the drinker subsample. Among the sensation seeking subscales, all four measures had unacceptable levels of internal consistency (alphas < .70). Thus, the unidimensional version of the total scale was retained as the only measure of the trait (alpha = .74).

Table 1. Coefficient Alphas for the Social Context, Sensation Seeking and Alcohol Use Intensity Scales

Social Facilitation (11 items).....	.94
Motor Vehicle (3 items).....	.84
Sex (3 items).....	.81
Emotional Pain (3 items).....	.77
Peer Acceptance (5 items).....	.72
Communion (3 items).....	.71
Sensation Seeking (40 items).....	.74
Thrill and Adventure Seeking (10 items).....	.67
Disinhibition (10 items).....	.66
Boredom Susceptibility (10 items).....	.43
Experience Seeking (10 items).....	.30
Alcohol Use Intensity (3 items).....	.84

Regression Analysis of Alcohol Use Intensity

A multiple regression analysis was conducted in which the six social context factors (Social Facilitation, Peer Acceptance, Emotional Pain, Motor Vehicle, Communion and Sex) and Sensation Seeking were used as predictor variables to account for variance in alcohol use intensity (items #64-66). The possible range of scores for the alcohol use intensity scale was 0-24 ($\bar{X} = 13.283$ and $SD = 5.236$). Only those respondents who reported consuming one or more drinks of alcohol in the previous twelve months were included in this analysis.

Four of the variables did not have statistically significant beta weights (Sex, Emotional Pain, Communion and Peer Acceptance). The variable most closely related to intensity of alcohol use was the context of Social Facilitation (beta = .653), followed by Motor Vehicle and Sensation Seeking (see Table 2).

Table 2. Multiple Regression of Alcohol Use Intensity by Social Context and Sensation Seeking Factors

Variable	Beta	Sig.
Social Facilitation	.653	.0000
Motor Vehicle	.145	.0300
Sensation Seeking	.132	.0300
Sex	.098	NS
Emotional Pain	.012	NS
Peer Acceptance	-.028	NS
Communion	-.039	NS

df = 7, 112

Regression Analysis of Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

The next regression analysis used item #67 (driving under the influence of alcohol) as the dependent variable. The same factors were used as predictor variables to account for variance in the measure of frequency of alcohol impaired driving. As can be seen in Table 3, the only variable significantly related to driving under the influence of alcohol was that of Motor Vehicle (beta = .397).

Table 3. Multiple Regression of Frequency of Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol by Social Context and Sensation Seeking Factors

Variable	Beta	Sig.
Motor Vehicle	.397	.0001
Communion	.142	NS
Sensation Seeking	.116	NS
Sex	.115	NS
Social Facilitation	.053	NS
Peer Acceptance	-.082	NS
Emotional Pain	-.096	NS

df = 7, 115

Regression Analysis of Frequency of Riding With an Impaired Driver

Item #68 (frequency of riding with an impaired driver) was also used to determine the amount of variance that the Social Context and Sensation Seeking Scales accounted for in measures of multiple regression. The variables of Communion, Sensation Seeking, Sex, Social Facilitation, Peer Acceptance and Emotional Pain did not have statistically significant beta weights. The only variable significantly related to the frequency of riding with an impaired driver was Motor Vehicle (beta = .371).

Table 4. Multiple Regression of Frequency of Riding With an Impaired Driver by Social Context and Sensation Seeking Factors

Variable	Beta	Sig.
Motor Vehicle	.371	.0001
Social Facilitation	.203	NS
Sensation Seeking	.137	NS
Sex	.101	NS
Communion	.048	NS
Emotional Pain	-.058	NS
Peer Acceptance	-.086	NS

df = 7, 115

Summary

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that alcohol consumption in a college setting is most closely related to Social Facilitation (drinking in a context of fun, conviviality, and disinhibition). This is consistent with previous social context research which came to the same conclusion,⁹⁰⁻⁹² the variables Motor Vehicle and Sensation Seeking were also significantly related to alcohol use intensity. The contexts of driving under the influence of alcohol and riding with an impaired driver are most closely related to the variable of Motor Vehicle (see Tables 3 and 4).

⁹⁰Thombs, et al., The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds.

⁹¹Thombs, et al., The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

⁹²Beck, K.H., Thombs, D.L., Mahoney, C.A., & Fingar, K.M. (1994). Social context and sensation seeking: gender differences in college student drinking motivations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Summary

This research project has three limitations. First, the sample size for this research was relatively small ($n = 153$). Second, the study assessed only male subjects. Lastly, the students were not selected by a random process. It was a sample of convenience.

The anonymous questionnaire was administered to 153 male college students. The mean age was almost twenty two years of age. Over 85.0 percent of the respondents were white. Approximately 87.0 percent of the respondents had used alcohol on at least one occasion in the preceding twelve months. Forty percent responded positively to being drunk at least once a week. Sixty eight percent of the respondents had operated a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, whereas almost 44.0 percent reported that they had ridden in a vehicle with an impaired driver in the preceding twelve months.

The results of this study indicate that the Social Context Scales are more important than the Sensation Seeking Scales in explaining alcohol use intensity, frequency of alcohol impaired driving, and frequency of riding with an impaired driver.

However, Sensation Seeking (unidimensional version of the scale) is significant in accounting for alcohol use intensity (see Table 2).

Implications

Results from this study indicate that there is a strong relationship between convivial needs and alcohol use among young adults males. It is imperative that prevention and intervention efforts be targeted at those social activities which do not rely on alcohol use. Providing alternatives to alcohol use is a major step in combating the problem of alcohol abuse.

The results of this investigation are consistent with those of previous social context studies.⁹³⁻⁹⁵ Providing students with knowledge alone will not be an effective means in which to reduce alcohol use. Therefore, what must be done is to find alternatives to drinking which are pleasurable, fun, convenient, challenging and without adult supervision. Colleges, as well as high schools and junior highs, could offer more on campus activities which are alcohol-free (dances, social events, dating services, intramural programs and sporting events). These activities must be desirable for those

⁹³Thombs, et al., The relationship of social context and expectancy factors to alcohol use intensity among 18 to 22 year-olds.

⁹⁴Thombs, et al., The effects of social context and gender on the drinking patterns of young adults.

⁹⁵Beck, K.H., Thombs, D.L., Mahoney, C.A., & Fingar, K.M. (1994). Social context and sensation seeking: gender differences in college student drinking motivations.

who have not succumbed to the abuse of alcohol, as well as for those who have. In planning these activities originate the issues that have to be faced by health educators such as how often should they be held, what resources will be available for use in providing these activities, as well as the political issue of whether or not the campus is responsible for providing such events. These events and activities should be planned with the combined efforts of the school, parents, and the community. Peer representatives of the target groups should also be included in the planning process. Since sensation-seeking was significantly related to alcohol use intensity, high sensation seekers should be represented on planning committees to increase the likelihood that activities will be desirable to individuals possessing this personality trait.

Results from this study also indicate the importance that the variable Motor Vehicle portrays in explaining alcohol use intensity and the contexts of driving under the influence of alcohol and riding with an impaired driver. The data indicate that these behaviors are associated with drinking in or around a car. It appears that the accessibility of automobiles to college students plays a major role in this application. To help alleviate this problem, campuses/committees could institute road blocks, prohibit students from having automobiles on campus, and make busing available on and around campus during peak drinking times.

It has become apparent that our society has evolved in such a manner as to present the use of alcohol as a tool for deriving pleasure. The obstacle or barrier that must be faced is that drinking has become the way to have fun.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study relied on a small, convenience sample (n = 153). In addition, only males were assessed. It is therefore recommended that future investigations should examine other populations of young adults. These other populations include females, those not attending college, a balance of ethnically diverse groups (as the sample in this research was predominantly white), and adolescents in treatment for alcohol and/or drug problems. Future investigators could include the application of the social context model to drug use other than alcohol. Another recommendation would be to revise the instrument to enhance its reliability. Finally, consideration should be given to conducting a longitudinal study. An example of this would be to begin with junior high school students and follow their progression through their college age years.

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APPENDIX A

ALCOHOL SURVEY

The purpose of this research project is to identify psychological and social variables related to the use and non-use of alcohol. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any way for refusing to complete a questionnaire. If you agree to participate, I encourage you to answer all of the questions. However, if there is a question that you find objectionable for any reason, just leave it blank.

Do not write your name on either the questionnaire or the answer sheet. Your answers to the questions are completely anonymous. There is no way to connect you to your responses. Please be as accurate and honest as you can be in answering the questions. It is important that you record your answers on the answer sheet with a #2 pencil. Please make sure that your responses on the answer sheet correspond with the proper question on the questionnaire. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete. When you are finished, you can place your questionnaire and answer sheet in the brown envelope. Thank you for your help on this important project.

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE
OR THE ANSWER SHEET.**

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ANY MARKS ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1) What is your current age?

- 0. 18 or under
- 1. 19
- 2. 20
- 3. 21
- 4. 22
- 5. 23
- 6. 24-30
- 7. 31-40
- 8. 41-50
- 9. 51 or older

2) What is your gender?

- 0. Male
- 1. Female

3) What is your race?

- 0. White
- 1. Black
- 2. Hispanic
- 3. Asian
- 4. Other

4) Which best describes your current living quarters?

- 0. on-campus dorm
- 1. off-campus apartment or rented house
- 2. at home with parent(s)
- 3. fraternity/sorority house
- 4. other off-campus

5) How often do you attend church or synagogue services?

- 0. never
- 1. once a year
- 2. twice a year
- 3. three to four times a year
- 4. five to six times a year
- 5. once a month
- 6. once every two weeks
- 7. once a week
- 8. two or more times a week

INSTRUCTIONS: This group of questions (6-62) refers to what you usually do in regard to consuming alcohol (beer, wine, wine coolers, and liquor). Use the scale below to indicate how often you drink alcohol for each occasion. For each question, choose the one response that seems most appropriate to you and darken the corresponding space on your answer sheet.

How often do you drink alcohol:

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently
6) at a bar	0	1	2	3
7) at a party with friends	0	1	2	3
8) to celebrate a religious holiday	0	1	2	3
9) to get along better on dates	0	1	2	3
10) for the enjoyment of taste	0	1	2	3
11) for a sense of well-being	0	1	2	3
12) to get drunk	0	1	2	3

How often do you drink alcohol:

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently
13) to get rid of depression	0	1	2	3
14) to feel better about yourself	0	1	2	3
15) to have a good time	0	1	2	3
16) in a parked car	0	1	2	3
17) while driving around	0	1	2	3
18) indoors (e.g., at the movies, bowling alley, shopping mall, restaurant)	0	1	2	3
19) at family social events (e.g., birthday parties, dinners, weddings, etc.)	0	1	2	3
20) with a small group of friends	0	1	2	3
21) with a large group of friends	0	1	2	3
22) alone with a boyfriend or girlfriend	0	1	2	3
23) on a college campus (e.g., at parties, in dormitories, at fraternities or sororities)	0	1	2	3
24) at home with your parent(s)	0	1	2	3
25) to be part of a group (to be accepted, fit in and not feel left out)	0	1	2	3
26) to act older or feel more grown-up	0	1	2	3
27) to "blow-off steam"	0	1	2	3
28) as part of a drinking game	0	1	2	3
29) because it's "cool"	0	1	2	3
30) to get someone's approval (e.g., a close friend, a boyfriend or girlfriend)	0	1	2	3
31) to celebrate a victory or some special achievement	0	1	2	3

How often do you drink alcohol:

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently
32) because it's what your friends do for fun	0	1	2	3
33) after classes	0	1	2	3
34) after work	0	1	2	3
35) after studying	0	1	2	3
36) on <u>weekday</u> nights	0	1	2	3
37) on <u>weekend</u> nights	0	1	2	3
38) because you're bored	0	1	2	3
39) when bars have drink specials	0	1	2	3
40) when a brother or sister visits for the weekend	0	1	2	3
41) to get "crazy"	0	1	2	3
42) to treat a hangover	0	1	2	3
43) to maintain your image	0	1	2	3
44) as a part of group activities (i.e., Greek, sports, or other organizations)	0	1	2	3
45) following a sporting event	0	1	2	3
46) while watching sports on T.V.	0	1	2	3
47) when you have no classes or other obligations the next morning	0	1	2	3
48) after an exam	0	1	2	3
49) before "going out" (i.e., to a party or bar)	0	1	2	3
50) outside a bar	0	1	2	3
51) to "put-up" with other drunk people	0	1	2	3

How often do you drink alcohol:

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently
52) to make it easier to go to bed with someone	0	1	2	3
53) because it's your group's tradition	0	1	2	3
54) to show loyalty to your group	0	1	2	3
55) in order to talk to someone about a painful situation	0	1	2	3
56) to forget about academic problems	0	1	2	3
57) to forget about personal problems	0	1	2	3
58) to build up courage to talk to someone of the opposite sex	0	1	2	3
59) to reduce inhibitions	0	1	2	3
60) while driving or riding in a car to another night spot	0	1	2	3
61) while walking somewhere at night	0	1	2	3
62) when a friend from home visits for the weekend	0	1	2	3

INSTRUCTIONS: Beer, wine coolers, and liquor (mixed drinks, vodka, whiskey, tequila, etc.) are all types of alcohol. **Indicate how much you drink by darkening the corresponding space on your answer sheet.**

- 63) During the past twelve months, have you had one or more drinks of alcohol?
0. **Yes** (If you answer "yes" on your answer sheet, proceed to question #64.)
 1. **No** (If you answer "no" on your answer sheet, skip questions 64-67. Start with 68.)
- 64) On average, how often do you drink alcohol?
0. less than once a month
 1. once a month
 2. 2 or 3 times a month
 3. once a week
 4. 2 or 3 times a week
 5. 4 or 5 times a week
 6. every day

65) A "drink" is one beer, one wine cooler, one glass of liquor, or one mixed drink. How many drinks do you usually have on a **typical** occasion?

0. less than one whole drink
1. 1 drink
2. 2 drinks
3. 3 drinks
4. 4 drinks
5. 5 or 6 drinks
6. 7 or 8 drinks
7. 9 or 10 drinks
8. 11 or 12 drinks
9. 13 or more drinks

66) How often would you say you get "drunk" as a result of drinking?

0. never
1. about once a year
2. a few times a year
3. once every two to three months
4. once a month
5. 2 or 3 times a month
6. once a week
7. 2 or 3 times a week
8. 4 or 5 times a week
9. every day

67) During the last 12 months, on how many occasions (if any) have you driven a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol?

0. none
1. once
2. twice
3. three or four times
4. five or six times
5. seven to ten times
6. eleven to fifteen times
7. sixteen to twenty times
8. twenty-one to twenty-five times
9. twenty-six or more times

68) During the last 12 months, on how many occasions (if any) have you been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of alcohol?

0. none
1. once
2. twice
3. three or four times
4. five or six times
5. seven to ten times
6. eleven to fifteen times
7. sixteen to twenty times
8. twenty-one to twenty-five times
9. twenty-six or more times

INSTRUCTIONS: The following items concern things you might like to do, types of people you may enjoy being with, feelings you might have toward something, etc. For each pair of statements please choose the one which is more like you or you agree with more by filling either the number "0" or "1" on the answer sheet. It is important to **FILL IN ONLY ONE NUMBER FOR EACH PAIR OF STATEMENTS** and to **ANSWER ALL 40 PAIRS**. There may be some times when you agree with both statements. In that case simply fill in the one you agree with more. If you disagree with both statements in pair, choose the one you disagree with less. **Remember, there is no way to connect you to your responses.**

- 69) 0. I like "wild" uninhibited parties.
1. I prefer quiet parties with good conversation.
- 70) 0. There are some movies I enjoy seeing a second or even a third time.
1. I can't stand watching a movie that I've seen before.
- 71) 0. I often wish I could become a mountain climber.
1. I can't understand people who risk their necks climbing mountains.
- 72) 0. I dislike all body odors.
1. I like some of the earthy body smells.
- 73) 0. I get bored seeing the same old faces.
1. I like the comfortable familiarity of everyday friends.
- 74) 0. I like to explore a strange city or section of town by myself, even if it means getting lost.
1. I prefer a guide when I am in a place I don't know well.
- 75) 0. I don't like people who do or say things just to shock or upset others.
1. I get a laugh out of people who do or say things just to shock or upset others.
- 76) 0. I usually don't enjoy a movie or play where I can predict what will happen in advance.
1. I don't mind watching a movie or play where I can predict what will happen in advance.
- 77) 0. I have tried marijuana or would like to.
1. I would never smoke marijuana.
- 78) 0. I would not like to try any drug which might produce strange and dangerous effects on me.
1. I would like to try some drugs that produce hallucinations.
- 79) 0. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous.
1. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening.
- 80) 0. I dislike "party-ers."
1. I enjoy the company of real "party-ers."
- 81) 0. I find that stimulants make me uncomfortable.
1. I often like to get high (drinking liquor, smoking marijuana, etc.).

FILL IN ONLY ONE NUMBER FOR EACH PAIR OF STATEMENTS.

- 82) 0. I like to try new foods that I have never tasted before.
1. I order the dishes with which I am familiar, so as to avoid disappointment and unpleasantness.
- 83) 0. I enjoy looking at home movies or travel slides.
1. Looking at someone's home movies or travel slides bores me tremendously.
- 84) 0. I would like to take up the sport of water-skiing.
1. I would not like to take up water-skiing.
- 85) 0. I would like to try surf-board riding.
1. I would not like to try surf-board riding.
- 86) 0. I would like to take off on a trip with no pre-planned or definite routes, or timetable.
1. When I go on a trip I like to plan my route and timetable fairly carefully.
- 87) 0. I prefer "down-to-earth" kinds of people as friends.
1. I like to have some "off-the-wall" people as friends.
- 88) 0. I would not like to learn to fly an airplane.
1. I would like to learn to fly an airplane.
- 89) 0. I prefer the surface of the water to the depths.
1. I would like to go scuba diving.
- 90) 0. I would like to meet some persons who are homosexual (men or women).
1. I stay away from any one I suspect of being gay.
- 91) 0. I would like to try parachute jumping.
1. I would never want to try parachute jumping.
- 92) 0. I prefer friends who are exciting and unpredictable.
1. I prefer friends who are reliable and predictable.
- 93) 0. I am not interested in experience for its own sake.
1. I like to have new and exciting experiences and sensations even if they are a little frightening, unconventional or illegal.
- 94) 0. I like art which is clear, symmetrical of form, and has harmony of colors.
1. I often find beauty in the "clashing" colors and irregular forms of modern painting.
- 95) 0. I enjoy spending time in the familiar surroundings of home.
1. I get very restless if I have to stay around home for any length of time.
- 96) 0. I like to dive off the high board.
1. I don't like the feeling I get standing on the high board (or I don't go near it at all).

FILL IN ONLY ONE NUMBER FOR EACH PAIR OF STATEMENTS.

- 97) 0. I like to date members of the opposite sex who are physically exciting.
1. I like to date members of the opposite sex who share my values.
- 98) 0. Heavy drinking usually ruins a party because some people get loud and boisterous.
1. Keeping the drinks full is the key to a good party.
- 99) 0. The worst social sin is to be rude.
1. The worst social sin is to be a bore.
- 100) 0. A person should have considerable sexual experience before marriage.
1. It's better if two married persons begin their sexual experience with each other.
- 101) 0. Even if I had the money I would not care to associate with people in the "fast lane."
1. I could imagine myself seeking pleasure around the world with those living in the "fast lane."
- 102) 0. I like people who are sharp and witty even if they do sometimes insult each other.
1. I dislike people who have their fun at the expense of hurting the feelings of others.
- 103) 0. There is altogether too much portrayal of sex in movies.
1. I enjoy watching many of the "sexy" scenes in movies.
- 104) 0. I feel best after taking a couple of drinks.
1. Something is wrong with people who need liquor to feel good.
- 105) 0. People should dress according to some standards of taste, neatness, and style.
1. People should dress in individual ways even if the effects are sometimes strange.
- 106) 0. Sailing long distances in small sailing crafts is foolhardy.
1. I would like to sail a long distance in a small but seaworthy craft.
- 107) 0. I have no patience with dull or boring persons.
1. I find something interesting in almost every person I talk with.
- 108) 0. Skiing fast down a high mountain slope is a good way to end up on crutches.
1. I think I would enjoy the sensations of skiing very fast down a high mountain slope.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Item to Scale Assignment

Social Context Scales:

- 1) Social Facilitation-----6+7+12+15+20+23+28+37+39+47+49+62
- 2) Peer Acceptance-----25+26+29+30+43
- 3) Communion -----8+19+24
- 4) Emotional Pain-----3+56+57
- 5) Motor Vehicle -----16+17+60
- 6) Sex -----52+58+59

Alcohol Intensity Scale -----64+65+66

Sensation Seeking Scales:

- 1) Thrill/Adventure Seeking -----71+79+84+85+88+89+91+96+106+108
- 2) Experience Seeking -----2+74+77+78+82+86+87+90+94+105
- 3) Disinhibition -----69+80+81+93+97+98+100+101+103+104
- 4) Boredom Susceptibility -----70+73+75+76+83+92+95+99+102+107

APPENDIX C

BROCKPORT

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York 14420

Grants Development Director
(716) 395-2523/5118
FAX: (716) 395-5602

Date: December 3, 1993

To: Thomas Woodhams
William Zimmerli

From: Colleen Donaldson for
Institutional Review Board

Re: Project IRB # 93-77

Your proposal entitled THE RELAIIONSHIP OF SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SENSATION SEEKING TO INDICES OF COLLEGE STUDENT ALCOHOL ABUSE has been reviewed by the IRB. Accordingly, you may proceed with the work as proposed and approved.

Please contact Colleen Donaldson, Office of Academic Affairs, immediately if:

- the project changes substantially,
- a subject is injured,
- the level of risk increases.

A final report is due within one year from the date listed above.

If you have any questions please call Colleen Donaldson a 395-5118.

PLEASE PRINT
OR TYPE

Institutional Review Board

Human Subjects Research Review Form

Expedited Review	_____
Exempt review approved	_____
Full Board review recommended	_____
PROJECT NUMBER:	_____

TO: Colleen Donaldson
Office of Academic Affairs, 6th Floor, Allen Adm.

FROM: Investigator(s) name(s) Thomas D. Woodhams
Department & Telephone Department of Health Science 395-5478

RE: Human Subject Research Review

PROJECT TITLE The Relationship of Social Context and Sensation Seeking
to Indices of College Student Alcohol Abuse

1. College Status (For each investigator):

Faculty/Staff _____
Undergraduate Student _____
Graduate Student x

2. If the principal investigator is a student, list name, department and local telephone of faculty supervisor. Please note that THE FACULTY SUPERVISOR MUST INDICATE KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF THIS PROPOSAL BY SIGNING THIS FORM.

Faculty Supervisor Name Dr. William Zimmerli
Department & Telephone Department of Health Science 395-5478

3. Check appropriate category of research project:

____ Category I (Exempt Review)
x Category II (Expedited Review)
____ Category III (Full Review)

4. The Principal Investigator must sign this form. (If the P.I. is a student, his/her faculty supervisor must also sign this form.)

I certify that a) the information provided for this project is accurate, b) no other procedures will be used in this project, and c) any modifications in this project will be submitted for approval prior to use.

Thomas D. Woodhams
Signature of Investigator

November 17, 1993
Date

I certify that this project is under my direct supervision and that I am responsible for insuring that all provisions of approval are complied with by the investigator.

William H. Zimmerli
Signature of Faculty Supervisor

11/18/93
Date

Joseph E. Butler
Signature of Department Head or Designee

11/19/93
Date

I recommend: Full IRB review _____ or exempt review category I
or expedited review category II

Thomas D. Woodhams

November 20, 1993

Ms. Colleen Donaldson
Office of Academic Affairs
Allen Administration Building
S.U.N.Y. Brockport
Brockport, N.Y. 14420

Dear Ms. Donaldson,

I am a graduate student in the Health Science Department currently working on my thesis under the direction of Dr. William Zimmerli. I am writing to you in regard to the human subjects research review form. Please find enclosed the completed application for human subjects review and one copy of the survey I wish to administer. A prompt review would be greatly appreciated as I wish to begin collecting data within the next few weeks. Thank you so much for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas D. Woodhams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Thomas D. Woodhams

- 1.) In the research project, an anonymous questionnaire will be administered, with instructor's permission, in regularly scheduled classes. All respondents will be males at least 18 years of age, and will be informed of the voluntary nature of the study. They will record their responses on optical scan answer sheets.
- 2.) The sample will consist of college students enrolled at S.U.N.Y. Brockport during the Fall Semester of 1993. It is anticipated that approximately 150 male students will respond to the questionnaire.
- 3.) This will be a convenience sample. Participants will be selected on the basis of availability. Participants will not receive any remuneration.
- 4.) Research assistants will not be hired. The investigator will administer the questionnaires.
- 5.) The investigator will cover the cost of photocopying the questionnaires. Computer time will be provided by the Department of Health Science.
- 6.) The project will begin in November 1993 and conclude in January 1994.
- 7.) The questionnaire is enclosed.
- 8.) The respondents will be instructed (both verbally and in the questionnaire cover letter) to not write their name on the answer sheet or the questionnaire. No personal identifying indicators will be used. The answer sheets will be destroyed after five years of storage.
- 9.) **STATEMENT MADE PRIOR TO QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION**

The purpose of this research project is to identify psychological and social variables related to the use and non-use of alcohol. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. You will not be penalized in any way for refusing to complete a questionnaire. If you agree to participate, you are encouraged to answer all of the questions. However, if there is a question that you find objectionable for any reason, just leave it blank.

Do not write your name on either the questionnaire or the answer sheet. Your answers to the questions are completely anonymous. There is no way to connect you to your responses. Please be as accurate and honest as you can be in answering the questions.

It is important that you record your answers on the answer sheet with a #2 pencil. Please make sure that your responses on the answer sheet correspond with the proper question on the questionnaire. The questionnaire should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. When you are finished, you can place

your questionnaire and answer sheet in the brown envelope. Thank you for your help on this important project.

- 10.) Attached is the I.R.B. review form signed by the Chair of the Department of Health Science and the faculty supervisor giving this investigator permission to conduct the study.
- 11.) The subjects will not come in contact with any mechanical, electrical, or electronic equipment during the course of their participation in the project.

BROCKPORT

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York 14420

Department of Health Science
(716) 395-2643

Date: February 21, 1994

To: SUNY Brockport Faculty

Fr: Dr. William Zimmerli (Faculty Advisor)
Thomas Woodhams (Masters Candidate)

Re: Use of Your Students for Thesis Research Project

We are conducting an IRB approved survey (see attached) to identify psychological and social variables related to the use and non-use of alcohol. We are looking to administer the survey to approximately 150 male students on campus. The survey itself should not take more than 20 minutes to complete. We are looking for faculty members who would be willing to allow us some time in their classes to administer this survey. Any cooperation would be greatly appreciated. We can be reached at 395-5478 (William Zimmerli) and (Thomas Woodhams). Thank you for your time on this important matter.

The title of my thesis is: The Relationship of Social Context and Sensation Seeking to Indices to College Student Alcohol Abuse.

This study will: examine the drinking habits and behaviors of college age students. It will test the relative ability of the social context scales and the sensation seeking scales to explain alcohol use intensity in a 18-23 year old college sample.

The sample for this study will be one of convenience. An instructor's willingness to allow data collection in their course will be the basis for choosing particular courses.

The revised College Social Context of Drinking Scales will be administered to approximately 150 male college-aged students (those 18-23 years old). The survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. It will be explained to students that participation is strictly voluntary, as the survey is anonymous, and that there will not be any way to connect them to their responses.

The questionnaire consists of three distinct instruments, five demographic items (age, gender, race, type of residence, and religiosity), and two alcohol-related single item measures (frequency of driving under the influence and frequency of riding with a driver under the influence). The first instrument is the Social Context of Drinking Scale. This instrument uses the question stem: "How often do you drink alcohol?". It is followed by a set of 57 items (e.g., "at a bar", "at a party with friends", "for a sense of well-being", "as part of a drinking game"). The items assess the contexts of male college student drinking that arise from the interactive influence of intrapersonal and social-environmental factors. The frequency of drinking in these contexts will be measured by a four-point scale ("never" - scored as 0, "seldom" - scored as 1, "occasionally" - scored as 2, or "frequently" - scored as 3).

The second instrument, consisting of three items, will measure alcohol use intensity. The first item assesses frequency of alcohol use on a seven-point scale ranging from "less than once a month" (scored as 0) to "everyday" (scored as 6). The quantity of alcohol consumed is measured on a ten-point scale ranging from "less than one whole drink" (scored as 0) to "thirteen or more drinks" (scored as 9). The third item of the alcohol use intensity scale assesses frequency of drunkenness. It is measured on a ten-point scale ranging from "never" (scored as 0) to "everyday" (scored as 9). For each respondent, an alcohol use intensity score will be derived by summing their responses to the three items. The possible range of scores for the alcohol use intensity scale will be from 0-24.

The third instrument is Form V of the Sensation Seeking Scale. The 40-item scale consists of 20 pairs of statements presented in a forced choice format. The instrument consists of four subscales: Thrill/Adventure Seeking, Experience Seeking, Boredom Susceptibility, and Disinhibition. Sensation seeking has been associated with many alcohol-related behaviors such as fights, theft, vandalism, and problems in school.

The data analysis in this study will be conducted in three steps. First, simple frequency analyses of each item will be performed. Second, the scales used in this study will be subjected to a reliability analysis to determine their degree of internal consistency in a male college sample. Third, a series of multiple regression analyses will be conducted to determine the amount of variance the Social Context and Sensation Seeking Scales account for in measures of alcohol use intensity, frequency of alcohol impaired driving, and frequency of riding with an impaired driver. The demographic variables assessed in this study (age, gender, race, type of residence, and religiosity) will also be entered into the regression equations.

In conclusion, by understanding the relationships and factors contributing to drinking habits and expectancies, health professionals and educators can better meet the diverse needs of symptomatic students as well as those who are at risk for developing disorders, by allowing for effective prevention, intervention, and treatment programs on college campuses.