

The Representation of Alcohol Consumption in the *Indiana Daily Student's* Coverage of the Little 500

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College student alcohol consumption increases during student-constructed holidays, leaving a lasting impact on campus culture and student experiences. To analyze the portrayal of alcohol consumption in college newspapers, this study examines the coverage of alcohol consumption in the Indiana Daily Student (IDS) during the Little 500 bicycle race at Indiana University. After a review of 10,738 IDS articles, the results provide student affairs practitioners with insights about student perceptions regarding risky behavior during student-constructed holidays.

Alcohol use is prevalent on college campuses (Stupiansky, 2008) and has been an “important part of the American college experience since the eighteenth century” (Vander Ven, 2011, p. 8). Fifty percent of students have consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting at least once in the previous month (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009). Based on results from a self-reported questionnaire in 2002, 31% of college students met the criteria for alcohol dependency (Knight, Wechsler, Kuo, Seibring, Weitzman, & Schuckit, 2002). In addition to typical drinking behaviors on college campuses, alcohol use increases during major campus and community special events (e.g. Homecoming) and personal celebrations like birthdays (Lefkowitz, Patrick, Morgan, Bezemer, & Vasilenko, 2012; Rutledge, Park, & Sher, 2008). On Indiana University’s (IU) Bloomington campus, the annual Little 500 bicycle races and the related unofficial and official events (Indiana University Student Foundation, 2013a) is an example of a large student-constructed holiday.

Students believe that college newspapers represent a college community (Armstrong & Collins, 2009; Gaziano & McGrath, 1987). College newspapers typically cover campus events and holidays. This coverage influences students’ perceptions of campus culture, which includes alcohol consumption (Lefkowitz et al., 2012). Previous literature indicates that students overestimate alcohol consumption among their peers (Marshall, Roberts, Donnelly, & Rutledge, 2011; Perkins, 2003) and that newspapers influence standards for acceptable behavior (Smith, Twum, & Gielen, 2009).

This study illustrates how the depiction of alcohol during a student-constructed holiday, Little 500 at IU, has changed over time by analyzing the portrayal of the event in the student-run, university-affiliated newspaper, the *Indiana Daily Student (IDS)*.

Literature Review

The following literature review covers three main topics to provide background for the present study. First, we cover

alcohol consumption on college campuses and the reasons it is an important issue in higher education. Second, we explore campus events and their impact on campus culture, specifically regarding the Little 500 at IU. Third, we address the role student newspapers have on college campuses in regard to alcohol use and provide context specifically for the *IDS*. These sections provide comprehensive background information necessary to analyze changes over time in the depiction of alcohol consumption during Little 500 in the *IDS*.

Alcohol Use on College Campuses

Ample research in higher education examines alcohol use and its consequences (Core Institute, 2013b; Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2002; Seaman, 2005; Vander Ven, 2011). Although there is a great deal of information in this area, most of it originates from one source – the Core Institute and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) National Advisory Council, the leading reputable sources on alcohol consumption by college-aged students. In a 2013 study of college student drinking habits, 69.0% of the students surveyed reported consuming alcohol in the last 30 days, and 81.4% of the students surveyed reported consuming alcohol in the last year (Core Institute, 2013b). For students between the ages of 16-20, 63.4% reported consuming alcohol within the last 30 days (Core Institute, 2013b). These results indicate that both those under and over the legal drinking age of 21 consume alcohol frequently.

Students on college campuses consume alcohol through various patterns, including binge drinking. The

NIAAA National Advisory Council (2007) defines binge drinking as “a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram-percent or above” (p. 2). Binge drinking negatively affects the efforts of colleges. This type of drinking not only impairs student safety and quality of living but also the institution’s reputation, relationship with the surrounding community, and overall academic environment (NIAAA, 2002; Seaman, 2005). The Core Institute (2013b) found that more than two of every five students (44.8%) reported binge drinking at least one time in the two weeks prior to completing the survey (Core Institute, 2013b).

Another pattern of drinking behavior among college students is pre-partying. The definition of pre-partying is drinking before going to a main social event where alcohol could be difficult to obtain (Bosari et al., 2007). This behavior is considered a high-risk activity, because pre-partiers are more likely than students who do not pre-party to reach higher alcohol-blood levels and experience more alcohol-related consequences, including personal problems and public misconduct (LaBrie, Hummer, Pedersen, Lac, & Chithambo, 2012).

In the last year, 22% of surveyed students reported alcohol-related personal problems (Core Institute, 2013b). Personal problems include, but are not limited to, personal harm and/or injury, suicide ideation, an inability to stop drinking, and sexual assault (Core Institute, 2013b). Additionally, heavy alcohol use among American college students is associated with death and physical injury (Saylor, 2011; Schaus et al., 2009). The NIAAA estimates that every year 500,000 students are accidentally injured while under the

influence of alcohol (NIAAA, 2002). In order to obtain the emergency medical help needed to address these consequences and injuries, students require the assistance of hospital personnel, emergency medical departments, campus police, resident assistants, and other students (Oster-Aaland, Lewis, Neighbors, Vangness, & Larimer, 2009). At institutions where more than half of the student population binge drinks, college administrators have major concerns about increased numbers of reports of student experiencing serious personal problems as a result of their alcohol consumption (Lefkowitz et al., 2012; Seaman, 2005; Vander Ven, 2011).

Also, alcohol consumption can lead to public misconduct, which includes fights, arguments, interactions with police, vandalism, driving under the influence, and other forms of misconduct (Core Institute, 2013b; Park, 2005). Thirty-three percent of surveyed students reported that they were the victim of or had participated in public misconduct due to drinking or drug use in the year prior to completing the study (Core Institute, 2013b). Similar to serious personal problems, research on the relationship between alcohol consumption and public misconduct of college students shows that each year more than 600,000 students are assaulted by another student under the influence of alcohol (Core Institute, 2013b), 110,000 students are arrested for alcohol-related violations (Hingson et al., 2002), 2.8 million students drive under the influence of alcohol (Core Institute, 2013b), and nearly 11% of student drinkers report vandalizing property under the influence of alcohol (NIAAA, 2002).

Similar to findings from research on alcohol use and student behavior, students believe drinking plays a major

role in the social lives of their peers. However, student beliefs about their peers' alcohol consumption and their peers' reported alcohol consumption do not always align (Lefkowitz et al., 2012). One strand of research regarding students' perceptions of their peers' use of alcohol is social norming, which is perceptions of common and acceptable behavior (Marshall et al., 2011; Perkins, 2003). Generally, students overestimate their peers' alcohol consumption (Marshall et al., 2011; Perkins, 2003). Approximately 82.5% of surveyed male students believed that alcohol constituted a large part of other students' social lives (Core Institute, 2013b). Additionally, 73.1% of surveyed female students believed that alcohol constituted a large part in the majority of other students' social lives (Core Institute, 2013b). Overall, 85.7% of students surveyed believed the majority of students on their campus consumed alcohol at least once a week, while only 69.0% of college students reported actually consuming alcohol during the last month (Core Institute, 2013b).

For some college students, perceptions of drinking influence the relationship between alcohol consumption and social situations, because drinking yields a number of perceived benefits that overshadow the problems generated by alcohol consumption. Some of these perceived benefits include exerting social class, strengthening relationships with peers, active socialization, romantic encounters, stress relief, and acceptance among some peer groups (Lefkowitz et al., 2012; Park, 2004; Park & Grant, 2005; Seaman, 2005; Vander Ven, 2011). Students repeatedly report both positive and negative consequences for typical, non-holiday periods (Core Institute, 2013b, Park,

2004; Park & Grant, 2005; Seaman, 2005; Vander Ven, 2011) as well as for holidays and special occasions (Lefkowitz et al., 2012).

Student-Constructed Holidays

Besides the typical drinking patterns on college campuses, college student alcohol consumption increases during traditionally observed holidays accompanied by breaks, such as Spring Break, Thanksgiving, and New Year's Day (Lefkowitz et al., 2012). In addition to these traditional holidays, college student drinking increases during special celebratory events, such as sporting events and 21st birthday parties (Lefkowitz et al., 2012; Neighbors et al., 2007; Neighbors et al., 2011). Student-constructed holidays are a less studied type of holiday or celebration but is equally important. Both "spontaneous and idiosyncratic" (Lefkowitz et al., 2012, p. 324), student-constructed holidays are occasions specifically created for or by a campus population of students. Characterizations of student-constructed holidays include event-specific risk-taking behaviors, similar to the previously mentioned holiday examples (Lefkowitz et al., 2012). These holidays include both positive (e.g. increased social opportunities) and negative behaviors (e.g. increased binge drinking) related to alcohol consumption (Lefkowitz et al., 2012).

There are many examples of student-constructed holidays across the United States. Students at Syracuse University celebrate May Fest, which signifies the end of school and beginning of spring (About, 2013). This celebration includes a large block party with alcohol allowed and available to students (About, 2013; Rivoli, 2013). Students at Missouri University of Science and Technology

celebrate the "Best Ever" St. Pats. Alumni and students celebrate during this week of activities, which includes street painting, follies, fraternity shillelagh contests, and green beer (Ehrhard, 2013; St. Pat's 2014, 2014). In Bloomington, IN, students similarly celebrate a week of activities, which is Little 500.

Little 500. Little 500 is a student-constructed holiday at IU and a major part of the campus culture (Schwarb, 1999). The IU Student Foundation, which is a philanthropic leadership organization that works to support IU and create enthusiastic students and alumni through campus events, started the Little 500 bicycle races in 1951 (Indiana University Student Foundation, 2013a). The Little 500 races, the largest collegiate bicycle races in the country, raise scholarship money for students (Indiana University Student Foundation, 2013a). Over time, Little 500 grew to encompass races for men and women, university-sponsored events leading up to the races, and activities to promote socializing between students (Schwarb, 1999). Celebrations begin with the qualifying races for biker aspirants approximately one month before the official Little 500 races (Indiana University Student Foundation, 2013b).

Over time, Little 500 developed into a largely popular social event and became known as the "Greatest College Weekend" (Schwarb, 1999). The title of "Greatest College Weekend" can be traced back to the event's advertisements from the mid-1950s (Schwarb, 1999). The combination of the bicycle races, weekend social events, excessive drinking, and coverage on Music Television (MTV) created this reputation (Schwarb, 1999). Similar to the student-constructed holidays Lefkowitz et al. (2012) discussed, "the

festive parties and events surrounding the [Little 500 races] are characterized by intensive alcohol use" (Stupiansky, 2008, p. 26-27). Stupiansky's (2008) sample group of IU students in 2007 indicated that alcohol consumption was greater during the week of Little 500 than the week before or the week after.

Considering the previous research on alcohol use, student-constructed holidays, and Stupiansky's (2008) examination of Little 500, the authors believe that analyzing student newspapers provides an interesting and alternative methodology, which focuses on student voices surrounding the event.

Media and Student Newspapers

Print media focuses on topics that interest readers and influences the standards for acceptable behavior (Smith, Twum, & Gielen, 2009; Yankovitzky & Stryker, 2001). Although media has great power, few media content analysis studies specifically focus on alcohol consumption (Smith, Twum, & Gielen, 2009). Yankovitzky and Stryker (2001) determined that media could indirectly affect youth binge drinking by increasing the social acceptability of this dangerous behavior. Furthermore, Lyons, Dalton, and Hoy (2006) found that young adult magazines show alcohol consumption and binge drinking as "normative and cool, adult and professional" (p. 229). These findings indicate that media can make a difference in young adults' beliefs about normal behavior, and these beliefs then can influence a young adult's behavior.

Few recent works of literature have examined the coverage and reporting of alcohol consumption, specifically in college newspapers. In a study of student newspapers in 1994 and 1995, Atkin and DeJong (2000) discovered that alcohol was mentioned in approximately one of

every two college newspaper issues published in the United States. The content of the alcohol coverage varied in frequency. Some of the mentions of alcohol were in multiple categories (Atkin & DeJong, 2000). Three-fourths of the alcohol articles related to social, legal, safety, or health issues; one-fourth related to drug and alcohol education; one-fifth related to basic alcohol education information; and very few related to detection, intervention, or treatment for alcohol-related problems (Atkin & DeJong, 2000).

College newspapers mirror the general media in their ability to influence their readers, and they typically have high credibility and wide readership on the home campus (Armstrong & Collins, 2009; Atkin & DeJong, 2000). Additionally, college students view college and local newspapers as equally credible (Armstrong & Collins, 2009), and they believe that campus newspapers better engage student readers and represent the college community (Armstrong & Collins, 2009; Gaziano & McGrath, 1987). Because of these factors, student newspapers play a significant role in the campus event information transmitted to students. Additionally, the student newspaper acts as a student perspective on campus experiences, because they are student run. At IU, the *IDS* is the published, student perspective on campus.

The Indiana Daily Student. The *IDS* started publishing newspapers in 1867, and it became an auxiliary unit that was editorially independent from IU in 1969 (*IDS*, 2013a). With a current circulation of approximately 14,000, more than 300 locations on campus and in the wider campus community carry the *IDS* in addition to its online presence (*IDS*,

2013b). Most student contributors to the *IDS* study at the Ernie J. Pyle School of Journalism (A. Forray, personal communication, October 28, 2013). However, any student, staff, faculty, or community member can contribute to the printed or online version of the *IDS* via a letter to the editor.

Because the *IDS* is an independent student organization, all newspaper staff members are students. Therefore, examining *IDS* publications provides a clear idea of the social statement the organization makes about alcohol use and the drinking culture on campus. As previously mentioned, students believe that campus newspapers represent the college community (Gaziano & McGrath, 1987). Additionally, articles mentioning alcohol consumption published in the *IDS* before, during, and after Little 500 are relevant to the student perspective. As a way to understand student-constructed holidays, such as Little 500, analyzing the *IDS* would be an interesting and relevant addition to higher education and student affairs literature, specifically when looking at changes event's portrayal since its inception.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the *IDS*'s depiction of alcohol use during Little 500 festivities over time. More specifically, the following research question guided the authors: how has the pattern of coverage of alcohol consumption during Little 500 in the *IDS* changed over time in frequency and topic?

Method

The authors read, coded, and analyzed *IDS* articles from three-year periods in the 1970s, 1990s, and 2010s to examine the

depiction of alcohol consumption during Little 500. The sections below will include explanations of the rationale for selecting the three periods and the authors' quantitative approach that was used in the study.

Periods of Time

All *IDS* issues were obtained from the microfilm and archives departments in the main library on IU Bloomington's campus. The authors selected articles from three periods of time: 1974 to 1976, 1993 to 1995, and 2011 to 2013. The authors chose three-year periods to gain an understanding of a period's characteristics, as opposed to characteristics of one specific year. These periods were chosen for three reasons. First, the *IDS* became an auxiliary unit that was editorially independent from Indiana University in 1969 (*IDS*, 2013a). Prior to that time, journalism students at IU were required to work on the *IDS*, and they received course credits and a grade for their work. Due to the close relationship between the *IDS* and the School of Journalism, independent student voices concerning alcohol coverage were possibly limited. Therefore, the authors chose periods after 1969 to ensure that all articles selected for the study were printed when the *IDS* was editorially independent. The authors assumed that the governance and editorial oversight of the *IDS* remained the responsibility of students during the periods in which the articles were published.

Second, the authors included a recent period in order to analyze current depictions in the *IDS*. Therefore, the authors chose to select issues from 2011 to 2013, as those are the most recent years of Little 500. In order to effectively examine the depiction of alcohol

consumption over time, the authors analyzed the largest span of time possible since editorial independence took root. However, the authors included a five year buffer period to allow for editorial consistency after the 1969 transition to an auxiliary unit. Therefore, the authors chose to analyze articles from 1974 to 2013, which is approximately four decades.

Finally, the authors wanted to analyze a period that fell between the 1974 to 1976 and 2011 to 2013 periods in order to gain a greater understanding of trends within this wide timespan. After evenly dividing the years between 1976 and 2011, the 1993 to 1995 period was selected. Selecting 1993 to 1995 also allowed the authors to analyze periods approximately the same distance from the passage of the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984. According to the Act, all states must comply with a minimum legal age of 21 for the purchase or public possession of alcoholic beverages (Liebschutz, 1985). While Indiana previously had a minimum drinking age of 21, students from other states attend IU as well. During the semester following the law's adoption, the law possibly had an effect on students who came to IU from states or countries where the previous minimum legal age was lower than 21. The authors assume that the campus drinking culture was in flux immediately prior to and immediately after the law was enacted. Therefore, the first two periods selected, 1974 to 1976 and 1993 to 1995, allow a significant amount of time between the studied years and the passage of the National Minimum Drinking Act of 1984.

Procedure

The authors read and analyzed articles 30 days prior to and 10 days after

the races for the designated academic years. The authors chose 30 days prior to the event because the Little 500 qualification races, the races determining which teams will ride in the main Little 500 event, have historically occurred within 30 days of the Little 500 main events (J. Bailey, personal communication, September 3, 2013). Therefore, the authors believed that articles referencing the Little 500 events would be prevalent beginning at that time. The authors chose to examine *IDS* issues up to 10 days after the races, because Little 500 is one of the last campus social events prior to finals week and the end of the spring semester (Schwarb, 1999).

In order to examine the depiction of alcohol consumption during Little 500, the authors used a quantitative approach to reading, coding, and analyzing *IDS* articles from three periods. The authors focused on articles specifically linked to Little 500 and alcohol consumption. The authors scanned for items that utilize previous research, such as alcohol-related violations (Myhre, Saphir, Flora, Howard, & Gonzalez, 2002) and negative consequences of alcohol consumption (e.g., hangovers and injuries) (Core Institute, 2013b). Additionally, many of the concepts to be coded were chosen because of the authors' para-professional experiences with students during the Little 500 event (e.g., Greek life, police involvement, student pre-partying). For a complete list of codes and definitions, refer to Appendix A.

The authors conducted a preliminary scan of the April 1997 *IDS* issues in order to determine which concepts they would add to the coding definitions. This trial consisted of three authors examining each article together, discussing which concepts were represented, and

identifying themes in the articles that were not represented in the codes. The authors chose to focus only on certain sections of the *IDS*. Therefore, this study excludes the “Around the World” section, the “Around the Region” section, Associated Press articles, nationally published comic strips, and classifieds. While these sections might contain articles about alcohol consumption, it is unlikely that the focus would be on alcohol consumption pertaining to Little 500.

The authors indicated whether the concept is present in the article (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). There is one measure, *substance*, which is indicated in a non-binary code in order to specify the type of alcohol (1 = *beer*, 2 = *mixed drink*, 3 = *wine*, 4 = *shots*, 5 = *hard liquor* [if not in mixed drink or shot form], 6 = *malt liquor*, 7 = *other* [please specify], 8 = *unknown*). The authors also indicated the issue number, article title, and section. The authors briefly summarized each article and made note of any pertinent quotes or overarching themes relevant to the study. All of these items are documented in a spreadsheet.

All five authors were randomly assigned to code approximately one third of all the analyzed issues of the *IDS* with two authors coding each year’s issues. Randomization minimized the effects of different coding styles to ensure a decreased systematic influence that acts as a confounding variable. In order to decrease possible human error in coding and differences in coding styles, the authors reviewed issues from multiple periods. According to the literature, multiple individuals coding the same material increases reliability (Pelham & Blanton, 2007). After finishing the coding process, the authors reconciled any differences that appeared in the data.

Descriptive statistics illustrate overall patterns, changes in patterns, trends, and depiction of alcohol consumption over time. The authors examined the frequency of the different concepts, pulled quotes and comments to determine the perspective in *IDS* articles mentioning alcohol use related to Little 500, and considered relevant the historical context to provide a logical frame.

Results

In total, 10,738 *IDS* articles were reviewed for this project. About 4,450 articles were reviewed from the 1974 to 1976 period, 3,777 were reviewed from the 1993 to 1995 period, and 2,511 articles were reviewed from the 2011 to 2013 period. The average number of articles per *IDS* issue decreased over time: 51.2 from 1974 to 1976, 39.8 from 1993 to 1995, and 28.2 from 2011 to 2013. The proportion of articles that mentioned Little 500 and alcohol use separately in relation to the total number of articles increased steadily over time. During the 1974 to 1976 period, there were 58 (1.3%) articles that mentioned alcohol use and 150 (3.3%) articles that mentioned Little 500. From 1993 to 1995, 170 (4.5%) articles included references to alcohol use and 308 (8.1%) articles included references to Little 500. From 2011 to 2013, 163 (6.5%) articles included references to alcohol use and 283 (11.3%) articles included references to Little 500. These results indicate articles that include both alcohol and Little 500 have become more prevalent in recent years (2011 to 2013).

The number of articles that included references to both alcohol use and Little 500 also increased overtime: 8 (.18%) from 1974 to 1976, 41 (1.1%) from 1993

to 1995, and 65 (2.6%) from 2011 to 2013. The total of all these articles is 114. Therefore, the 1970s contained the least coverage of Little 500 and a lower association of alcohol and Little 500. Conversely, the greatest coverage was found in the three most recent years. Additionally, 35 (30.7%) of the 114 articles that were coded came from the Opinion section, 28 articles (24.6%) came from the Front page, 10 articles (8.8%) came from the Little 500 special edition,

and 41 articles (35.9%) came from other sections.

Table 1 contains emergent themes of articles that mentioned both alcohol use and Little 500. The three most prevalent themes were negative consequences (67), police (52), and Greek affiliation (34). The three least common themes were pre-partying (6), emergency/ medical assistance (6), and binge drinking (18). In regards to the substance theme, unknown and beer were the most prevalent substances coded.

TABLE 1

Themes in Data by Year

Themes	1974-1976	1993-1995	2011-2013	Total
Binge	2	3	13	18
Emergency/Medical	0	0	6	6
Greek	5	13	16	34
Negative	2	27	38	67
Police	0	30	22	52
Positive	2	7	28	37
Pre-partying	0	2	4	6
Substance (substance known)	6	19	23	48
Substance: Beer	4	18	17	39
Substance: Mixed Drink	1	1	6	8
Substance: Wine	1	1	2	4
Substance: Shots	0	1	3	4
Substance: Hard Liquor	0	1	6	7
Substance: Malt Liquor	0	0	1	1
Substance: Other	0	0	7	7
Substance: Unknown	3	19	41	63
Underage	1	20	10	31
Total Articles Coded:	8	41	65	114

For the 1974 to 1976 period, 8 articles were coded, and Greek was the most prevalent theme. Specifically, 5 of the 8 articles (62.5%) that mentioned both alcohol use and Little 500 also included references to Greek affiliations, such as fraternities and/or sororities. Binge drinking, negative consequences, and underage drinking were other themes that emerged in articles during the 1970s period. Emergency/medical assistance, police, and pre-partying were three themes that were not mentioned in articles reviewed. In addition to the themes that emerged, the authors noted that mention of alcohol use was directly related to the Little 500 races, such as discussions of riders refraining from consuming alcohol during training periods and individuals consuming alcohol during the actual race.

During the 1993 to 1995 period, police emerged as the most prevalent theme in coded articles. In 41 articles that mentioned both alcohol and Little 500, 30 articles also referenced police (73.2%). Negative consequences and underage drinking were the second and third most prevalent themes that emerged in articles that mentioned both alcohol use and Little 500 during the 1990s period. Specifically, 27 of the 41 articles (65.8%) referenced negative consequences and 20 of the 41 articles (48.9%) referenced underage drinking. Emergency/medical assistance was the only theme that was not mentioned in articles that were coded during the 1990s period. When coding the articles from 1993 to 1995, the authors noted that there were several mentions of previous Little 500 races. The authors also observed warnings of “no tolerance policies” and an increase in articles such as “A Real Look at Little 500” (Rand,

1993). In this opinion article, the author states, “We’ve got everyone but the ‘World’s Greatest College Weekend’” (Rand, 1993).

In the 65 articles coded from the 2011 to 2013 period, a negative consequence was the most prevalent theme. In the articles that mentioned both alcohol use and Little 500, 38 of the 65 (58.5%) referenced negative consequences. Police, Greek affiliation, binge drinking, and underage drinking were other prevalent themes in these articles. Specifically, 22 of the 65 articles (33.8%) referenced police, 16 of the 65 articles (24.6%) referenced Greek affiliation, 13 of the 65 articles (20.0%) referenced binge drinking, and 10 of 65 (15.4%) of the articles referenced underage drinking. Found in Table 1, only the 2011 to 2013 period referenced all themes coded. Additionally, there was great emphasis on the Little 500 concert during the 2011 to 2013 period.

Examples of the prevalent themes from 2011 to 2013 are vivid. In an article titled “Sex and the Common Man,” the *IDS* reporter states that the entire Little 500 week is the “pinnacle of college debauchery” and that “students have been trying to outdo, outlast and outdrink each other” (Mech, 2011, p. 4). Another article explores the “terrible concerts and binge drinking” that occur during Little 500, noting that concerts and binge drinking led to drunken fights (Jackson, 2012, p. 7). Additionally, Robert Weith, the Director of Residential Operations at the time, was quoted explaining that floor lounges and computer rooms would be locked because “historically a bunch of folks, not necessarily residents, will end up coming in intoxicated and crash there” (Aronson, 2011, p. 8). These examples capture the prevalent themes through a

more qualitative perspective, providing a view into student perceptions of Little 500 and alcohol consumption through the *IDS*.

Discussion

The analysis of the student newspaper allowed the authors to conceptualize alcohol use in relation to a major campus event over various periods, which provided insights into campus culture and student experience. The results gathered provide student affairs practitioners with a deeper understanding of the ways in which student created media depicts alcohol use surrounding student-constructed holidays. By using this form of analysis, the authors constructed a method that allowed them to identify several themes and assess changes in alcohol depiction in relation to Little 500 over time. The results indicated that from 1974 to 2013 the percentage of articles including references to alcohol and Little 500 increased steadily throughout the analyzed periods of time. In the articles that contained both alcohol and Little 500, coding revealed that the top three prevalent themes were negative consequences, police, and Greek affiliation.

In the 1970s, Greeks comprised the majority of students involved in race activities, (Schwarb, 1999) and understandably, Greek life was the most prevalent theme in coded articles. Greek life as a prevailing theme can be attributed to the type of media coverage the race received during this time. In the 1970s, media depicted the focus of the weekend as the Little 500 races and included discussions between Greek students and students who lived in residence halls. Beginning in the early 1990s, coverage focused less on the races

and shifted to portray a party atmosphere surrounding Little 500. Mainstream media, including MTV's coverage of the 1991 Little 500 event, possibly caused this shift. The most prevalent theme in the 1990s was police. A likely explanation for this prevalence is that in 1991 (two years prior to the coded years), MTV stationed in Bloomington in order to cover Little 500. This event resulted in riots, requiring a greater police presence to get the event under control (Schwarb, 1999).

In the 1990s, there were multiple references in the *IDS* to increased police presence and a zero tolerance policy for underage drinking. These two themes were possibly an effect from the riots intentionally included to curb the amount of illegal behavior and increase the safety of participants. For example, police officers discussed in a 1993 article titled "Area Police Gearing Up for the Little 500 Chaos" the ways in which they would crack down on driving under the influence and underage drinking during Little 500 (Poyser & Ross, 1993). Another important factor to consider is that the 1990s articles were published after the Drinking Act of 1984, which established a nation-wide legal drinking age of 21. Because Indiana University is an institution that attracts students from across the nation, the change in the national drinking age was possibly new for out-of-state students, who come from states where the drinking age was lower. Consequently, there could have been an increased focus on underage drinking, because the same behavior was not nationally considered illegal ten years prior. Again, this theme could run parallel to the national change to and enforcement of the new drinking age to crack down on underage drinking on college campuses across the nation.

Finally, the most prevalent theme in the 2010s was negative consequences, which can be accredited to the increased knowledge of the effects of alcohol consumption on college students across the nation from multiple sources (Core Institute, 2013b; Engs, Diebold, & Hansen, 1996; Hingson, Heeren, Zakocs, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2002; Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009; Wechsler et al., 2002). Between 2002 and 2011, the NIAAA created many initiatives targeting college and underage drinking, such as the Task Force on College Drinking, and the organization published “A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges, and creating the Underage Drinking Research Initiative” (NIAAA, n.d.). Additionally, the authors observed that a large amount of the Little 500 articles reference the Little 500 concert. The shift in references illustrates the shift in focus from the race to the supplementary events.

The majority of the 114 coded articles were found in the Opinion section and on the front page. Students of the newspaper staff and general student body are contributors to the Opinion section, which allows for a more diverse student perspective of Little 500 and alcohol consumption. Throughout the periods of time, the majority of articles from the 1990s Opinion section were written in protest of the police force. Revisiting Atkins and DeJong (2002), the student perspective of the college culture is communicated in direct opposition to law enforcement and university officials over their actions, such as strict enforcement of underage drinking laws. In addition, the front page contained the second most coded articles, which illustrates that alcohol consumption during Little 500 is represented through front-page news

coverage and entrenched in the campus culture (Atkin & DeJong, 2002).

Implications

This study adds recent empirical support to the literature examining the coverage and reporting of alcohol consumption in student run college newspapers. The frequency of alcohol mentioned in the newspaper articles revealed a trend of increased references over the years. The most prevalent themes further support Atkin and DeJong’s (2002) findings, which indicate that the majority of alcohol coverage content relates to social, legal, safety, or health issues. The current study also provides additional insight into the phenomenon of student-constructed holidays. In this study, the authors examined the ways in which the historical context of Little 500 framed the general trajectory of the event and its perceived impact on campus culture. Additionally, this context could be used to guide IU student affairs practitioners to return to previous Little 500 observances and celebrations.

This information is relevant to student affairs practitioners not only at IU but also at college campuses across the nation. The study provides a greater understanding of the ways in which student-run campus newspapers portray alcohol use and campus events. This is relevant, because student affairs practitioners can use our transferrable method to proactively challenge alcohol use during campus events. For example, student affairs practitioners can intentionally combat the negative portrayal of events through their own focus on the foundation and purpose of the celebrations by familiarizing

themselves with the messages that students are publishing and receiving about student-constructed events.

Without remission, we acknowledge the limitations that exist within our study. This study offers a generalization of the themes of one student-constructed holiday at one university. The newspaper staff is one group of students, even though sections, such as the Opinion section, allow for submissions outside of the staff. The timeframe of 30 days prior to and 10 days after Little 500 is a short period. Covering all of the years or decades would have provided more data to assess the campus culture and could have yielded different results. Finally, the themes for which we coded were based largely on current literature. It is possible there were few articles that mentioned coded themes, because the themes themselves were not applicable in the 1970s or 1990s.

We acknowledging that future research is necessary. Potential studies of this kind can examine other institutions' unique, student-constructed holidays and large campus events, such as Welcome Weeks and Homecoming. Expanding the research will add to the diversity of empirical data on the topic. As we only coded, reviewed, and analyzed articles that depicted both alcohol consumption and Little 500, other studies could look at the depiction of alcohol in the alcohol

only articles, because these examinations can also yield compelling data. Another extension of the study could be to further break down coding into detailed, specific themes. Adding more detailed coding would provide a better assessment of specific issues that are present in the college culture. Additionally, future research could examine the messages students actually take away from articles that mention alcohol use, because we do not address student perceptions when they are initially exposed to the messages discussed in this study.

While student affairs practitioners can use these results to inform methods for reducing alcohol consumption among college students during student-constructed holidays, they should be cautious when using these findings to fit the specific needs of their institution. Through a thorough examination of the messages that are portrayed in student newspapers, student affairs professionals can become aware of the messages that are not present: responsible alcohol consumption and sober celebrations. The idea of absent messages is an area that administrators can fill in the gaps through discussions about responsible alcohol consumption and foundations of campus events. These discussions could promote safe participation in student-constructed holidays.

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Appendix A

Coding Definitions

Binge Drinking: Any reference to consuming alcohol that brings one's blood alcohol concentration to .08% or above.

The NIAAA National Advisory Council (2007) has defined "binge' [as] a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram-percent or above" (p. 2). This definition corresponds to a man consuming approximately 5 alcoholic beverages or a woman consuming approximately 4 alcoholic beverages in a span of two hours (NIAAA, 2007). Approximately 44.8% of students reported binge drinking at least one time in the two weeks prior to completing the distributed survey (Core Institute, 2013b), which indicates that binge drinking is prevalent on college campuses. Binge drinking and underage drinking have been viewed as having negative effects on the efforts and purposes of colleges by "compromising the educational environment, the safety of students, the quality of life on campus[es], town/gown relationships, and university reputation" (NIAAA, 2002, p. 8; Seaman, 2005).

Emergency/Medical Assistance: Any reference to emergency medical assistance (i.e. hospital, ambulances, paramedics).

Heavy alcohol use among American college students is associated with death and physical injury, among other things (Saylor, 2011; Schaus et al., 2009). Correspondingly, students who consume alcohol in a harmful manner sometimes find themselves in situations in which emergency medical care is needed. When seeking medical assistance, students have reported using various sources, including hospital/emergency departments, campus police, resident assistants, and another students (Oster-Aaland, Lewis, Neighbors, Vangness, & Larimer, 2009). Therefore, it can be assumed that *IDS* articles regarding events and incidents associated with heavy consumptions of alcohol also included references to emergency medical assistance.

Greek: Any reference to Fraternity/Sorority Life activity, including, but not limited to, a Greek house, any respective fraternity or sorority chapter, any respective Greek council – Interfraternity Council (IFC), Panhellenic Association (PHA), Multicultural Greek Council (MCGC), or National Panhellenic Council (NPHC) – and/or a Greek affiliated student.

Greek organizations have been deemed "the best environment on campus in which to examine the role of social influence processes on alcohol use and problems" (Capone, Wood, Borsari, & Laird, 2007, p. 318). Greek life and its respective members comprise a "subgroup that consumes alcohol in greater quantities...and emulates a social environment and culture in which drinking alcohol is a key part of life" (Barry, 2007, p. 307). "Fraternity and sorority members have long been shown to be at high risk for alcohol problems" (Park, Sher, Wood, & Krull, 2009, p. 241), which makes Greek students a relevant student population to examine in relation to Little 500 and alcohol consumption.

Negative Consequences: Any reference to alcohol in a negative context, including, but not limited to negative consequences from use.

According to research, a negative context of alcohol “expresses concerns of the hazards of alcohol use or abuse” (Moellers, 2005, p.61). Studies have found various negative consequences of alcohol use reported by college students, such as “hangovers/sickness; unplanned kissing/sexual activity; fighting/arguments; consequences due to another person’s drinking/taking care of others; accidents; aberrant behavior” (Park, 2004, p. 315); saying or doing something one should not/being out of control; trouble with authorities/legal; blacking out; drinking and driving; and bouts of depression (Park & Grant, 2005).

Police: Any reference to Indiana University Police Department (IUPD), Bloomington Police Department (BPD), or the legal system, including, but not limited to, arrest, bail, and DUI/DWI

Because of drinking or drug use, 33% of students reported that they had been a victim of or a participant in public misconduct (Core Institute, 2013b). Alcohol use can lead to personal misconduct, including “trouble with the police, fighting/argument, DWI/DUI, [and] vandalism” (Core Institute, 2013b, p. 2). Based on the aforementioned information in conjunction with Little 500 as a time of “festive parties and events surrounding the [races which] are characterized by intensive alcohol use” (Stupiansky, 2008, p. 26-27), “police” coded in relation to Little 500.

Pre-partying: Also called pre-loading, pre-bar, or pre-gaming; any reference to drinking alcohol prior to attending a social event.

“Occurs when students drink alcohol before a primary social gathering or event” (Borsari et al., 2007, p. 2695). Additionally, the term is synonymous with “drinking prior to entering a social situation where alcohol would be difficult to obtain” (Borsari et al., 2007, p. 2695). Pre-partying is considered a high-risk activity, because students drink alcohol before going to a destination (i.e. party, bar, concert, sporting event) in which more alcohol may be consumed (LaBrie & Pederson, 2008). Pre-partiers are more likely to reach higher alcohol-blood levels and experience more alcohol-related consequences than those students who do not pre-party (LaBrie, Hummer, Pedersen, Lac, & Chithambo, 2012). Because Little 500 is an annual event of high popularity where alcohol cannot be purchased, it can be assumed that the races and associated events involved a significant amount of pre-partying.

Substance: The following substances were coded:

1 = Beer

2 = Mixed drink

3 = Wine

4 = Shots

5 = Hard Liquor (if not in mixed drink or shot form)

6 = Malt Liquor

7 = Other (please specify)

8 = Unknown

Underage: Any reference to students who are under the age of 21 consuming or possessing alcohol.

Underage drinking is defined as the consumption of alcoholic beverages by anyone who is under the legal drinking age of 21 (Paek & Hove, 2012). Underage drinking is a national issue on college campuses with underage students being much more likely than of-age students to engage in excessive drinking (Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & Castillo, 1995). In fact, Wechsler, Lee, Nelson, and Kuo (2002) estimate that approximately half of all alcohol consumption on college campuses qualifies as underage drinking. With underage drinking being so prevalent on college campuses, it would be expected that it would also be prevalent during the Little 500 event.