

performance. Thus, it is possible that at a large, public university, personal factors present at matriculation may predict both heavy alcohol use and academic performance, whereas at a smaller, residential college, especially one with a high rate of heavy drinking, the campus drinking culture overrides the influence of personal factors on this relationship.

Because the present study was carried out at a single institution, generalizations are hazardous. Still, this college shares many features in common with other colleges; and the evidence strongly indicates that heavy alcohol use—at least at a certain type of institution—has a negative impact on academic performance. In light of this research, it would be premature to discontinue investigations of alcohol's effects on academic performance. Rather, future research on this relationship—and on drinking behavior generally—needs to consider the influence of the campus context. This will require (1) large-scale studies with both institutional and individual units of analysis, and (2) the identification and measurement of key institutional variables, especially drinking norms and residential systems. In addition, other individual-level variables, not included in the present study, such as students' commitment to academic achievement and satisfaction with school, may influence both alcohol use and GPA. Incorporating all of these factors in theoretical models and research designs should provide a more complete understanding of the causes and consequences of problematic alcohol use among college students.

Acknowledgments

I thank Mark Hallahan for his feedback on the analysis and interpretation of the data and Amy Wolfson and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

References

- AERTGEERTS, B. AND BUNTINX, F. The relation between alcohol abuse and dependence and academic performance in first-year college students. *J. Adolesc. Hlth* **31**: 223-225, 2002.
- AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*, Washington, DC, 1994.
- BONDY, S.J. Overview of studies on drinking patterns and consequences. *Addiction* **91**: 1663-1674, 1996.
- CORE INSTITUTE. Data from 2005 CORE and Alcohol Drug Survey, December 2006, Carbondale, IL: Core Institute, Southern Illinois University, 2006.
- DOWDALL, G.W. AND WECHSLER, H. Studying college alcohol use: Widening the lens, sharpening the focus. *J. Stud. Alcohol, Supplement No. 14*, pp. 14-22, 2002.
- ENG, R.C., DIEBOLD, B.A., AND HANSON, D.J. The drinking patterns and problems of a national sample of college students, 1994. *J. Alcohol Drug Educ.* **41** (3): 13-33, 1996.
- HAWKINS, J.D., CATALANO, R.F., AND MILLER, J.Y. Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: Implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychol. Bull.* **112**: 64-105, 1992.
- PASCHALL, M.J. AND FREISTHLER, B. Does heavy drinking affect academic performance in college? Findings from a prospective study of high achievers. *J. Stud. Alcohol* **64**: 515-519, 2003.
- PERKINS, H.W. Surveying the damage: A review of research on consequences of alcohol misuse in college populations. *J. Stud. Alcohol, Supplement No. 14*, pp. 91-100, 2002.
- POWELL, L.M., WILLIAMS, J., AND WECHSLER, H. Study habits and the level of alcohol use among college students. *Educ. Econ.* **12**: 135-149, 2004.
- PRESLEY, C.A., MEILMAN, P.W., AND LEICHLITER, J.S. College factors that influence drinking. *J. Stud. Alcohol, Supplement No. 14*, pp. 82-90, 2002.
- PRESLEY, C.A. AND PIMENTEL, E.R. The introduction of the heavy and frequent drinker: A proposed classification to increase accuracy of alcohol assessments in postsecondary educational settings. *J. Stud. Alcohol* **67**: 324-331, 2006.
- SCHULENBERG, J., BACHMAN, J.G., O'MALLEY, P.M., AND JOHNSTON, L.D. High school educational success and subsequent substance use: A panel analysis following adolescents into young adulthood. *J. Hlth Social Behav.* **35**: 45-62, 1994.
- SHORE, E.R., RIVERS, C., AND BERMAN, J.J. Resistance by college students to peer pressure to drink. *J. Stud. Alcohol* **44**: 352-361, 1983.
- WECHSLER, H., DAVENPORT, A., DOWDALL, G., MOEYKENS, B., AND CASTILLO, S. Health and behavioral consequences of binge drinking in college: A national survey of students at 140 campuses. *JAMA* **272**: 1672-1677, 1994.
- WECHSLER, H., LEE, J.E., KUO, M., AND LEE, H. College binge drinking in the 1990s: A continuing problem. Results of the Harvard School of Public Health 1999 College Alcohol Study. *J. Amer. Coll. Hlth* **48**: 199-210, 2000.
- WECHSLER, H. AND NELSON, T.F. Binge drinking and the American college student: What's five drinks? *Psychol. Addict. Behav.* **15**: 287-291, 2001.
- WOLAVER, A.M. Effects of heavy drinking in college on study effort, grade point average, and major choice. *Contemp. Econ. Policy* **20**: 415-428, 2002.
- WOOD, P.K., SHER, K.J., ERICKSON, D.J., AND DEBORD, K.A. Predicting academic problems in college from freshman alcohol involvement. *J. Stud. Alcohol* **58**: 200-210, 1997.