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This document is part of a collection that serves two purposes. First, it is a digital archive for a sampling of unpublished documents, presentations, questionnaires and limited publications resulting from over forty years of research. Second, it is a public archive for data on college student drinking patterns on the national and international level collected for over 20 years. Research topics by Dr. Engs have included the exploration of hypotheses concerning the determinants of behaviors such as student drinking patterns; models that have examine the etiology of cycles of prohibition and temperance movements, origins of western European drinking cultures (attitudes and behaviors concerning alcohol) from antiquity, eugenics, Progressive Era, and other social reform movements with moral overtones-Clean Living Movements; biographies of health and social reformers including Upton Sinclair; and oral histories of elderly monks.

Indiana University Archives

Paper manuscripts and material for Dr. Engs can be found in the IUArchives http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entire_text&docId=InU-Ar-VAC0859
RELIGION AND COLLEGIATE DRINKING PROBLEMS OVER TIME

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To examine religious affiliation and the incidence of drinking problems among college students over time, a questionnaire was administered to students at 72 colleges throughout the United States in 1982-83 (N = 6,115) and again in 1984-85 (N = 4,266). The questionnaire included 17 items regarding possible negative consequences of drinking within the past year, such as hangover, vomiting, driving while intoxicated, and cutting class after drinking. The findings suggest little change in drinking problems among college students except for a decrease in driving-related behaviors among Roman Catholics and Protestants whose religion permits drinking (thus approaching the already-lower rates for Jews and those Protestants whose religion prohibits drinking) and a decrease in those behaviors among individuals for whom religion is not important (thus approaching the already-lower rates for more religious individuals).

The purpose of the research reported here is to compare the religious affiliation and drinking problems of a sample of college students from throughout the United States in 1984-85 with a comparable sample drawn in 1982-1983.

METHOD

Instrument. An anonymous pre-coded instrument was used which included demographic items, questions regarding the consumption of alcohol, and 17 items concerning possible negative consequences of drinking. The 17 items asked if respondents had, within the last year, had a hangover, vomited as a result of drinking, driven a car after having had several drinks, driven a car when they knew they had too much to drink, driven a car while drinking, come to class after having several drinks, "cut a class" after having several drinks, missed class because of a hangover, been arrested for DWI (driving while intoxicated), been criticized by someone they were dating because of their drinking, had trouble with the law because of drinking, lost a job because of drinking, got a lower grade because of drinking too much, gotten into trouble with school administration because of behavior resulting from drinking too much, gotten into a fight after drinking, thought they might have a problem with their drinking, or "damaged property, pulled a false fire alarm, or other such behavior after drinking."

All questionnaire items had been pre-tested prior to earlier research (Engs, 1977; Hanson, 1972) and instructions explained the voluntary nature of participation as approved by the Indiana University Human Subjects Committee.

Samples. The questionnaire was administered to students at 72 of the 82 colleges (87.8%) from throughout the United States that had participated in a

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similar study conducted about two years earlier by the authors. Thus, the same instrument was used in both time periods at 72 colleges.

The sample of 4,266 students was drawn, as was done about two years earlier (N = 6,115), from in-class administration in survey type sociology and health or physical education courses that had a high probability of containing students from every academic major and class year. The usable response rate exceeded 98% and, with the exception of females, the demographic composition of the resulting sample closely approximated that of students attending four-year institutions of higher learning in the United States (Gutek, 1983).

Sixty-four percent were females and 36% were males, while 92% were whites and 8% were blacks. Eighty-nine percent attended public and 11% attended private institutions. The regional distribution was as follows: North East, 29%; North Central, 26%; South, 25%; and West, 20%. Academic majors were social sciences (including pre-professional), 22%; arts and humanities, 8%; education, 20%; health-related majors, 16%; science and engineering, 7%; business, 18%; and other, 8%. While females were over-represented, their proportion in both samples in the two time periods was similar and the other demographic characteristics were also highly comparable.

RESULTS

Drinking. There were no significant changes over time in the proportion of drinkers among Roman Catholics (90.1% in 1985 compared to 91.2% in 1983), Protestants whose religion permits drinking (86.2% compared to 87.7% in 1983), Protestants whose religion prohibits drinking (60.3% vs. 57.8% earlier), or Jews (85.2% vs. 90.9% in 1983). Similarly, there were no significant changes over time among those for whom religion is very important (66.3% drank in 1985 compared to 66.4% in 1983) and among those for whom religion is not important (89.5% compared to 89.2% earlier).

Drinking Problems. Among Roman Catholic students there were significant decreases in the proportion reporting having driven a car after drinking (54.6% in 1985, down from 61.7% in 1983; \(X^2 = 14.4, df = 1, p < .01\)), driving a car after knowing they had too much to drink (37.4%, down from 41.4%, \(X^2 = 4.6, df = 1, p < .05\)), driving a car while drinking (40.5%, down from 49.9%; \(X^2 = 25.3, df = 1, p < .01\)), and thinking they have a problem with drinking (8.1%, down from 10.5%; \(X^2 = 4.6, df = 1, p < .05\)).

Significant increases occurred in the proportion who cut class because of drinking (11.7%, up from 9.1%; \(X^2 = 4.9, df = 1, p < .05\)) and who missed class because of hangover (29.9%, up from 23.9%; \(X^2 = 13.1, df = 1, p < .01\)).

Protestant students whose religion permits drinking exhibited significant decreases in the proportion who drove a car after drinking (55.5%, down from 62.1%; \(X^2 = 11.7, df = 1, p < .01\)), drove a car after knowing they had too much to drink (39.1%, down from 43.3%; \(X^2 = 4.8, df = 1, p < .05\)), and drove a car while drinking (38.9%, down from 50.1%; \(X^2 = 33.7, df = 1, p < .01\)). There were no increases in drinking problems among these students.

There were neither significant increases nor decreases in any drinking problems among either Jews or Protestants whose religion prohibits drinking. It should be noted that the decline in driving-related problems among Roman Catholics and Protestants whose religion permits drinking have brought these groups closer to the already lower percentages to be found among Jews and Protestants whose faith prohibits alcohol...
consumption.

Among those for whom religion is very important there was a decrease in drinking while driving (32.8%, down from 38.7%; \( X^2 = 6.7, df = 1, p < .01 \)). Among those for whom religion is not important there were decreases in driving after drinking (55.5%, down from 62.1%; \( X^2 = 13.9, df = 1, p < .01 \)), driving after knowing they had too much to drink (38.3%, down from 42.5%; \( X^2 = 5.6, df = 1, p < .05 \)), driving while drinking (40.9%, down from 49.0%; \( X^2 = 20.8, df = 1, p < .01 \)), but an increase in cutting class because of hangover (11.6%, up from 9.1%; \( X^2 = 4.2, df = 1, p < .05 \)).

SUMMARY

To examine religious affiliation and the incidence of drinking problems among college students over time, a questionnaire was administered to students at 72 colleges throughout the United States in 1982-83 (\( N = 6,115 \)), and again in 1984-85 (\( N = 4,266 \)). The questionnaire included 17 items regarding possible negative consequences of drinking within the past year, such as hangovers, vomiting, driving while intoxicated, and cutting class after drinking.

The findings suggest little change in drinking problems among college students except for (1) a decrease in drinking-related behaviors among Roman Catholics and Protestants whose religion permits drinking, thus approaching the already-lower rates for Jews and those Protestants whose religion prohibits drinking and (2) a decrease in drinking-related behaviors among those for whom religion is not important, thus approaching the already-lower rates for more religious students.

REFERENCES


REFERENCE NOTES

1. This study was supported by funds from Indiana University and the State University of New York College at Potsdam. Reprint requests should be sent to David J. Hanson, State University of New York College, Potsdam, NY 13676 or Ruth C. Engs, HPER 116, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

2. Order of authorship determined randomly by flip of coin.

3. As categorized by the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse: North East = CT, DE, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV; North Central = IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, WI; South = AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NM, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX; West = AZ, AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, ND, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY.