THE DRINKING PARTNERSHIP: FACTORS INFLUENCING ALCOHOL CONCORDANCE IN COLLEGE COUPLES

by

JAMYLAH KACHE DUNN

(Under the Direction of Lily D. McNair, Ph.D.)

ABSTRACT

This study examined relationship contentment, length of relationship, alcohol expectancies, and gender roles as potential factors influencing alcohol concordance in couples attending a Southeastern university. Simple linear regression revealed that males’ weekly rates of alcohol consumption were predictive of females’ level of drinking. Consistent with previous research on married couples, relationship contentment was predictive of alcohol concordance in this population. Unlike the results of previous studies, the present analyses suggested that relationship length did not predict alcohol concordance among these couples. The alcohol expectancies of male, but not female partners was predictive of alcohol concordance. Gender roles did not appear related to concordant patterns of drinking in this sample. Explanations of the present results are examined and future directions for research suggested.

INDEX WORDS: Alcohol Concordance, College Drinking, College Couples
THE DRINKING PARTNERSHIP: FACTORS INFLUENCING ALCOHOL
CONCORDANCE IN COLLEGE COUPLES

by

JAMYLAH KACHE DUNN
B.S., Tulane University, 2000

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003
THE DRINKING PARTNERSHIP: FACTORS INFLUENCING ALCOHOL
CONCORDANCE IN COLLEGE COUPLES

by

JAMYLAH KACHE DUNN

Major Professor: Lily D. McNair

Committee: Steven R. H. Beach
Velma McBride Murry

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2003
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those who graciously lent their support during this process. Most importantly, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Lily D. McNair for her wonderful support and guidance throughout my graduate career. Also, I must extend my warmest thanks and sincerest gratitude to Elyria A. Zuniga, James A. Dunn, Jr., and Jamile A. Dunn, my mother, father, and brother for their wisdom, help, love, and support. This final product is a culmination of years of training, coaching, and personal as well as professional development. Finally, I would like to thank Garnette Cotton, Angela Black, and Natasha Johnson for their encouragement and support during this process. Each one acknowledged here has contributed uniquely to my progress as a researcher in the field of psychology.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Roles and Ethnicity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Prevalence and Patterns in Adult Couples</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables Relating to Alcohol Consumption in Adult Couples</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Prevalence and Patterns in College Individuals</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Hypotheses</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and Participants</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Strategies</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Data</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlational Analyses</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1: Alcohol Concordance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Ethnic Demographics Data ...................................................... 26
Table 2: Participant Descriptives for DDQ scores, Relationship Length,
Femininity Scores on the BEM, MSIS, and AEQ scores ............... 27
Table 3: Intercorrelations Among All Measures ................................. 28
Table 4: Summary of Alcohol Concordance Among College Couples .... 30
Table 5: Comparison of BEM scores for the Current versus Normative
Sample .............................................................................................. 33
Table 6: Summary of Linear Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting
Alcohol Concordance ........................................................................ 34
Introduction

Only recently has research investigated the role of alcohol in romantic relationships. The *drinking partnership* involves the influence of romantic partners on each other’s patterns of alcohol consumption. These partnerships have previously been examined in terms of factors relating to drinking concordance and convergence patterns. Drinking concordance refers to the degree to which romantic partners consume alcoholic beverages in similar patterns or proportions. Convergence of drinking patterns involves the degree to which one partner adjusts their drinking behaviors to be in accordance with the drinking patterns or proportions of their partner. A review of the literature yields a recurring theory of convergence that attempts to explain consumption patterns in adult couples. The convergence hypothesis suggests that during the course of a relationship women become more like men in many positive and negative respects, including behaviors relating to patterns of alcohol consumption (Neve & Drop, 1996).

An explanation of the convergence hypothesis is that traditionally “feminine” characteristics such as passivity and lack of assertiveness may play a major role in the increased likelihood for women to adopt the habits or characteristics of their mates in heterosexual relationships. Literature in the arena of gender roles connotes that gender-specific sex-role traits form as a result of both biological and sociological factors (Lindsey, 1994). Like many personal characteristics, the gender roles endorsed by an individual are often a function of one’s cultural background. Researchers examining gender roles in relation to ethnicity have purported that African Americans are less likely than European Americans to endorse “gender-typed personality traits” (Harris, 1996;
Burgess, 1994; Hunter & Davis, 1992; Millham & Smith, 1981). Given the potential relationship between ascribed gender roles and alcohol convergence in couples, it seems fundamental that the dynamics of this relationship be examined.

Patterns of alcohol convergence have been examined based on gender differences in the general population (Neve & Drop, 1996) as well as in adult couples (Demers et al., 1999; Graham & Braun, 1999; Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999). However, research has also demonstrated that the drinking patterns of college populations are very different from those of the general adult population and married couples. Furthermore, research indicates that the drinking patterns of African American students differ from those of European American students. Given that college students disproportionately represent the drinking population, it is imperative that researchers examine ethnicity within the drinking dyad as one of the many facets related to alcohol consumption in this population. Many students enter college during adolescence, a period in which peer evaluation is common and peer acceptance is highly sought after (Aronson et al., 1999). Information about the mechanisms underlying drinking behaviors with respect to significant others in college populations may elucidate possible risk factors for problematic drinking patterns in this population and generate valuable insight leading to more effective interventions.

Theoretical Foundations

Researchers have suggested several factors that may affect the variability of drinking patterns within couples. Some researchers suggest that several behavioral tendencies might account for spousal drinking patterns being positively associated, including assortative mating, spousal influence, and common life experience (Cahalan,
Assortative mating involves individuals choosing to associate with persons whose attitudes and behaviors are similar to their own. Demers, Bisson, and Palluy (1999) have purported that when sharing a life with someone, there is often an implicit assortative mating process contributing to the fact that like drinkers are with like drinkers. According to this theory, heavy drinkers are more likely to involve themselves in relationships with other heavy drinkers due to this commonality (Hall et al., 1983; Jacob and Bremer, 1986). Conversely, assortative mating can also involve individuals choosing to associate with persons whose personalities complement their own (i.e. “opposites attract”). According to this tenet, very heavy drinkers are more likely to involve themselves in relationships with lighter drinkers due to a need for one partner to compensate for the other.

Individual patterns of drinking are antecedents of the romantic relationship and may be maintained independent of the relationship. At the individual level of relationships, there is often a marked shift away from more individualistic values toward more interdependent and socially positive values consistent with the adoption of the new role of partner (Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999). Therefore, when behavior is different prior to the relationship, some believe that "spouses are likely to adjust behavior reciprocally" (Sallis & Nader, 1988; Zimmerman & Conner, 1989). This suggests that during the course of a romantic relationship partners may adjust their drinking patterns to become more like one another in an attempt to equate with the new identity of considering themselves one entity.

Others have found that gender plays an important role in the drinking relationship between partners. Demers, Bisson, and Palluy (1999) concluded that "drinking patterns
are gender related...[and] that various social conditions have different impacts on men and women with respect to drinking patterns” (p. 369). Holmila (1988) asserted that social contagion reflects one process through which husbands and wives might influence each others’ drinking. Social contagion involves the transmission of emotions or behaviors from one party to another (Aronson et al, 1999). The influence of social contagion might be demonstrated by the extent that the couple drank together as opposed to drinking independently with friends. Differences in individual drinking patterns as opposed to one’s drinking patterns while in the presence of one’s partner could also be a function of this type of contagion. Research suggests that social contagion operates from male to female significantly more frequently in alcoholism than it does in the other direction (Gomberg, 1976). Although women are more likely to attempt to change their drinking patterns to be more consistent with those of their male partner, drinking concordance between husbands and wives decreases when men are very heavy drinkers (Corbett et al., 1991). This pattern may be due to the different manners in which alcohol impinges on the physiology of men and women. It may also be accounted for by the negative alcohol expectancies that female partners might possess about the consequences of the male partner’s drinking.

Alcohol expectancies relating to couple interactions may be integrally related to drinking patterns in couples. That is, those individuals who expect to have positive interactions with their partner after consuming alcohol may be more likely than others to drink in the presence of their partner. Leigh (1987) suggests that one's alcohol expectancies of other people might also be related to their individual alcohol consumption. In other words, one partner might be more inclined to drink when they
believe that their partner's drinking is associated with positive experiences. Leigh alluded to Edwards's (1954) utility theory, which states that behavior serves as a "function of the perceived likelihood of its consequences and an evaluation of the desirability of those consequences" (p. 468). Therefore, positive alcohol expectancies might result in concordant drinking behavior between two individuals.

Cotton (2001) contends that the alcohol expectancies of African American college students are different from those of Caucasian students. This assertion maintains that Caucasian students hold stronger and more pervasive alcohol expectancies than do African American students. Given that individual alcohol expectancies greatly influence one’s propensity to consume alcoholic beverages, it seems intuitive to suggest that individuals who hold strong alcohol expectancies would engage in drinking behaviors different from those whose expectations are not as strong. Consequently, African American individuals involved in romantic relationships may exhibit different drinking patterns and behaviors than Caucasian individuals in romantic relationships.

Drinking together may serve to foster intimacy and socialization. According to Akers’ social learning theory (Aronson, 1999), significant others provide the environment in which exposure to attitudes and beliefs, imitation of models and reinforcement take place. Therefore, the lesser drinker might be more willing to accept or conform to the partner’s drinking patterns and may even reinforce these patterns. The direction of influence is unilateral in that the wife adapts to the husband's drinking patterns but not the reverse (Cahalan, 1978; Jacob & Seilhamer, 1982; White et al., 1990). Covington and Surrey (1997) suggest that women's use of alcohol might be motivated by a desire to initiate or maintain relationships which increases the possibility that the male’s behavior
is more likely to be at least partially mimicked by the female. This suggestion implies that the stereotypically submissive role played by females in romantic relationships fosters women’s motivations to “mimic” the behavior of their partner.

**Gender Roles and Ethnicity**

Ascribed gender roles are most easily discerned by behaviors exhibited in the context of romantic relationships. Gender roles are identified as the expected attitudes and behaviors that a society or culture associates with each sex (Lindsey, 1994). This term also refers to the perceived normative rights and responsibilities of men and women in a given society. The gender roles that individuals endorse may be categorized as “traditional” or “non-traditional.” Traditional gender roles involve the notion that certain characteristics and responsibilities should be differentiated by gender or sex (i.e. ‘only men should be competitive’ or ‘only women should cook’). Conversely, non-traditional gender roles reflect a disinclination to assign roles and responsibilities according to one’s status as male or female (Uzzell, 1986). Due to the sociocultural factors that cultivate and encourage one’s expectations about the appropriate behavior of oneself and others, it is important to examine the links between such factors and their effects on gender roles in relationships.

It should be noted that the terms “gender roles” and “sex roles” are used interchangeably within the literature in this area. These concepts refer to the same underlying constructs relating to masculinity (perceived behaviors or characteristics of males), femininity (perceived behaviors or characteristics of females), and androgyny (perceived gender neutral behaviors or characteristics).
Research has indicated that the gender roles endorsed by individuals may be linked to one’s ethnic and cultural background. Harris (1996) examined the gender roles of a sample of 1,740 African American and Caucasian men and women. The findings of this study suggest that African American males and females have an equal propensity to describe themselves in terms of masculine traits. In contrast, Caucasian males were more likely than Caucasian females to describe themselves in terms of masculine traits. Regardless of ethnicity, females were more likely than males to describe themselves in terms of feminine traits although this trend was more consistent in Caucasian individuals. DeLeon (1993) found that when assessing masculinity, femininity, and androgyny with the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), African American women scored higher than women of other ethnicities on the scale’s measure of masculinity. Similarly, Binion (1990) found that African American women were more androgynous than Caucasian women. Other researchers purport that African American samples place “minimal value upon sex roles differentiated on the basis of trait-descriptive characteristics” whereas Caucasian research participants exhibit “substantial value for such differentiation (Millham & Smith, 1981).” These research findings lend evidence to the notion that culture and ethnicity play a prominent role in influencing the gender roles to which individuals subscribe.

If African American and Caucasian adults appear to ascribe to different gender roles, it is likely that these distinct beliefs are developed during childhood or adolescents. Filardo (1996) evaluated gender patterns in African American and Caucasian adolescents. This study assessed these patterns in groups of adolescents by examining the level of activity exhibited by males and females within the groups, the level of influence
exhibited by male and females in the groups, as well as methods of communication. The results indicated that groups of African Americans exhibited greater gender equality in terms of level of activity and level of influence between males and females within a group. The results evaluating methods of communication were more mixed. In groups of Caucasian adolescents, females engaged in significantly more acts that were positive or validating reactions, for example “uh-huh,” while in African American groups there were no gender differences in the percentages of these acts. However, in other forms of communication examined in this study, African American female adolescents engaged in significantly more active and assertive styles of communicating than men. Filardo (1996) concludes that the speech of Caucasian female adolescents may be described as more tentative, conciliatory, and polite as well as less powerful than the speech of African American female adolescents.

Researchers have alluded to a variety of social, economic, and cultural reasons for the apparent variable sex-role differences among African American and Caucasian communities. McCray (1980) purports that the historical racial discrimination and subsequent economic oppression faced by African Americans have created these modified gender roles. A fundamental difference in the experience of African American and Caucasian females is a necessity to actively and consistently identify as members of the work force. While traditional familial gender roles endorse the husband as “breadwinner” and the wife as “homemaker,” the sex role flexibility exhibited by African American couples may serve as an adaptive response to an economic necessity.

An alternative explanation suggests that neutrality of gender roles extends back to African cultural patterns. Sudarkasa (1987) explains that in many African societies
women hold many leadership positions in the community, at home, and at work. Consequently, traditionally perceived rights, responsibilities, and privileges are distributed without regard for gender. Ladner (1972) notes that African American women are encouraged to display traditionally male characteristics such as independence and strength. It is likely that these characteristics are encouraged to facilitate an African American woman’s ability to balance the task of maintaining both work and home responsibilities, which is characteristic of African American femininity. Maintaining this balance is not stereotypically or traditionally “feminine” in Caucasian communities.

Research demonstrating the malleable gender roles endorsed by African American couples posits that these couples are more likely than their Caucasian counterparts to have a balance of relative authority within the relationship (DeJarnett & Raven, 1981). This balance of power translates into both household decision making as well as the distribution of household chores. Due to the more egalitarian relationships endorsed by African Americans couples, it seems probable that behaviors that change in the context of the relationship may do so bilaterally rather than unilaterally (typically female behaving more like male partner).

Drinking Prevalence and Patterns in Adult Couples

A review of the literature yielded no studies comparing the drinking prevalence and patterns of African American and Caucasian couples. By comparing wives and husbands in prevalence rates of drinking, some studies suggest that not only do women drink less frequently, but also men consume more per occasion than do women. Demers et al. (1997) evaluated the association of wives' alcohol use with their husbands’. Upon surveying 6,582 (3,872 after analysis, correction, and weighting) couples, it was found
that 21% of wives and 15% of husbands were concordant by abstaining from drinking. They also found 27% of wives and 13% of husbands drink less than once a month while 5% of wives and 15% of husbands drank four or more times a week. The authors also examined the prevalence of heavier consumption rates indicated by 5 drinks or more on one occasion. They found that 70% of wives and 46% of husbands never consumed 5 or more drinks on occasion. The authors also reported that 28% of wives and 43% of husbands endorsed the 5+ category one to twelve times over the past year. For the heaviest consumption category, the authors found that 2% of wives and 11% of husbands consumed 5+ drinks thirteen or more times in one year. The overwhelming majority of participants in this study were European American (92%); therefore, these patterns of drinking should be examined in African American couples.

Research has identified specific linear increases in alcohol consumption by women over the last two decades while consumption by men has stabilized and in some cases actually decreased (Neve & Drop, 1996). Despite the increase in females’ alcohol consumption in recent decades, studies still support the notion that women drink less and less frequently than men. In one of only a few studies that have examined concordance between spouses, almost 75% of the couples reported concordance on alcohol consumption in the past year. In concordant couples, 47% of the couples reported both being drinkers while 27% reported abstaining from drinking. In couples with discordant drinking patterns, 20% reported that the husband drank while the wife abstained, and 6% reported that the wife drank while the husband abstained. In concordant drinking couples, the authors found that wives’ drinking increased in frequency and quantity where 21% drank one to three times a month, 33% drank one to three times a week, and 46%
drank four to seven days a week. The husbands' drinking frequencies in these relationships were as follows: 19% drank one to three times a month, 20% drank one to three times a week, while 61% drank four to seven days a week (Graham & Braun, 1999).

Research findings lend evidence to the assumption that couples who marry have similar drinking patterns the year before marriage and that drinking gradually decreases over the first marital transition year. Leonard and Das Eiden (1999) examined the drinking patterns of newlyweds over the transition to marriage. They found that only 19% of husbands and 8.5% of wives increased average consumption by two or more drinks. They also found that 26% of the husbands and 18% of the wives decreased weekly consumption by two or more drinks. It is also important to examine the mechanism of change through which differential dyadic patterns change to become similar.

Research has also examined the ability of one partner to accurately assess the other partner’s drinking behavior. This area of research is important in that it might be able to explain the influence of perceived consumption and its relation to alcohol concordance. In fact, Demers et al. (1997) found that men and women were reasonably accurate in estimating how much their spouses drank in general but less accurate with estimates of their spouses’ daily drinking.

Prior to conducting research on couples and alcohol consumption, researchers examined the prevalence and patterns of drinking by the individual. Therefore, individual drinking patterns serve as an integral predictor of drinking patterns in relationships. However, research on couples and alcohol often becomes complicated by the variability in individual drinking patterns (Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999), so reliability
of analysis must be utilized. Leonard and Das Eiden (1999) assert that the drinking patterns of husbands tend to play a critical role in predicting wives’ drinking, though the opposite scenario has not been found. Therefore, they conclude that husbands who report heavy drinking may serve as a risk factor for their wives’ drinking patterns. Moreover, it would be inaccurate to assume that lighter drinking by the wife would serve as a protective factor of husbands’ drinking since the drinking relationship has been found to be a unilateral, not bilateral relationship. Demers et al. (1997) also examined individuals’ drinking in the context of couples and found that women's drinking is more related to her spouse's drinking than the husband’s drinking is to his wife. These studies did not examine the potential relationship between ascribed gender roles and alcohol convergence.

Variables Relating to Alcohol Consumption in Adult Couples

Research has shown that there are several factors that influence the prevalence and concordance rates of drinking in adult couples (Demers et al., 1997; Graham & Braun, 1999; Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999). Among them, higher education, socioeconomic status, religion, physical health, and relationship contentment have been identified as correlating with specific patterns of drinking in adult couples.

Higher education appears to be associated with higher drinking in wives while poorer health begets higher drinking in males (Demers et al., 1997). Higher education was also associated with both men and women being drinkers in additional studies (Graham & Braun, 1999). Socioeconomic status may also influence drinking patterns. Demers et al. (1997) found that couples in higher socioeconomic status drank more in frequency and volume. Graham and Braun’s (1999) study of drinking in married couples
examined the multiple factors that influence drinking behaviors in this demographic. Age was unrelated to concordance as was age difference between husband and wife. These researchers assert that high concordance and high rates of drinking within spouses are most likely more common among older rather than younger couples. Demers et al. (1997) reported that factors in abstaining from drinking included reasons such as religion and health. Graham and Braun (1999) also found that husbands' religiosity was a significant factor when males abstained from drinking, but not for drinking husbands. However, religion did not significantly predict the wife's drinking behavior. Number of years married was related to drinking patterns. The longer couples were married the more likely it appeared that the couples reported abstinence (Graham & Braun, 1999).

Relationship contentment may also influence drinking patterns in adult couples. Couples in which the wife abstained from drinking reported more depression than did couples in which the wife drank. The husbands of these wives were less happy with the relationship and reported poorer health themselves. This trend prevailed regardless of the husband’s drinking patterns. The health of the wife was lowest when the wife abstained and the husband drank. Husband's depression was significantly related to husband's drinking patterns, with slightly higher depression among non-drinking husbands (Graham & Braun, 1999). Wives’ drinking is positively and strongly related to their husbands’ alcohol use in terms of frequency and consumption. This finding is highly supported in that similar results have been found in numerous studies (Demers et al., 1997; Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999; Graham & Braun, 1999; Holmila, 1988; Roberts & Leonard, 1998).
Drinking Prevalence and Patterns in College Individuals

It is widely recognized that the transition from high school to college presents students with increased risk for heavy drinking "as they attempt to gain acceptance by participating in what they perceive to be normal college drinking practices” (Harrington, p.372, 1995). The prevalence of alcohol use in college populations has been documented in numerous studies. Engs et al.(1996) found that in a nationwide survey of 12,000 college students sampled during the 1993-1994 academic year, 72% of the students consumed alcohol within the past year. In addition, 20.6% reported being heavy drinkers (consuming 5 or more drinks per occasion, once a week or more), 31% of males consumed over 21 drinks per week, and 19.2% of females consumed over 14 drinks per week. Another study of student drinking (1996) found that of 903 college students attending a large Southeastern University, 86% of the students consumed alcohol in the past year. This study also found that 46% of the students reported binge drinking, defined as 5 or more drinks in one sitting during the previous two weeks. These findings support the notion that college males drink more than their female counterparts in terms of frequency and volume.

Cotton (2001) compared the alcohol consumption of African American and Caucasian college students. Results indicate that rates of alcohol consumption vary significantly according to ethnicity in college populations. The mean number of alcoholic beverages consumed per week reported by African American students was 4.13 (SD = 6.81) drinks, while the mean number for Caucasian students was 9.62 (SD = 10.96) drinks. Caucasian students also reported consuming more alcohol per sitting than African American students. The mean number of drinks per sitting reported by Caucasian
students was $10.37 \text{ (SD} = 7.16\text{)}$ drinks as opposed to $5.70 \text{ (SD} = 6.15\text{)}$ drinks reported by African American students.

Other research has examined differences in the drinking behavior of college students versus the general population. It was found that college students have drinking patterns more related to social activities (Leigh, 1987) while adult drinkers typically drink to facilitate relaxation. The perceived effects of alcohol in each population also differ in that college students indicate being less inhibited and more outgoing as opposed to the general population, which reported more impairment and depression as a result of drinking (Leigh, 1987). Thus, there seems to be evidence differentiating drinking behaviors, motivations, and effects in college populations versus non-college populations. This may suggest that drinking behaviors of college students are explained by different factors than those of adult populations.

Although the review of literature yielded no studies directly addressing convergence patterns in college populations, Engs and Hanson (1990) assert that the gender differential in drinking behaviors has steadily decreased. The authors note that in 1953, Straus and Bacon ascertained a 16 percentage point differential between the sexes, while in 1972, Hanson determined only a five percentage point differential in his study across 37 colleges and universities. Other researchers (Glassco, 1975; Hanson, 1977) have purported that the gender differential in the behavior of drinking is less than five percent or equal in college populations. These studies suggest gender convergence in alcohol consumption over the last half century but do not address issues relating to convergence of drinking patterns with regard to the frequency and volume consumed.
Furthermore, these inquiries do not attend to the possible influences of relationship status and ethnicity on these individual patterns of drinking in this population.

Previous research has examined the drinking patterns of individuals and of Caucasian adult (often married) couples. These studies have demonstrated that Caucasian women typically drink less than their partners and are more likely to adjust their drinking patterns to those of their male partner (Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999; Demers et al., 1999; Holmila, 1988; Roberts & Leonard, 1998). Alcohol expectancies of adult couples and individuals have also been evaluated, as well as other factors that influence drinking behaviors in these populations. It has also been demonstrated that college individuals have different alcohol expectancies and patterns of consumption than the general population (Engs et al., 1996). Further, it has been demonstrated that African Americans endorse both positive and negative alcohol expectancies less strongly and maintain different drinking patterns than Caucasians (Cotton, 2001). The aforementioned empirical findings raise the question of whether or not the drinking patterns of individuals within college couples converge as have drinking patterns in adult couples. This study will evaluate patterns of alcohol use in college couples, including alcohol expectancies, gender roles, and ethnicity. In doing so, this study will explore the underrepresented line of research examining and distinguishing the drinking patterns of African American and Caucasian college students in romantic relationships.

Purpose and Hypotheses

This study will attempt to examine alcohol convergence and alcohol concordance in college couples across ethnic groups by investigating African American and Caucasian students. Several hypotheses will be examined.
1. Given the findings of research examining adult couples, it is hypothesized that as in adult populations, Caucasian college females will adjust their drinking patterns to be more in line with those of their male partners rather than vice versa. Drinking patterns will be measured by the quantity of alcohol consumed per week.

2. Based on prior research examining the variability of alcohol expectancies across ethnicity, it is also hypothesized that the relationship between the number of drinks consumed per week and alcohol expectancies will be more strongly related in Caucasian college couples than in African American couples.

3. It is also predicted that, in accordance with prior research on adult couples, regardless of ethnicity, couples in lengthier relationships will exhibit significantly more concordant drinking patterns.

4. Based on findings that African Americans exhibit less traditional gender roles than Caucasians, it is hypothesized that the number of drinks consumed per week by African American males will not be significantly related to changes in number of drinks consumed by his partner. Namely, it is expected that a discordant relationship between partners' drinking will exist for African American couples. Additionally, it is not expected that African American females will adjust the number of drinks consumed per week to be more consistent with their partners’ consumption.

5. Given that relationship contentment has been associated with concordant drinking patterns in adult couples, it is expected that this factor will also be
significantly associated with concordant patterns of alcohol consumption in college couples regardless of ethnicity.
Methods

Design and Participants

This study entailed a cross-sectional examination of drinking patterns among African American and Caucasian college couples. A power analysis revealed that 129 couples should be recruited, for an effect size of $0.15$. A small effect size was chosen based on the normative effect size obtained by other studies of alcohol convergence (Demers et al., 1997; Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999). Participants were undergraduate students recruited through the available research pool at the University of Georgia. Through a prescreening procedure, participants were excluded on the basis of marriage. Marriage yields exclusion of couples because prior research has demonstrated that married couples have different patterns of alcohol consumption than college individuals. Therefore married couples may generate data that are unrepresentative of the demographic of interest. The researcher attempted to obtain approximately 65 African American couples and 65 Caucasian couples. Interracial and homosexual couples were also excluded in order to independently evaluate the role of gender and ethnicity in alcohol convergence. Demographic variables of this sample reflected the distribution of the overall population at the University of Georgia.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. As part of the prescreening procedure, each participant was asked to provide information regarding sex, age, length of relationship, and racial/ethnic background.
Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ; Collins, Parks, & Marlatt, 1985). This questionnaire was derived from the Drinking Practices Questionnaire (DPQ; Cahalan, Cisin, & Crossley, 1969). Participants were asked to indicate their average daily alcohol consumption for each day in a typical week. Additionally, participants were also asked to estimate the average weekly alcohol consumption of their partner. The convergent validity of the DDQ with the DPQ has been demonstrated with a Pearson’s correlation of \( r = 0.50, p = 0.001 \) (Collins et al., 1985).

Alcohol Expectancies Questionnaire (AEQ; (Collins, Lapp, & Emmons, 1990). This 40-item forced choice questionnaire assesses perceptions about the effects of alcohol consumption, or alcohol expectancies, based on responses of either “agree” or “disagree” to the items. The measure contains six subscales consisting of global positive changes, sexual enhancement, physical and social pleasure, social assertion, relaxation and tension reduction, and arousal and aggression. A typical item is, “Alcohol can transform my personality.” The AEQ has an internal consistency coefficient ranging from .72 to .92, and a test-retest correlation of .64. Subscale scores range from 0-9 with higher scores indicating greater expectancies for that scale. Total scores range from 0-40 with higher scores indicating greater overall alcohol expectancies.

Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS; Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). This questionnaire contains 17 items designed to assess the degree of closeness, affection, and personal disclosure in a relationship. Participants were asked to respond to items along a 10-point Likert scale ranging from “very rarely” (1) to “almost always” (10). A representative item is, “How often do you confide very personal information to your partner?” The convergent validity of the MSIS with the Interpersonal Relationship Scale (IRS) has been
demonstrated with a Pearson’s coefficient of \( r = .71, \ p = .001 \). The MSIS has test-retest correlations ranging from .84 to .96.

*Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS; Parham & Helms, 1985).* This questionnaire is designed to measure one’s identification with a particular ethnic group. The measure is a 23-item Likert scale arrangement, which ranges from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” It also assesses ethnic identity by examining the ethnic heritage of each of the participant’s parents. An example of the items included in this questionnaire is, “I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.” Scores range from 39-71 with higher scores indicating greater identification with ethnic group membership.

*Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974).* This measure includes 60 items designed to assess the level of masculinity, femininity, or androgyny endorsed by the participant. Participants were asked to respond to each item along a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “never or almost never true” (1) to “always or almost always true” (7). The BEM assesses traditional gender specific traits by addressing the degree to which participants endorse characteristics such as, “self-reliance” and “moodiness.” The BEM has internal consistency coefficients ranging from .75 to .86, and a test-retest correlations ranging from .90 to .93. BSRI scores range from –20 to +20 with higher scores indicating the endorsement of masculine traits.

*Procedures*

Each couple was assigned an identification number with which the dyad was distinguished. In order to minimize collaborative responses, participants were asked to sit separately from their partners. Consent forms were distributed and participants were asked to sign and keep one copy, while returning the other signed copy to the researcher.
After obtaining informed consent, participants were asked to complete the Demographic Questionnaire followed by the DDQ, AEQ, MSIS, RIAS and finally the BEM. The complete packet of questionnaires took approximately 50 minutes to complete. Couples participating in the study were debriefed upon completion of the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Alcohol concordance among couples was determined by whether both individuals report consuming a similar number of drinks during an average week as defined by falling into the same drinking category (abstinent, light, moderate, or heavy drinkers). The “abstinent” category included individuals who reported consuming no alcohol during the average week, as assessed by the DDQ. The category of “light drinkers” encompassed those individuals who reported consuming one to five drinks per week. The “moderate drinkers” category included individuals who reported consuming six to ten drinks per week. Individuals who reported consuming more than ten drinks per week were categorized as “heavy drinkers” (Demers et al., 1997; Engs, 1975). In order to test the hypotheses, the following analyses were utilized.

Analytical Strategies

The current sample precluded the use of the original hypotheses and analyses. Despite significant efforts including distributing fliers in the student center and at various events during Black History month, soliciting participation from members of Black sororities and fraternities, announcing the study on the Minority Programs list-serv, and attending classes in the African American Studies program, the present sample consists of only five African American couples. Due to the disproportionate number of African American and Caucasian couples, comparative analyses could not be performed.
Therefore, the proposed hypotheses were altered to better fit the demographics of the present sample.

In order to examine hypothesis 1, which originally stated that Caucasian females would adjust their number of drinks consumed per week to be more in line with those of their male partners, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. This analysis was chosen to illuminate the association between the level of drinking in males and the level of drinking in their female partners. The male’s total number of drinks consumed per week, as measured by the DDQ, was the predictor variable while the criterion variable was the female’s total number of drinks consumed per week. Hypothesis 1 was modified to state that females would adjust their number of drinks consumed per weeks to be more in line with those of their male partner.

In order to investigate hypothesis 2, which originally stated that the relationship between the number of drinks consumed per week and alcohol expectancies will be more strongly related in Caucasian couples than in African American couples, a simple linear regression was again utilized. Hypothesis 2 was modified to state that alcohol expectancies would be related to number of drinks consumed per week for both males and females. This analysis was chosen to demonstrate the strength of the relationship between the number of drinks consumed per week and the alcohol expectancies endorsed in these populations. The predictor variable was the total scale score on the AEQ while the criterion variable was the total number of drinks consumed per week.

Hypothesis 3, which originally stated that couples in lengthier relationships would exhibit significantly more alcohol concordance, was analyzed with a simple linear regression. Hypothesis 3 was not modified. Analyses were chosen to fully capture the
complete range of variance within the data set. Alcohol concordance was computed by the absolute difference in the number of drinks consumed per week between male and female partners. The predictor variable was the length of relationship while the criterion variable was the absolute difference score.

In examining hypothesis 4, which originally stated that the number of drinks consumed per week by African American males would not be significantly related to changes in his partner’s alcohol consumption, a simple linear regression analysis was proposed. Hypothesis 4 was modified to state that women with higher composite scores on the femininity scale of the BEM would be more likely to exhibit concordant drinking patterns with their partner. This hypothesis was examined with a simple linear regression. Women’s scores on the femininity scale of the BEM were the predictor variables while absolute difference scores were the criterion.

Hypothesis 5, originally stated that relationship contentment would be significantly associated with concordant patterns of alcohol consumption across ethnic groups. Hypothesis 5 was modified to state that relationship contentment would be significantly associated with concordant patterns of alcohol consumption. This hypothesis was tested using a simple linear regression. The predictor variable was the participants’ composite score on the MSIS while the criterion variable was the absolute difference score.
Results

Descriptive Data

Sample size (n), means (M), and standard deviations (SD) of descriptive variables are presented in Table 1 and 2. The sample consisted of 100 college couples enrolled in a predominantly Caucasian institution at a large university in the southeast. Of the sample, five couples (5.0%) were African American, four couples (4.0%) were Asian American, one couple (1.0%) was biracial, two couples (2.0%) identified their ethnic background as Native American, and 88 couples (88.0%) were Caucasian students. Data from all students were included in statistical analyses.

Mean weekly alcohol consumption, as measured by scores on the Daily Drinking Questionnaire, was 9.5 ($SD = 8.16$) for women and 18.4 ($SD = 14.95$) for men. Mean relationship length for the sample was 13.1 months ($SD = 12.7$). Mean Miller Social Intimacy Scale scores for women and men were 145.1 ($SD = 15.43$) and 138.4 ($SD = 20.24$), respectively. Mean Bem Sex Role Inventory score for women on the Femininity Scale was 5.1 ($SD = .52$). Mean Alcohol Expectancy Questionnaire scores for women and men were 24.1 ($SD = 6.6$) and 24.6 ($SD = 6.8$), respectively.

Correlational Analyses

Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment correlations among the major variables. These correlations can be used to examine evidence for the relationships among weekly levels of drinking, relationship contentment, relationship length, femininity scores, alcohol expectancies scores, and alcohol concordance. Significant
Table 1.

*Ethnic Demographics Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couples total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.

*Participant Descriptives for DDQ scores, Relationship Length, Femininity Scores on the BEM, MSIS, and AEQ scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M or %</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DDQ</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Length</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSRI Femininity Scales&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSIS Scores&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>145.1</td>
<td>15.43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>138.0</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEQ Scores&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>BSRI scale composite scores range from 1 – 7 with higher scores indicating greater identification with gender stereotypic traits.

<sup>b</sup>MSIS scores range from 17-150 with higher scores indicating greater relationship contentment.

<sup>c</sup>AEQ scores range from 0 – 40 with higher scores indicating greater overall alcohol expectancies.
Table 3.

*Intercorrelations Among All Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. DDQ&lt;sub&gt;women&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DDQ&lt;sub&gt;men&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>.614**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MSIS&lt;sub&gt;women&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>-.269**</td>
<td>-.349**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MSIS&lt;sub&gt;men&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>-.344**</td>
<td>-.404**</td>
<td>.440**</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rel. Length</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>-.201</td>
<td>.362**</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Femininity&lt;sub&gt;women&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>-.128</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.281**</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. AEQ&lt;sub&gt;women&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>.518**</td>
<td>.358**</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>-.257*</td>
<td>-.218*</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. AEQ&lt;sub&gt;men&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>.362**</td>
<td>.422**</td>
<td>-.219*</td>
<td>-.323**</td>
<td>-.211*</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>.227*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Concordance</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.803**</td>
<td>-.234*</td>
<td>-.325**</td>
<td>-.158</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>-.359**</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
correlations are presented between women and men’s level of drinking ($r = .599, p < .01$), women and men’s relationship contentment ($r = .440, p < .01$), and relationship length and women’s relationship contentment ($r = .362, p < .01$). An inverse correlation was found between women’s relationship contentment and women’s level of drinking ($r = -.242, p < .05$). Similarly, a negative correlation was found between men’s relationship contentment and men’s level of drinking ($r = -.336, p < .01$). Also, a significant correlation between women’s femininity scores and women’s relationship contentment was found ($r = .281, p < .01$).

Hypothesis 1: Alcohol Concordance

Alcohol concordance was defined as members of a couple falling into the same drinking category. Of 100 couples, 52 were categorized as having concordant drinking patterns. Table 4 presents concordance patterns among these couples. It was hypothesized that females would adjust their number of drinks consumed to be more in line with those of their male partner. Results of a simple linear regression performed on DDQ scores revealed that males’ weekly rates of alcohol consumption were predictive of females’ level of drinking ($R = .599, R^2 = .359, F (1, 53), p < .01$). Male partners consumed more alcohol in a typical week than female partners ($\beta = .330, t = 7.26, p < .01$). Mean DDQ scores for female partners were 9.46 drinks ($SD = 8.16$), and for male partners 18.37 ($SD = 14.95$).

Hypothesis 2: Alcohol Expectancies

It was hypothesized that alcohol expectancies would be predictive of the number of drinks consumed per week for both males and females. Summary scores were computed for scores on the AEQ. Mean AEQ scores were 24.1 ($SD = 6.6$) and 24.6
Table 4.

*Summary of Alcohol Concordance among College Couples (N = 52)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance Category</th>
<th>% (of concordant couples)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concordant Abstainers</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordant Light Drinkers (1 - 5 drinks per week)</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordant Moderate Drinkers (6 – 10 drinks per week)</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordant Heavy Drinkers (11 or more drinks per week)</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(SD = 6.8) for women and men, respectively. A simple linear regression performed on AEQ scores revealed that males’ alcohol expectancies were predictive of weekly alcohol consumption, as measured by the DDQ (R = .42, R² = .18, F = 20.57, p < .00). Likewise, women’s alcohol expectancies were predictive of weekly alcohol consumption (R = .52, R² = .27, F = 34.50, p < .00). A significant correlation was found between men’s and women’s alcohol expectancies (r = .227, p < .05). Post-hoc analyses revealed that male partner alcohol expectancies accounted for a significant amount of variance related to alcohol concordance within these couples (R = .38, R² = .15, F = 14, p < .00). The same was not true for female partner alcohol expectancies (R = .11, R² = .01, F = .98, p < .33).

Hypothesis 3: Relationship Length

It was hypothesized that couples in lengthier relationships would exhibit significantly more alcohol concordance. In order to fully capture the range of variance within the data set, given that members of some couples might consume similar amounts of alcohol even though they are in different drinking categories, alcohol concordance was analyzed as a continuous variable. The degree of alcohol concordance was computed as the absolute value of the difference between male and female scores on the DDQ. A log transformation was used to normalize the distributions of relationship length and degree of concordance, as they were negatively skewed. Results of a simple linear regression revealed that rates of alcohol concordance did not differ significantly according to relationship length. (R = .153, R² = .02, p < .18). Mean relationship length was 13.1 months (SD = 12.70) while the mean degree of concordance was 10.8 (SD = 10.74). The degree of concordance for this population ranged from an absolute difference of zero drinks to a difference of 46 drinks per week.
Hypothesis 4: Gender Roles

It was hypothesized that women with higher femininity scores on the BEM will be more likely to exhibit concordant drinking patterns with their partner. Results of a simple linear regression performed on BEM femininity scale scores revealed that concordant drinking patterns were not predicted by women’s scores on the BEM femininity scale ($R = .058$, $R^2 = .003$, $p < .599$). Women’s mean composite scores on this scale were 5.1 ($SD = .52$). Table 5 compares the BSRI means and standard deviations of the current sample with those of the normative sample.

Hypothesis 5: Relationship Contentment

It was hypothesized that relationship contentment would be significantly associated with concordant patterns of alcohol consumption. Results of a simple linear regression performed on MSIS scores revealed that alcohol concordance did differ significantly according to relationship contentment for both males and females ($R = .265$, $R^2 = .070$, $F (1, 6), p < .02$; $R = .234$, $R^2 = .055$, $F (1, 5), p < .03$), respectively. Table 6 contains the regression table for this and the aforementioned variables as they relate to alcohol concordance.
Table 5.

*Comparison of BEM scores for the Current versus Normative Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current (N = 100)</td>
<td>Normative (N = 340)</td>
<td>Current (N = 100)</td>
<td>Normative (N = 476)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.

Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Alcohol Concordance ($N = 100$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Expectancies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Length</td>
<td>-.188</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>-.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSRI Femininity Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Contentment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The present study attempted to elucidate potential factors related to alcohol concordance among college couples. Consistent with other studies (Demers et al., 1997; Graham & Braun, 1999; Leonard & Das Eiden, 1999), male and female partner’s level of alcohol consumption was significantly correlated. Additionally, as with previous research with adults in this area (Graham & Braun, 1999), relationship contentment was found to be predictive of alcohol concordance in college couples. Alcohol expectancies appeared significantly related not only to individual drinking frequency but also to alcohol concordance among couples in this sample. Unlike the results of literature evaluating alcohol concordance in adult couples (Demers et al., 1997), relationship length was not predictive of alcohol concordance.

Given that previous research in the domain of alcohol use in couples has been primarily focused on adult married couples, these results are especially useful in aiding in our understanding of the dynamics of alcohol use within undergraduate college couples. Research on drinking patterns of college individuals has demonstrated that male and female students exhibit significantly different levels of drinking (Engs et al., 1996; Cotton, 2001). In light of this research, the strong positive correlation between male and female partners’ drinking lends support to the convergence hypothesis (Neve & Drop, 1996). This hypothesis purports that individual behavioral patterns are often adjusted during the course of a relationship to be more in line with those of the other partner. Due
to the cross-sectional nature of this study the directionality of these behavioral adjustments could not be determined. However, the findings of the present study support previous work which suggests that females are more likely to adjust their behaviors to be more in line with those of their male partner.

Similar to previous research on alcohol expectancies (Cotton, 2001), the present study found a significant relationship between alcohol expectancies and individual drinking frequency. This study, however, adds to the literature in its depiction of the role of alcohol expectancies in relation to alcohol concordance among college couples. The present findings suggest a significant relationship between male partner alcohol expectancies and alcohol concordance. This relationship may be indicative of social learning processes wherein female partners adjust their alcohol expectancies to be more in line with those of their partner or vice versa. Such adjustments in expectancies may explain the similarity in drinking patterns found amid couples of this population.

In contrast to other studies of alcohol use in couples (Demers et al., 1997), the present study found no significant association between relationship length and alcohol concordance in college couples. These results suggest that the degree of alcohol concordance may not change as a function of time for college couples as data have suggested may be the case for adult married couples. There seem a variety of reasons this finding may have occurred. Firstly, the length of college relationships is often markedly shorter than that of married couples (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Therefore it may be true that, given more time, rates of alcohol concordance might increase for this population. The present findings may also lend support to theories of assortative mating (Brehm, 1992, Hall et al., 1993). Such theories suggest that individuals choose to associate with
persons whose attitudes and behaviors are similar to their own. It is widely recognized that adolescence is a developmental period in which social acceptance is highly sought after. Consequently, college students may be more likely than older adults to choose partners whose behavioral patterns are similar to their own. Also, similarity in drinking may be especially salient for college couples due to their age and increased sensitivity to social pressures in general. Thus students’ patterns of partnering during later adolescence may decrease the need and likelihood of significant behavioral changes as a function of relationship length.

Gender roles did not appear to significantly contribute to variance in alcohol concordance as hypothesized. The lack of previous research linking these factors complicates the interpretation of the observable finding. Given that the BEM Sex Role Inventory was standardized decades ago on individuals whose ages ranged from 31-65 years, it is conceivable that this measure may not accurately capture gender differentiated traits of contemporary adolescent populations. Konrad (2002) found that European American women considered only 4 of the 40 BSRI items to be differentially desirable for women and men. This finding supports the notion that the adjectives included on the BSRI may not have encapsulated contemporary perceptions of stereotypic gender-typed traits. If these findings hold true it seems unlikely that significant results related to gender roles and alcohol concordance could be found in the present study.

Despite recent criticism regarding the validity of the BSRI, Table 5 illustrates the strikingly similar results of the current study to those of the normative sample. This similarity supports the reliability of the BSRI and suggests that this measure may, in fact, be generalizeable to contemporary college-aged individuals. However, given the current
finding that men’s, and not women’s, alcohol expectancies are predictive of alcohol concordance in this sample, one might consider gender-specific characteristics and person traits (e.g. levels of assertiveness, perceptions of interpersonal power, etc.) that may not be captured by the BSRI but may influence alcohol concordance in this population.

The current finding that relationship contentment was significantly associated with alcohol concordance in college couples is similar to the results of studies on adult couples (Graham & Braun, 1999). This finding suggests that individuals within couples are more likely to report relationship contentment when they and their partner exhibit similar drinking patterns. This contentment may be a function of happier couples spending more time together and therefore drinking similarly. Relationship contentment may also be related to these individuals’ proposed tendency to choose mates possessing similar behaviors and attitudes. Because couples with highly discordant drinking patterns seem less satisfied with their relationships, it seems plausible that they may be more likely to terminate these relationships and thus may not be included in this sample.

Several limitations were present in the current study. Firstly, difficulty obtaining African-American subjects precluded analyses comparing the alcohol use and gender roles among these and Caucasian couples. Investigators interested in examining these factors as they relate to African-American and Caucasian couples might attempt to recruit students from historically Black colleges or universities in order to increase the likelihood of finding an adequate sample. Future research in the arena of gender roles in collegiate populations might consider utilizing measures standardized for this or adolescent populations. In addition, multiple measures might be used in future studies to assess
gender-specific traits and characteristics. Furthermore, a more causal relationship explaining alcohol concordance in college populations might be obtained through the use of a longitudinal experimental design.
References


University of Georgia Core Drug and Alcohol Survey. 1996


Appendix A

Code # ______

Demographics Questionnaire

1. Age ______

2. Sex:  Female □  Male □

3. Year at UGA:  □ Freshman  
                □ Sophomore  
                □ Junior  
                □ Senior

4. Ethnic Identity: Please check all that apply.  
                    □ African American  
                    □ Asian American  
                    □ Caucasian  
                    □ Latina/o  
                    □ Native American  
                    □ Other: ______________

5. Sexual Orientation  
                    □ Bisexual  
                    □ Heterosexual  
                    □ Homosexual  
                    □ Other

6. Are you a member of a fraternity or sorority?  □ Yes  □ No

7. Are you currently in a monogamous dating relationship?  □ Yes  □ No  
   a. If yes, how long have you been dating this person? __________
   b. If no, how many dating partners do you presently have? __________
Appendix B


DDQ

Please fill in a number for each day of the week indicating the average number of drinks you consumed during one week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

**Alcohol Expectancies Questionnaire** (Collins, Lapp & Emmons, 1990)

Please read each of the following statements and respond according to your experiences with a moderate amount of alcohol. If you believe alcohol sometimes or always has the stated effect on you check **AGREE**. If you believe alcohol never has the stated effect on you, check **DIAGREE**.

Then, in the column to the far right, fill in the number that best corresponds to the strength of your belief, according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mildly believe</td>
<td>Strongly believe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strength of belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alcohol increases muscular tension in my body.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Drinking makes me feel less shy.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alcohol enables me to fall asleep much more quickly.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel powerful when I drink, as if I can really influence others to do as I want.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I'm more clumsy after I drink.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I'm more romantic when I drink.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Drinking makes the future seem brighter to me.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If I have had alcohol, it is easier for me to tell someone off.</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I can't act as quickly when I've been drinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Alcohol can act as an anesthetic for me, that is, it can deaden pain.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I often feel sexier after I've been drinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Drinking makes me feel good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Alcohol makes me careless about my actions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Alcohol has a pleasant, cleansing, tingly to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Drinking increases my aggressiveness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Alcohol seems like magic to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Alcohol makes it hard for me concentrate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>After drinking, I am a better lover.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>When I'm drinking, it is easier to open up and express my feelings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Drinking adds a certain warmth to social occasions to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>If I'm feeling restricted in any way, drinking makes me feel better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I can't think as quickly after I drink.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Having drinks is a nice way for me to celebrate special occasions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Alcohol makes me worry less.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Drinking is pleasurable because it's enjoyable for me to join in with other people who are enjoying themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>After drinking, I am more sexually responsive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I feel more coordinated after I drink.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I'm more likely to say embarrassing things after drinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I enjoy having sex more if I've had alcohol.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>I'm more likely to get into an argument if I've had alcohol.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31. Alcohol makes me less concerned about doing things well.
32. Alcohol helps me sleep better.
33. Drinking gives me more confidence in myself.
34. Alcohol makes me more irresponsible.
35. After drinking it is easier to pick a fight.
36. Alcohol makes it easier for me to talk to people.
37. If I have alcohol it is easier to express my feelings.
38. Alcohol makes me more interesting.
39. After I've had a few drinks, I'm more likely to feel sexy.
40. Drinking makes me feel flushed.
Appendix D

Miller Social Intimacy Scale (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982)

**MSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Some of the Time</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you have leisure time how often do you choose to spend it with him/her alone?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you keep very personal information to yourself and do not share it with him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you show him/her affection?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you confide very personal information to him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are you able to understand his/her feelings?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you feel close to him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not Much</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do you like to spend time alone with him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do you feel like being encouraging and supportive to him/her when he/she is unhappy?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How close do you feel to him/her most of the time?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it to you to listen to hi/her very very personal disclosures?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfying is your relationship with him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How affectionate do you feel towards him/her?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it to you that he/she understands</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much damage is caused by a typical disagreement in your relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With him/her?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it to you that he/she be encouraging and supportive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to you when you are unhappy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it to you that he/she show you affection?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is your relationship with him/her in your life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Parham, T.A. & Helms, J.E., 1985)

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, American Indian, Anglo-American, and White. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes two groups, but people differ on how important their ethnicity is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behavior is affected by it. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in:

In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _______________________________________________________________________________________.

Use the numbers given below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

4: Strongly Agree  3: Somewhat Agree  2: Somewhat Disagree  1: Strongly Disagree

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, tradition, and customs. _____

2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. _____

3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. _____

4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____

5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. _____

6. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. _____

7. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together. _____

8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life. _____
9. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own. ______

10. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group. ______

11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. ______

12. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups. ______

13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. ______

14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. ______

15. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups. ______

16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music or customs. ______

17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups. ______

18. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. ______

19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own. ______

20. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background. ______

Write in the number that gives the best answer to each question.

21. My ethnicity is

   (1) Asian, Asian American, or Oriental
   (2) Black or African American
   (3) Hispanic or Latino
   (4) White, Caucasian, European, not Hispanic
   (5) American Indian
   (6) Mixed, parents are from two different groups
   (7) Other (write in): ________________________

22. My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above) ______

23. My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above) ______
Appendix F

Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974)

BSRI

Put an 'X' in the parenthesis (X) that best describes you.
Pick 1 if the word/phrase almost never describes you.
Pick 2 if the word/phrase is rarely true.
Pick 3 if the word/phrase is seldom true.
Pick 4 if the word/phrase is both and accurate AND inaccurate descriptor for yourself.
Pick 5 if the word/phrase is often true.
Pick 6 if the word/phrase is mostly true.
Pick 7 if the word/phrase almost always describes you.

1. Self-reliant
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

2. Yielding
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

3. Helpful
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

4. Defends own beliefs
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

5. Cheerful
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

6. Moody
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

7. Independent
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

8. Shy
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

9. Conscientious
   ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

10. Athletic
    ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

11. Affectionate
    ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

12. Theatrical
    ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7

13. Assertive
    ( )1 ( )2 ( )3 ( )4 ( )5 ( )6 ( )7
14. Flatterable
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
15. Happy
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
16. Strong personality
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
17. Loyal
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
18. Unpredictable
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
19. Forceful
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
20. Feminine
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
21. Reliable
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
22. Analytical
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
23. Sympathetic
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
24. Jealous
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
25. Has leadership abilities
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
26. Sensitive to the needs of others
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
27. Truthful
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
28. Willing to take risks
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
29. Understanding
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
30. Secretive
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
31. Makes decisions easily
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
32. Compassionate
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
33. Sincere
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
34. Self-sufficient
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
35. Eager to soothe hurt feelings
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7
36. Conceited
(   )1 (   )2 (   )3 (   )4 (   )5 (   )6 (   )7