Drinking in Academic Situations and the Effect on Impression Management

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Abstract

The present study proposed will test the effects of drinking alcohol in an academic situation and the perceived appropriate behavior by participants. The participants will be young college adults, which will be randomly assigned into groups. The experiment will be tested through scenarios, which will be depicting situations that will manipulate the consumption of alcohol by a student and whether the student will be female or male. There will also be questionnaires used, in order to evaluate causal inferences of the perceived behavior. The drinking behavior is predicted to be perceived negatively based on impression management of participants. The anticipated results will potentially show a main effect between drinking and non-drinking scenarios.

*Keywords*: drinking, impression management, alcohol, college, students, perception

Drinking in Academic Situations and the Effect on Impression Management

Frequently, people make observations that are based on preconceived ideas about the situations that are presented. There are often negative biased observations when the involvement of alcohol occurs in academic situations. Past research supported motives for alcohol use and the relation between positive and negative emotions (Cooper, Frone, Russell & Mudar, 1995). It also proposed that the alcohol consumption suggested a desire to alter an affective experience and emotion. This study shows a causal inference between alcohol use and the change in emotions. The information gathered from this study suggests that a certain affective experience is desired, which is why the consumption of alcohol is used (Cooper et al; 1995).

However, Skidmore and Murphy (2010) purposed that the cause for the high number of college students who experience heavy episodes of drinking is the social reinforcement. While participating in the heavy drinking episodes, the college students experienced an increase in social interaction, bonding, smiling and other positive reinforcement (Skidmore & Murphy, 2010). Although the self-claimed “heavy drinkers” experienced a high amount of reinforcement during a drinking experience, they also experienced a high number of reinforcement that was not solitarily connected to drinking. These reinforcements were called “substance-free” reinforcements; they were operationally defined as involving school, relationships, family, and sex. Skidmore and Murphy (2010) found that reinforcements such as, school and family activities, would cause competition between the reinforcement and drinking with the participant.

In contrast, another study depicted that the social desirability of the amount of substance use causes the participant to self-report skewed amounts (Davis, Thake & Vilhena, 2009). This experiment addressed the issue of impression management with the participants misrepresenting themselves in their questionnaires in order to still appeal desirable to the experimenter. The view of social desirability affecting the results of the questionnaire supports the hypothesis of negative bias of alcohol use in different settings. By the participants altering their true ingestion or use of alcoholic substances, supports the presence of conscious desire to be represented pleasingly to others. Davis, Thake, and Vilhena (2009) state that although the experiences in which the participant may disclose the amount of alcohol that was consumed, the participant will change the amount. However, depending on the experience or person they would be telling, changes the amount the participant will disclose (Davis et al; 2009).

Within an academic setting, the student who had lower study expectancies was more likely to become heavier drinkers than the students that had high study expectancies (Levy & Earleywine, 2003). While the students who were heavier drinkers also developed more problems with drinking, and the students who were light drinkers developed less problems. In this study, the difference of how often the student would consume alcohol did not have much of an effect. This led the researchers to focus on how the student would consume alcohol. Levy and Earleywine (2003) found that if the student had high study expectancies then the student would keep their drinking in a safer and controlled manner, while the student with low study expectancies would drink with less regard and become dangerously intoxicated.

The frequency and amount of alcohol used could be based upon the beneficial expectancies that college students had (Carey, 1995). The expectancies were to include the prediction of high-risk drinking among college students. The results of this study depicted that the positive expectancies of comprehensive opinion predicted the maximum daily quantity. As well as, the sexual enhancement expectancies predicted the frequency of intoxication in college students. This could suggest a positive view of drinking, as opposed to the negative ideas about drinking in the other studies discussed. However, it does not account for the negative view from outside persons that are not experiencing the benefits from drinking.

In the research by Suls and Green (2003), the four experiments that they conducted were concentrated in the student’s perceived norms and personal concerns of drinking. The experiment established that impression management was not what the students were engaging in, but what that the students were being evaluated at all. Men and women reported that they had more concerns about drinking, than their same- and opposite-sex peers. Men also reported that they received more pressure to drink and were more embarrassed to discuss the problems they had with drinking. Women also reported to have more severe repercussions if they were to drink excessively (Suls & Green, 2003). This supports the negative ideas about drinking and the weight of impression management in judging situations.

In my experiment, I hypothesize that a woman that will consume alcohol the night before an exam will be viewed more negatively by the participants.

**Method**

**Participants**

Young adult students (*N* = 50, 25 females, 25 males, *M* = 19.83, *SD* = 1.07, age range = 18-22) will be the sample population in this experiment. The participants will be self-selected sampling with random assignment into groups. The participants will be separated into four groups with four separate scenarios by using a random numbers table. The participants will receive extra credit in a psychology course for participating in this experiment.

**Materials and Procedure**

The items used to complete this study include four self-created scenarios (see Appendix B), one depicting a drinking situation with a male student, John, one depicting a drinking situation with a female student, Molly, another depicting a non-drinking situation with a male student, John, and one depicting a non-drinking situation with a female student, Molly. This study will also include a self-created questionnaire (see Appendix C) using the Likert scale.

The scenario which involves drinking will describe a college student preparing for an exam, then drinking the same night. The student then will miss their exam because they did not wake up in time for the class. The scenario which involves a non-drinking situation involves a student that is studying for an exam, the night before. The next morning the student will miss their exam because they also did not wake up in time for the class. The questionnaire will contain statements that will grade how strongly the participants view the student’s behavior was appropriate before an exam and whether the student should be able to have a makeup exam. The experiment will take place in a classroom that has tables and chairs for the participants to be seated, and will also have a computer with a projection system.

The participants will be told the nature of the study with an opening statement (see Appendix A). The participants will also be given a consent form to sign with their discretion. The participants will begin reading the scenario, at their own pace, that is given to their group. Once the scenario has been read, the participants will answer the questionnaire, at their own pace. After the questionnaire has been completed, I will debrief the participants and tell the true nature of the experiment with a debriefing statement (see Appendix A). The experiment will be conducted in a classroom.

**Proposed Results and Discussion**

I will use a two-way analysis of variance to analyze the data from the questionnaires, the participant’s impression of the student’s behavior in the scenarios. I expect to find a main effect for drinking and non-drinking, but no main effect for gender. I also expect to find an interaction between female students and drinking. I will use a two-way analysis of variance to analyze the data, because this experiment is a 2x2 factorial design. I expect the results will support my hypothesis based on past research of women receiving more severe consequences from over consuming alcohol (Suls & Green, 2003). I also think that past research involving study expectancies and drinking amounts will affect the results (Skidmore & Murphy, 2010). I controlled for a confounding variable based on gender by making it an independent variable. There could be a selection confounding variable because participants could have differing opinions and bias about drinking alcohol, based upon the participants consumption of alcohol, which could affect the data. I think that with this experiment it could produce a correlation between perceived appropriate study habits in college students and the consumption of alcohol.

Appendix A

**LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY**   
**Human Subjects Research Review Committee**   
**Committee Action Form**

(To Be Completed By Researcher)

Proposal Title: Drinking in Academic Situations and the Effect on Impression Management\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal   
Investigator: Ariana Anderson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(For Committee Use Only)

[  ]  Meets the criteria for making research exempt from obtaining written informed consent and Committee review.

[  ]  Approved by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

[  ]  Approved with revisions by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.  The researcher(s) must provide a revised copy of the proposal to the Committee before commencing research.

[  ]  Rejected by the Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Committee (circle one) Member/Chair:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**Longwood University Human and Animal Subjects Research Review Committee**   
**Research Proposal Submission Form**

**I. Proposal**

All Longwood University administration, faculty, and students conducting investigations involving human subjects, and all other researchers conducting investigations involving human subjects at Longwood University, must submit a research proposal to be reviewed and approved by the Human Subject Research Review Committee prior to the commencement of research.  Research involving children should conform to the ethical standards found at <http://www.srcd.org/ethicalstandards.html>. **Some types of human subjects research are exempt from the provisions of state and federal law, however, even research exempt from these provisions must be reviewed by the committee to determine that they are indeed exempt.**  Research proposals submitted to the committee must follow the protocols contained in this form and include the following information.  *Check those that are included*.

[X]  A description of the research, including:

1) A Title,   
2) The purpose of the research, and   
3) The methods or procedures to be employed including descriptions of:   
    a) The human subjects and the criteria for including them in the research,   
    b) What is to be done with or to them,   
    c) Any possible risks, stress, or requests for information subjects might consider personal or sensitive, or which may be illegal, and whether or not the only risk to the subjects is the harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality,  
    d) the steps that will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects,   
    e) the permissions from other institutions, if required, that will be obtained.

[X]  A signed, completed copy of this submission form.

In addition, the research proposal may have to include the following documents.  *Check those that are included*.

[X] A copy of the test, survey, or questionnaire, if employed, and if it is not a standardized professional diagnostic tool otherwise specified in the proposal.

[X]   A copy of the written statement explaining the research indicating that participation is voluntary, if required. (See III. A. below.)

[X]  A copy of what will be said to subjects before and after the research is conducted, if the methodology requires that the subjects be misled in any way.  (See III. B.)

[X] A copy of the informed consent statement that will be used, if required.  (See Sec. IV. below.)  A model informed consent statement can be found at the end of this form.   
    
 **II. Exemptions**

If your research falls into any of the categories of research below, it is exempt from the requirement of obtaining written informed consent and being reviewed by the entire Committee, and only 1 copy of the proposal need be submitted. All others must submit 3 copies of their proposal. If your project conforms to any of the following descriptions, check those which apply:

[ ] Research or student learning outcomes assessments conducted in educational settings involving regular or special education instructional strategies, the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods, or the use of educational tests, whether cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, or achievement, if the data from such tests are recorded in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

[ ] Research involving surveyor interview procedures unless responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

[ ] Research involving survey or interview procedures, when the respondents are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

[ ] Research involving solely the observation of public behavior, including observation by participants, unless observations are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and either (i) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or (ii) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use, or illegal conduct.

[ ] Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner so that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

# III. Special Types of Research

A. In addition to the above types of research that are exempt from the requirement to obtain written informed consent and full committee review, the committee may waive the requirement that the investigator obtain written informed consent for some or all subjects for the following type of research. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

[ ] Research in which the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.

In the forgoing type of research, the committee may require the investigator to provide the subjects with a written statement explaining the research and indicating that their participation is voluntary. In addition, each subject shall be asked whether s/he wants documentation linking him or her to the research, and the subject’s wishes shall govern. In the case that the subject agrees to be identified in the research, her or his written permission to do so shall be obtained by the researcher.

B. Some research methodologies may require that the subjects be initially misled regarding the purpose of the research, and so require that the consent procedure omit or alter some or all of the basic elements of informed consent, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent. If your research conforms to the following description, indicate by checking.

[ ] Research involves no more than "minimal risk" or risk of harm not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests, research could not practicably be performed without the omission, alteration or waiver, and the omission, alteration or waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

Inthe forgoing type of research, the committee requires the researcher to provide the subjects with an adequate post-investigative explanation of the purpose and methods of the research, or explanatory debriefing procedure to be undertaken immediately after the conclusion of each subject's participation. The committee requires investigators undertaking this sort of research to furnish the committee with copies of the information that will be supplied to the subject before and after the investigation.

**IV. Written Informed Consent**

    Research engaged in all other types of research must obtain written informed consent from the research subjects. Informed consent means the knowing and voluntary agreement, without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or other form of constraint or coercion, of a person who is capable of exercising free power of choice.

    The basic elements of information necessary to such consent are:

 1. A reasonable and comprehensible explanation to the person of the proposed procedures of protocols to be followed, their purposes, including descriptions of any attendant discomforts, and risks and benefits reasonably to be expected;

 2. A disclosure of any appropriate alternative procedures or therapies that might be advantageous for the person;

 3. An instruction that the person may withdraw his consent and discontinue participation in the human research at any time without prejudice to her or him;

 4. An explanation of any costs or compensation which may accrue to the person and, if applicable, the availability of third party reimbursement for the proposed procedures or protocols; and

 5. An offer to answer and answers to any inquiries by the person concerning the procedures and protocols.

    Informed consent must be obtained in the following manners for the following types of human subjects: (a) competent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person and witnessed; (b) not competent at the time consent is required, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by the person’s legally authorized representative and witnessed; or (c) a minor otherwise capable of rendering informed consent, then it shall be subscribed to in writing by both the minor and her or his legally authorized representative.   
    Legally authorized representative means (a) the parent or parents having custody of a prospective subject, (b) the legal guardian of a prospective subject, or (c) any person or judicial or other body authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research.   
    Any person authorized by law or regulation to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to such subject’s participation in the particular human research shall include an attorney in fact appointed under a durable power of attorney, to the extent the power grants the authority to make such a decision. The attorney in fact shall not be employed by the person, institution, or agency conducting the human research. No official or employee of the institution or agency conducting or authorizing the research shall be qualified to act as a legally authorized representative.   
    A legally authorized representative may not consent to nontherapeutic research, or research in which there is no reasonable expectation of direct benefit to the physical or mental condition of the human subject, unless it is determined by the human subject research review committee that such research will present no more than a minor increase over minimal risk to the human subject.   
    Notwithstanding consent by a legally authorized representative, no person who is otherwise capable of rendering informed consent shall be forced to participate in any human research.   
    In the case of persons suffering from organic brain diseases causing progressive deterioration of cognition for which there is no known cure or medically accepted treatment, the implementation of experimental courses of therapeutic treatment to which a legally authorized representative has given informed consent shall not constitute the use of force.   
    No informed consent form shall include any language through which the person who is to be the human subject waives or appears to waive any of her or his legal rights, including any release of any individual, institution, or agency or any agents thereof from liability for negligence.   
    Human subject research investigators are responsible for obtaining written informed consent from research subjects in accordance with these specifications, and for obtaining permissions from any other institutions that may be involved in informed consent statement which conforms to these specifications.

    The Longwood University Human Subjects Research Review Committee must be informed of any violation or alteration of the research protocol.  Continuing research projects must be re-approved annually.

    The undersigned researcher(s) indicate that the information provided to the committee is accurate and true to the best knowledge of the researcher(s), and that the researcher(s) have conformed to the above guidelines to the best abilities of the researcher(s).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed (legibly):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If this research is being completed in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree, the thesis committee must approve of your project prior to submission of these forms. The signature(s) of your committee chair/advisor on the appropriate form constitutes acknowledgement of this prior approval by your committee.

Please indicate the address where you would like the approval form sent (along with phone # and/or e-mail address):

Box No. 44 Longwood University Farmville, Va 23909

ariana.anderson@live.longwood.edu

Further information of the status of proposals may be found at the following:

        Dr. Eric Laws   
        Department of Psychology   
        Phone:  (434)395-2841; e-mail:  lawsel@longwood.edu

**DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH**

Title of Research: **Drinking in Academic Situations and the Effect on Impression Management**

1. Purpose of Research: The goal of this research is **to find out whether or not drinking in an academic situation causes participants to view the situation in a negative way**. The research is being conducted as a **between-participants design**, under the supervision of  **Dr. Eric Laws.**
2. Methods and Procedures:
3. Participants: Participants will be Longwood University students who agree to voluntarily participate in the research. The purpose of the research will be explained to the students and they will be asked to participate with the provision that they are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
4. Procedures:  **I plan to conduct my experiment in a classroom with convenience sampling to obtain the participants. I will have the participants read one of four scenarios. These scenarios will vary in terms of drinking or non-drinking, and male or female. Once the participants have read the scenario, at their own pace, they will answer a questionnaire. Once the participants have answered the questionnaire, at their own pace, they will be debriefed and told the nature of the experiment.**
5. Possible Risks: It is anticipated that participants will be at no physical, psychological, or emotional risk at any time during the research. Nor is it anticipated that participation in the research will place the participants at any risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the participants' financial standing or employability.
6. Assurance of Anonymity and Confidentiality: Participants will be informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research via instructions on the data collection instrument. Participants will also be instructed not to put their name or any identifying information on the instrument. When collecting data from participants, the researcher will immediately place the data in a large envelope, and will not examine any of the data until all data have been collected. Once collected, the raw data will only be accessible to **Ariana K. Anderson and Dr. Eric Laws**. In the event that any information provided by a participant should become known outside the research, it is unlikely that any harm would come to the participant.

**Longwood University**   
**Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research**

I consent to participate in the research project entitled:

**The Effect of Study Habits on Test Scores**

being conducted in the Department of **Psychology** by

**Ariana K. Anderson**

* I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to discontinue participation in this project without penalty.
* I acknowledge that the general purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation have been explained to me.
* I acknowledge that I have the opportunity to obtain information regarding this research project, and that any questions I have will be answered to my full satisfaction.
* I understand that no information will be presented which will identify me as the subject of this study unless I give my permission in writing.
* I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.  A copy of this form will be given to me.

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_        Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that if I have concerns or complaints about my treatment in this study, I am encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Affairs at Longwood University at (434) 395-2010.

Opening Statement

Hello, my name is Ariana Anderson and welcome to my experiment on the effect of study habits on test scores. In front you there is a consent form. Once you have read the form and would still like to continue with this experiment, please sign now. However, if you feel the desire at any time, you may leave without any consequence. Once I have collected the consent forms, I will distribute a scenario. You will then read the scenario at your own pace. Once everyone has read the scenario, I will distribute a questionnaire. You will then complete the questionnaire at your own pace. Once everyone has completed the scenario, I will debrief you about this study.

Debriefing Statement

The true nature of this study is to find out the effects of drinking alcohol on the perception of appropriate academic habits. There are four scenarios in this experiment. There is a drinking situation with a male student, a drinking situation with a female student, a non-drinking situation with a male student, and a non-drinking situation with a female student. If you have any questions or concerns about this study please email me at [ariana.anderson@live.longwood.edu](mailto:ariana.anderson@live.longwood.edu). You may also come to the poster session in the Lankford Ballroom to see the results of this study. Thank you and have a nice day.

Appendix B

Scenario 1

John is studying for an exam tomorrow morning. After he has studied and prepared for the class, he decides to have a few alcoholic drinks with his friends. They play games and watch a movie while they all drink alcohol. John doesn’t go to sleep until late at night. The next morning, John does not wake up in time to take his exam.

Scenario 2

Molly is studying for an exam tomorrow morning. After she has studied and prepared for the class, she decides to have a few alcoholic drinks with her friends. They play games and watch a movie while they all drink alcohol. Molly doesn’t go to sleep until late at night. The next morning, Molly does not wake up in time to take her exam.

Scenario 3

John is studying for an exam tomorrow morning. John did not prepare for his exam earlier in the week, and is cramming in order to pass the class. John doesn’t go to sleep until late at night. The next morning, John does not wake up in time to take his exam.

Scenario 4

Molly is studying for an exam tomorrow morning. Molly did not prepare for her exam earlier in the week, and is cramming in order to pass the class. Molly doesn’t go to sleep until late at night. The next morning, Molly does not wake up in time to take her exam.

Appendix C

Questionnaire

1. The student in the scenario did not study for their exam appropriately. (Circle the number that best reflects your judgment)

1-------------------------2-------------------------3-------------------------4-------------------------5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. The student should be allowed to make up their exam. (Circle the number that best reflects your judgment)

1-------------------------2-------------------------3-------------------------4-------------------------5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. The student does not have reasonable cause for a make-up exam. (Circle the number that best reflects your judgment)

1-------------------------2-------------------------3-------------------------4-------------------------5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

**4.** I would never act the way this student acted. (Circle the number that best reflects your judgment)

1-------------------------2-------------------------3-------------------------4-------------------------5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

References

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