

Drinking Behaviors Versus Perceived Norms Of Kentucky College Students



Anne Goodman, MPH Candidate, Dr. Laurie Larkin, Dr. Julie Lasslo, Dr. Rae Loftis Department of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, Eastern Kentucky University

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

College-age adults and alcohol use:

- #1 cause of death.
- >1,500 die/yr.
- 69% said they used alcohol in their lifetime.
- 43% said that they spend 1+ hours per week partying.
- 700,000 assaults take place each year in which the aggressor has been drinking alcohol.
- 31% of college students report alcohol abuse and 6% reported alcohol dependence.
- 14% of college students said they had driven after drinking.

In Kentucky:

- 17% of adults report binge drinking habits.
- 1 in 4 deaths are due to vehicular accidents involving alcohol.

Drinking as a Social Norm:

- Unfortunately, the long running work public health has been doing to try to curve alcohol use in college students may have had unintentionally made adolescents believe that a high % of students is binge drinking in college creating an incorrect social norm that it is normal to binge drink on a college campus.
- The minority number of students participating in binge drinking activity often disrupt their peers who are not taking part in these activities. This can lead to the perception that binge drinking is common among one's peers.

No known study has assessed actual drinking habits versus perceived drinking habits for students attending a Kentucky university.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to identify actual drinking habits of Kentucky college students attending a regional college, versus their perceptions of other student's drinking habits.

It is hypothesized that the drinking habits of Kentucky college students will be significantly lower than what they perceive the habits of their peers to be; students will associate higher alcohol consumption with Athletics and Greek Life; respondents will believe the alcohol consumption is the same for their campus as it is for other campuses; and that most respondents will have received some sort of alcohol safety education during their time in college.

METHODS

Participants

- 363 students attending a regional Kentucky university were voluntarily surveyed.
- Only students 18 and over enrolled at the university as either an undergraduate or graduate student were included.

Instrument

- 2-minute Qualtrics survey titled *Drinking Behaviors vs. Perceived Norms of Kentucky College Students*.
- 14 items: 6 demographic, 3 alcohol use, & 5 perceived norms.
- The survey was created by the principal investigator and research committee.
- Pilot tested on 133 college students in the Fall of 2022.

Procedures

• The survey was shared on the college campus through flyer distribution, digital flyers, emails via the graduate school, Residence Life, and the university's College of Health Sciences; and through social media posts.

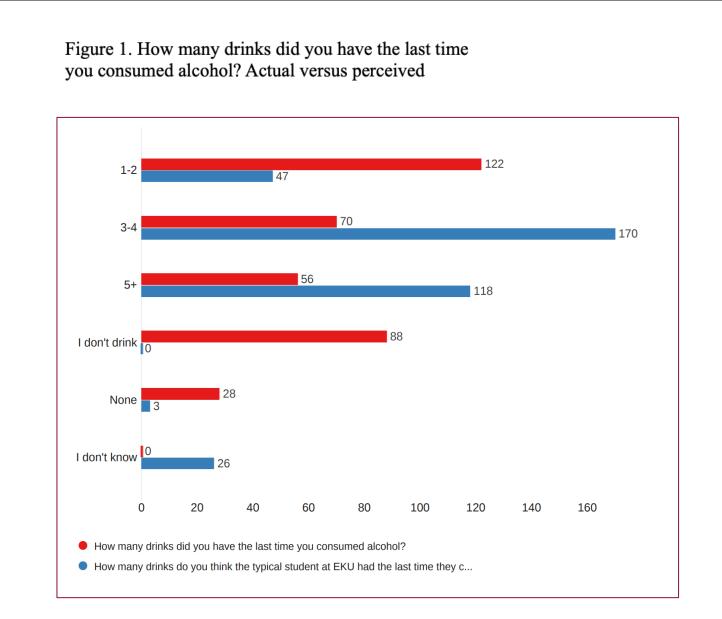
RESULTS

Demographics

Gender: 66% were self-identified as cisgender females Race: 81% were Caucasian

Actual vs. Perceived Drinking Behaviors

- 33.6% consumed 1-2 drinks the last time they had alcohol but 79% believed the typical student had 3+ drinks the last time they consumed alcohol.
- 46%, of respondents said they had not consumed alcohol in the past 30 days but 84%, believe the typical student drinks anywhere from 3 to 19 days a month.
- 77% said they "never" consumed 5 or more drinks in the past 2 weeks but only 6% of respondents thought the typical student "never" consumed 5+ drinks in one sitting, with 50% answering they thought the typical student sometimes drank 5+ drinks in the same sitting, and 32% answering they believe the typical student was drinking this much about half the time.
- 74% of students believe their colleges alcohol consumption is about the same as other college campuses, 17% of respondents thought alcohol consumption is lower than other college campuses, and only 9% believe it is higher.
- 94% of students believe alcohol is a central part of Greek Life, Fraternities, and Sororities.
- 56% believe it is a central part of being a college student.
- 47% believe it is a central part of athletics.
- 73% of students have received some form of alcohol training during their time in college.



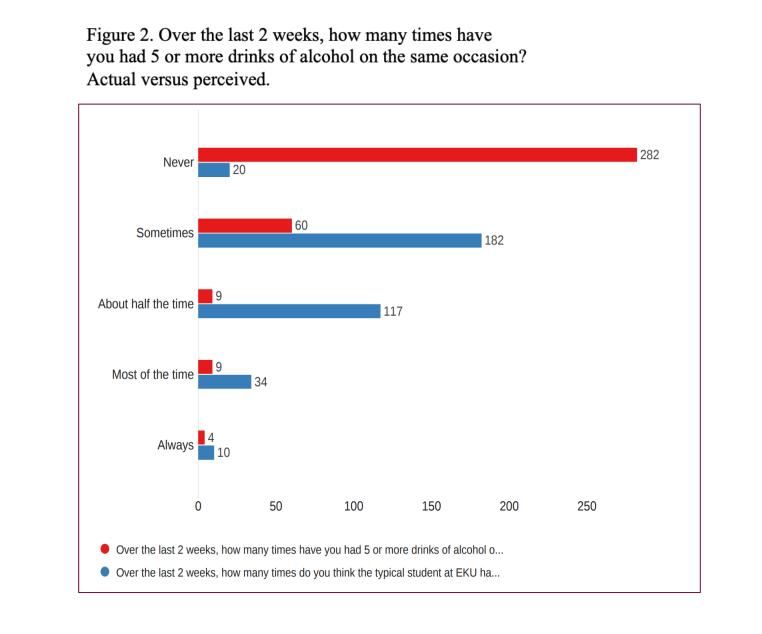


Table 1. Perception of different groups on campus and if alcohol is a central part of each group.



Table 2. Year in College.

'n	hl	Δ	7	Λ	ge
a	IJ		J.		20

What year in college are you?	Counts	% of Total	What is your age?	Counts	% of '
Freshman	106	29.2 %	18-24	277	76.
Sophomore	55	15.2 %	25-34	31	8.0
Junior	52	14.3 %	35-44	31	8.0
Senior	49	13.5 %	45-54	15	4.
			55-64	6	1.7
Graduate Student	101	27.8 %	65+	2	0.6

Discussion

Actual versus perceived drinking habits:

- Actual drinking habits are much lower than what is being perceived of their peers. The study found that only 15% of students reported consuming 5 or more drinks the last time they drank, while 32% believed the typical student had consumed this amount.
- Alcohol consumption is not happening as often as students are perceiving, with nearly half saying they have not consumed any alcohol in the past month. Only 1% of students perceived that their peers were never drinking.
- Binge drinking rates are very low among students. 77% of respondents said they never had 5 or more drinks in one sitting. However, the perception of others binge drinking habits is very high with only 6% believing the typical student never consumed 5 or more drinks at one time.

Alcohol Education:

- The college is reaching many of its students, with 73% saying they received some form of alcohol education during their time in college.
- This data give us the implication that a social norms campaign on campus, educating them on actual versus perceived drinking habits could be more beneficial than traditional education.
- Target populations should include Greek Life, Fraternities, and Sororities, as 94% of respondents perceive alcohol to be a central part of this group.

REFERENCES

Answirent College Harlit Answirentin, (2021). Notional College Harlit Answirentin, (2021). Notional College Harlit Answirentin, (2021). 2021 Young for the Relative Study (Dischools, Retrieved from Improviews campusations by syndholistic control from Improviews canaptacide and provided in the College Students (Amer. 2011). 120 Harlit Relative, 2022 St. (2012). 2021 Young for the Relative Study (Dischools). Retrieved from Improviews complexations and provided in the College Students. American Journal of Journal Answer 2011, 179-151
County Braill Readings, 2023, Karmady (Dischools). Retrieved from Improviews complexations and provided in the College Students. American Journal of American College Health. 1513, 121
Brainford, L.A., Martell, D., Allon, R., Poole, A., Clin, K., Smith, S.W. (2021). The Improviem george through a social conting company to realise help-inst deviation of religious commitment, proceeding for a child and attendance modulation on absolute assumption behavior at Congression College (Dectoral discretine, Spalling University).

Martinolo, N. R., (2014). The availation of religious commitment, proceeding the Relative State of the College Students. Resolution and attendance modulation on absolute assumption behavior at Congression College (Dectoral discretine, Spalling University).

Martinolo, N. R., (2014). Repress of Colleges to Relative Districting College Students. Resolution districtions, Resolution of Proceedings of the College Students and College Students. Resolution districtions, Spalling University Students and Evolution of Dector of College Students and According College Students and College Students and According to the College Students and College Students and Dector of College Students and According to the College Student

Wechsler, H., Davenport, A., Dowdall, G., Moeykens, B., Castillo, S. (1994). Health and behavioral consequences of binge drinking in college. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 272(2). Wechsler, H., Dowdall, G.W., Davenport, A., Castillo, S. (1995). Correlates of student binge drinking. *American Journal of Public Health*. 85(7), 921-926

Wechsler, H., Dowdall, G.W., Davenport, A., Rimm, E.B. (1995). A gender-specific measure of binge drinking among college students. *American Journal of Public Health*. 85(7), 982-985