An Investigation into Gender Differences in Alcohol Consumption among Third Level College Students in Ireland.

STUDENT NAME: Tanya Roper, STUDENT NUMBER: 1200568, SURPERVISOR NAME: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to investigate gender differences in alcohol consumption among male and female third level college students in Ireland. Quantitative research methods were used with a quasi-experimental design. The variables were gender (IV) and alcohol consumption (DV). Results highlight that male students do consume more alcohol than female students and male and female students have an equal knowledge of the health risks of drinking alcohol and are equally unaware of the development of mental health issues due to drinking. Results furthermore show that female students have more unprotected sex and drink more than male students. In conclusion female college students need to be reminded of the health implications of engaging in unprotected sex and the consequences of drink driving. Both male and female college students need more education on the issue of mental health and how to maintain it.

Method
In order to carry out this research each participant was given a questionnaire which was a purposely devised questionnaire that consisted of different questions including demographic information. The Functions of Use and Bad Effects from Use Scales was subdivided into two subscales, the Mood Functioning Scale and the Negative Effects Scale (Boys et al., 1999), the Alcohol Use Scale (Johnston, 1990), and the Comprehensive Alcohol Expectancy Questionnaire (Demmel, Moshagen & Nicolson, 2010) and the Alcohol Awareness Scale which was purposely devised for the study. DESIGN: The research was conducted using quantitative methods and a quasi-experimental design. PARTICIPANTS: Participants were selected using a convenience sample. Students were selected from Dublin Business School, Mount Business College and Athlone Institute of Technology. The total number of students who participated in the research were 108, of which 51 were male and 57 were female. The varied in age the youngest being 18 and the oldest 56 years. PROCEDURE: Permission was sought from Dublin Business School lecturers to enter some of their classes during class time. A letter of consent was given to the other two colleges in order to gain access to their students. The questionnaire took 5-8 minutes for students to complete, each participant in the study voluntarily and were told they could withdraw at any time. The respondents were thanked for participating in the study and were assured that all questionnaires would be kept confidential.

Results
Results indicated that male students did drink significantly more alcohol than female students. Relating to students awareness of the health consequences of alcohol consumption both genders indicated a similar knowledge. However there was lack of knowledge for both genders in relation to developing mental health issues. Male students showed a significant correlation between aggression while under the influence of alcohol. A difference between the levels of unprotected sex between male and female students was detected which found that female students were having more unprotected sex than males. Female students also indicated they drank and driven more than male students. The result showed that there was not a significant difference between the genders and consuming alcohol in order to avoid dealing with negative emotions.

Discussion
The current study found that male college students are drinking more than female college students. There was also no significant difference between male and female college students awareness around the health risks associated to alcohol consumption. Both genders did however show a lack of knowledge relating to the development of mental health issues. The research concluded that male students appeared to become more aggressive after consuming alcohol than female students. Females students were found to be having more unprotected sex and drink driving more than male college students. The study indicated no significant between the genders and drinking to avoid dealing with negative emotions.

References