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Examining College Students' Participation in the Leisure Pursuits of Drinking and Illegal Drug Use

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Much of the research over the last decade has focused on the "benefits of leisure." However, there is another side of leisure that has received much less attention. For example, drinking and illegal drugs are popular leisure activities for many college students, yet leisure researchers have paid scant attention to such pursuits even though these activities often take place during leisure time and in a leisure context. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address this gap in the leisure literature by examining college students' participation in two leisure pursuits, drinking and illegal drug use. We examined their behavior within two potential explanatory theories, differential association and casual leisure, in hopes that we might identify a particularly salient theoretical framework for a leisure perspective on these timely and socially relevant issues.

KEYWORDS: *College students, purple leisure, casual leisure, differential association.*

The study of leisure traditionally focuses on the implicit, and often explicit, benefits of leisure participation (Driver, Peterson, & Brown, 1991). In this regard, Glover (2003) commented that the leisure literature often reflects research on the countless benefits that individuals receive from their activity participation. However, Rojek (1989) recognized the negative side of leisure and the costs associated with such participation when he stated, "an obvious and indisputable fact about leisure in modern society is that many of the most popular activities are illegal" (p. 82). This seems to be the case when one considers some of the more popular leisure pursuits among college students, drinking and illegal drugs use. For example, Henry Wechsler surveyed students at 140 college campuses across the United States and recently published his findings in a book entitled *Dying to Drink: Confronting Binge Drinking on College Campuses* (2002). His findings showed that two in five college students regularly drink five or more alcoholic beverages in a row, which was significantly linked to the frequency with which they encountered secondary effects of alcohol consumption including date rape, scholastic difficulties, and violence (Hoover, 2002). Similarly, after surveying

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7,800 undergraduates at 16 universities across Canada, the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) (2000) discovered 62.7% of the students reported consuming more than five drinks during a single occasion. Moreover, the CAMH found 47% of the students reported using marijuana at some point in their lives, and 10.2% had used illegal substances within 12 months of the study.

Despite the apparent popularity of drinking and illegal drug use, very little is written in the leisure studies literature about college students' involvement in these leisure time activities. One exception was an exploratory study conducted by Tucker and Shinew (1995) that examined the leisure pursuits of college age students. They found 86% of their sample consumed alcohol at least once a week and 40% used illegal drugs, primarily marijuana. This general lack of attention in the leisure literature, however, to the drinking and illegal drug use of college students suggests that a leisure perspective has not been brought to bear on these socially relevant habits, which is surprising given that these activities are typically pursued during leisure time and in a leisure context (Carruthers, 1993; Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 1991). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address the paucity of research in this area by examining college students' participation in two popular leisure pursuits, drinking and illegal drug use. In this study, drinking was defined by asking students if they drink alcohol, and drug use was established by asking students if they use illegal drugs. We examined their behavior within two potential explanatory theories, differential association and casual leisure, in hopes that we might identify a particularly salient theoretical framework for a leisure perspective on these activities.

The "Other" Side of Leisure

The "benefits of leisure" campaign has been the focus of much research over the past decade. For example, with respect to physical activity, leisure and sport have been linked to cardiovascular benefits such as a reduced resting heart rate (Froelicher & Froelicher, 1991), reduced hypertension, reduced risk of obesity, and prevention of osteoporosis (McPherson, 1991). Iwasaki and Mannell (2000) and Iwasaki, Mannell, Smale, and Butcher (2002) demonstrated the positive role of leisure in helping people deal with stressful life events. Leisure participation has also been credited with helping people develop a sense of competence and self-confidence (Freysinger, Alessio & Mehdizadeh, 1993). Shaw (2001) posited that leisure is a space in which people, either individually or collectively, can challenge and resist the power distributions in society. Family leisure involvement has been found to be strongly associated with family satisfaction among parents (Zabriskie, & McCormick, 2003). Moreover, Wankel and Berger (1991) found that leisure pursuits provided opportunities for people to explore individualized methods of expression leading to spiritual benefits. Green (1998) found that leisure contexts provided women with opportunities to review their lives, assess their life satisfaction, and resist traditional feminine roles. These few exam-

ples reflect how the literature, in general, often depicts the positive effects of leisure.

There is a negative side of leisure, too, and there has been some debate about what to call this other type of leisure (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). For instance, some have referred to it as purple leisure because it is "off-color" or not quite socially acceptable (Curtis, 1988). According to Russell (2002), purple leisure activities are those that participants enjoy but are harmful to society. Others use the term "taboo leisure" to reflect the notion that such pursuits involve activities that are typically illicit because they challenge societal norms, laws, customs or belief systems (Russell, 2002). The terms "marginal" or "deviant" leisure are also used as descriptors for those activities on the fringe of social acceptability. However, Kelly and Freysinger (2000) criticized these terms for being morally ambiguous. They raised the question of who decides the norm from which leisure participation deviates. Where do we draw the line? Who decides what is right and what is wrong? In response to these criticisms the terms "leisure's other side" or "leisure's darker side" have emerged (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000; Rojek, 1999).

Whatever term one chooses to use, there clearly is a negative side to leisure that is associated with "costs" of participation, rather than "benefits" (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). For instance, Shaw (1999) explored the impact of pornography as a male leisure pursuit on women's lives. She found the women in her study reacted negatively to pornography, particularly violent pornography, in part because it negatively affected their relationships with men and was thought to reinforce sexist attitudes in males. Critcher (2000) and Glover (2003) explored leisure's other side by focusing on rave cultures. Raves, or all night dance parties, are considered part of leisure's other side because they are associated with the use of illegal drugs, particularly Ecstasy. In his discussion of rave culture, Critcher (2000) commented, "there is a need for a revised sociology of youth, case study material on moral regulation and greater sustained attention to music, dance and drugs as central to the formation of contemporary youth cultures in leisure" (p. 145). Robertson (1999) contributed to this line of research when she examined why young male adolescents who participated in socially unacceptable or delinquent activities considered their acts to be leisure. Her results indicated that male adolescents choose delinquent pursuits, in part, because they perceived a lack of parental interest in their activities, which resulted in few shared family leisure experiences. The current study sought to extend this line of research on leisure's other side by examining drinking and illegal drug use among college students.

Addressing the leisure choices of college students serves an important function because it focuses on the activities of a group who thus far have been largely neglected in the leisure literature. As Raymore (1995) noted, leisure researchers have not paid adequate attention to this group and thus have not developed a full understanding of the major life transition that occurs between adolescence and young adulthood. A significant body of research has demonstrated how leisure changes over the course of the lifespan,

yet many of those studies have explored life stages such as childhood (Barnett & Chick, 1986), adolescence (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003; Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995), middle adulthood (Freysinger, 1995), and later adulthood (Kelly, 1993; Weagley & Huh, 2004), while the transition to college has been largely neglected. College students in late adolescence or early adulthood tend to be neglected from a life course perspective. Raymore (1995) exemplified this point when she commented; "the focus on the influence of family leisure misses an important contextual change that could influence leisure behavior greatly—namely, the transition from adolescence to young adulthood" (p. 203). This is not to suggest that others have also neglected this group and their participation in these activities. Scholars within other disciplines including psychology and sociology have studied drinking and drug use patterns among college students (Billingham, Parillo & Gross, 1993; Lo, 2000; Nezlek, Pilkington, & Bilbro, 1993), but their focus has not been from a leisure perspective. As Iso-Ahola and Crowley (1991) noted, "although a myriad of studies have been reported on various aspects of drug use [and drinking], researchers have generally overlooked leisure-related factors as correlates and causes of substance abuse. This is surprising because drug use [and drinking] probably most often occurs during leisure time and in leisure settings" (p. 261). Despite the lack of leisure perspective, however, a vast body of research has developed in other fields and thus drinking and drug use and the college lifestyle in general have been well documented.

The College Lifestyle

College students comprise the largest group of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 (Rigotti, Lee & Wechsler, 2000). Their lifestyle is characterized by students who have recently moved away from home, live in residence halls or with friends off-campus, and enjoy their newfound freedom by often attending more to their social life than to their academic career. Rigotti, Lee and Wechsler (2000) noted that many students are part of "a college lifestyle that values social life over educational achievement, athletic participation, or religion" (p. 705). According to Lo (2000), drinking alcohol has always played a dominant role in the lifestyle of college students by influencing their choice of activities and the rites of passage established for incoming collegians. When asked about drinking on his college campus, one student commented, "it's part of the American college culture. I don't know of any college where a large part of the student body isn't drinking on weekends" (FoxNews, 2002).

Recently the topic of binge drinking has received increased attention. For example, Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport and Castillo's (1995) conducted a national study of just over 17,000 students on 140 campuses in the United States that focused on binge drinking on campuses. Their study is credited for being the largest of its kind in scope, but also for their definition of binge drinking, which for the first time took into account gender and ethanol metabolism. Wechsler et al. (1995) defined binge drinking for men as

having five or more drinks at one time and for women as consuming four or more alcoholic beverages in a row. Given this definition, their findings indicated that 44% of college students engage in binge drinking. However, recently this definition of binge drinking has been criticized for overlooking a person's body weight and the length of time over which the drinks are consumed, factors that influence the physiological effects of alcohol consumption (Hoover, 2002).

College students are not only drinking, but they are smoking and using illegal drugs too. Rigotti, Lee and Wechsler (2000) posited,

> Tobacco use among college students is more prevalent than previously appreciated, because tobacco use is not limited to cigarettes. College students are experimenting with the full range of tobacco products and this is occurring across all types of colleges. College students who use tobacco share many characteristics. They are more likely to be White, single, and experimenting with other risky behaviors, such as binge drinking, using marijuana, and having more sexual partners. (p. 705)

Pope, Ionescu-Pioggia and Pope (2001) conducted a 30-year longitudinal study on drug use and its associated lifestyle among college undergraduate students. Their results showed that weekly use of alcohol by college students remained stable over the years, marijuana was the most frequently tried illicit drug by college students, and Ecstasy was the second most commonly tried illicit drug. They also found that drug users have become a distinct group on college campuses in that their values and lifestyle are somewhat distinct from the larger student body.

The college lifestyle has attracted the attention of researchers, college officials, and parents because such behaviors have been the cause of problems such as delinquent activities, academic trouble, injuries and health problems, and even death (Lo, 2000). Previous research has indicated, however, that some students are more likely than others to pursue the drinking and drug cultures often associated with college. More specifically, Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport and DeJong (2000) found that men were more likely to binge drink than were women, racial and ethnic minorities were less likely to be binge drinkers than were White students, and students who were members of a fraternity or sorority were four times more likely to be binge drinkers when compared to non-members.

Thus, there is a large body of literature that has developed over the years that has examined the drinking and drug use patterns of college students. In particular, many studies have been conducted to explore students' motivations to drink and use illegal drugs, the frequency in which they engage in these pursuits, correlates of drinking, and the social contexts in which students drink or use drugs. Indeed there are entire journals devoted to topics including the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, The International Journal of the Addictions, Drug and Alcohol Dependence,* and the *Journal of Drug Education and Addictive Behaviors.* Although there are a myriad of possible theoretical explanations to help understand this behavior, we feel it is important to

examine this issue from a leisure perspective given its connection to leisure time and leisure contexts. Both differential association and casual leisure seem to offer relevant frameworks in which to understand these particular leisure pursuits.

Theoretical Frameworks

Differential Association

Differential association is a social learning theory that centers on "explanations [for behavior] that focus on the mechanisms through which people learn the techniques and attitudes favorable to committing deviant acts" (Bridges & Desmond, 2000, p. 666). The theory of differential association posits that people experience differing expectations for what is considered appropriate behavior. More specifically, through their friendship groups, people learn what is considered delinquent behavior (Matsueda, 1982) in that people learn to participate in illegal, or deviant, activities from the people with whom they are closest. Lo (2000) highlighted four dimensions on which differential association varies including: the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of association. In short, the influence of intimate personal groups varies depending on the how frequently they assemble, the amount of time they spend together, the level of priority the friendship is to group members, and the intensity of the friendship group. Jennings and Gunther (2000) argued that most learning of delinquent behavior occurs in small, informal group settings and the learning occurs as a result of collective experience in addition to individual, specific circumstances and current events. In other words,

> according to differential association, juveniles develop beliefs favorable to the commission of delinquent acts and knowledge about the techniques of committing deviant acts from their closest friends, typically their peers. Thus, sufficient exposure to peers endorsing beliefs favoring deviance who also have knowledge about the commission of deviant acts will cause the otherwise conforming juvenile to commit deviant acts. Thus, if adolescent peers influence smoking, drinking alcohol, and other forms of drug abuse—and exposure to these influences occurs frequently, over a long period of time, and involves relationships that are important to the conforming adolescent—then he or she is likely to develop beliefs and values favorable to committing these acts. Once those beliefs and values develop, he or she is likely to commit the acts. (Bridges & Desmond, 2000, p. 667)

Differential association has been used to explain youth employment and juvenile delinquency (Miller & Matthews, 2001), why students carry firearms to school (May, 1999), and the impact of first drinking experience on collegiate drinking habits (Lo, 2000), which suggests its applicability to the current study. More specifically, college tends to be a period of time when students form close friendships that are important to them, and they spend a great deal of leisure time with friends because they often live away from home in residence halls or apartments. The social nature of the college years

suggests the applicability of differential association for a leisure perspective on drinking and drug use among college students.

Casual Leisure

Casual leisure is an alternative theory that may bring an important perspective to college students' drinking and illegal drug use. Stebbins (1997) defined casual leisure as "immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (p. 18). This definition of casual leisure is in contrast with his definition of serious leisure as "the systematic pursuit of an activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins, 1993, p. 3). Stebbins noted that over the years researchers who have written about serious leisure often cast casual leisure in almost a "residual role," yet he wrote that "casual leisure is a distinctive activity in itself and an important part of the contemporary leisure scene, suggesting that it, too, should be conceptually elaborated just as serious leisure was earlier" (p. 17).

Stebbins (1997) asserted that casual leisure typically comes in the form of at least six types, and although the types are conceptually distinct, participants frequently experience two or more types while engaging in one leisure activity. Among the types of casual leisure are play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, social conversation, sensory stimulation, and casual volunteering. Most applicable to the two leisure pursuits examined in this study, drinking and illegal drug use, is sensory stimulation. Actually, Stebbins (1997) referred to the "thrills of deviant activity" when describing sensory stimulation and stated, "drug use intended to produce pleasant alterations of mood and perception as centered on such effects as vertigo, hallucinations, and mood elevation" is an example of this type of casual leisure (p. 20). Further, he noted that all types of casual leisure are hedonistic in that they offer a level of pleasure for those who participate in them. Casual leisure also affords regeneration, or re-creation, to participants when followed by some form of obligatory activity (Stebbins, 1997; 2001). Another benefit of some types of casual leisure is the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. "Each person gains a high level of deeply satisfying intimacy and interaction through participating with the other in a given activity or set of activities" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 306). When sensory stimulation is combined with another type of casual leisure, such as sociable conversation and/or passive and active entertainment, these other benefits are particular common.

Stebbins (1997) acknowledged that activities such as gambling, drinking, and the use of cannabis are often considered deviant leisure pursuits. Stebbins pointed out, however, that while such activities are often deviant, they are only mildly threatening and thus are considered "socially tolerable" deviant pursuits. Stebbins (1997) asserted that socially tolerable deviant activi-

ties that are undertaken solely for pleasure makes them of a casual, not serious nature. However, it should be noted that depending on the frequency and intensity of these activities, they could potentially be considered much more than mildly threatening on both an individual and societal level. In fact, Stebbins made reference to this distinction when he noted that "heaving drinking and gambling, but not their more seriously regarded cousins alcoholism and compulsive gambling" are tolerably deviant and thus considered casual leisure.

Thus, Stebbins (1997) identified pursuits such as drinking and illicit drug use as socially tolerable and therefore casual leisure because he believes people are motivated to participate in such activities for hedonistic purposes. When describing deviant *serious* leisure, Stebbins referred to such activities as aberrant religion, politics, and science. However, depending on the seriousness of college students' participation in drinking and drug use, they could potentially be considered under the serious leisure category. For example, if college students spend a significant amount of their leisure time participating in pursuits such as drinking and using illicit drugs, perceive that they achieve benefits through their participation, strongly identify with their peers who also engage in these activities, and consequently, develop a unique ethos, then their behavior may speak to that of a serious leisure participant more so than a casual one as identified by Stebbins (1992a; 1992b; 2001). Moreover, it seems plausible that such students identify so strongly with their chosen leisure pursuits that the effects of their participation would be long lasting, not short lived, which is another indication of a serious rather than casual pursuit. Further, participation in these leisure activities may directly influence one's choice of friendship groups in that students participating in these activities may be drawn to and identify with others who also engage in these pursuits. However, in general, we feel most students' drinking and drug use habits more typically fall under the category of casual leisure, and specifically sensory stimulation.

In short, this study sought to bring a leisure perspective to bear on the drinking and drug choices of college students. In doing so, we examined their behavior within two potential explanatory theories. First, differential association was selected because it takes into account the social nature of drinking and drug use among college students. Second, casual leisure was selected because sensory stimulation and the benefits of casual leisure seem closely associated with drinking and drug use, and may add an important perspective to the body of literature in this area.

Methods

The present study is based on data obtained over several semesters from undergraduate students at a midwestern university. Questionnaires were administered in an introductory course in a Leisure Studies Department. Students from across campus can take the course for general education credit, and thus students enrolled in the course represent a broad range of majors.

The class size ranges from 40-300. Potential respondents were told the general purpose of the study, as well as their right to participate or not participate in the study, and their right to anonymity. They were also told that the results would be confidential. Most students chose to participate in the study. The survey took less than 10 minutes to complete. Because the survey was administered over several semesters, questions were added and/or modified based on the results of previous administrations. This allowed us to seek clarification on some of the study's initial findings.

A total of 740 undergraduate students participated in the study, however, because questions were added and/or modified throughout the data collection period, not all questions were asked of all students. There was a fairly even breakdown of subjects by sex (women = 41.9%; men = 58.1%) and academic year (freshman = 20%; sophomore = 22%; junior = 17.7%; senior = 40.1%). The majority of the students labeled themselves as "White/Caucasian" (76.6%); the two largest minority groups were African American (7.9%) and Asian (8.3%). The other races represented included Hispanic/Latino/Mexican American (2.3%) and mixed race students (4.9%). Students were given the option of specifying their race if they did not feel one of the categories represented them. Many indicated that they belong to a fraternity or sorority (35.3%). Students were also asked, "Do you consider yourself a religious person?" and 60.7% indicated "yes." Because previous studies (Pope et al., 2001; Wechsler et al., 2000) have found significant differences by sex, race, membership in the Greek system, and religious affiliation, the current study also tested for these differences. For the purposes of this paper, only White, African American and Asian students were included in the analyses due to the low number of Hispanic/Latino/Mexican students and mixed race students who responded to the survey.

To assess the connection with differential association, we asked students "When did you begin drinking?" Their options included "elementary school," "junior high," "high school," and "college." We also asked, "Who did you have your first drink with?" and asked them to indicate whether it was with "friends," "parents," "sibling," or "other." We also asked, "When you drink, are you *usually* . . ." Their options included "alone," "with friends," "with family," or "with girlfriend/boyfriend." These same questions were also asked regarding their drug use. We also asked about membership in the Greek system to get a greater sense of their social networks.

For casual leisure, we inquired about frequency, intensity, perceived benefits, and their perception of whether the activity was considered "leisure." More specifically, we asked respondents who indicated that they drink to report "On average, how many days per week do you drink?" They were also asked, "On average, how many drinks do you have per occasion?" Both of these questions were open-ended, and were also asked for drug use. We asked them "What are the main reasons you drink?" Based on the literature, we offered the following responses: social reasons, to relax, to escape, reduce stress, fun, peer pressure, for the effects. For those students who indicated

that they did not drink alcohol, we asked them to indicate their reasons for not drinking. The options given included: costs too much, don't like the taste, peer/parent pressure, not legal drinking age, religious reasons, don't have access. For drug use, options given for using drugs included: social reasons, to relax, to escape, reduce stress, fun, peer pressure, for the effects. Reasons for not using drugs included: costs too much, it is illegal, it is immoral, fear of the effects, don't have access. Respondents were also asked to respond to the statement, "I believe drinking alcohol is a leisure activity" using a five-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). This same question was also asked for drug use.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the questionnaire items. To determine whether significant differences existed by sex, race, Greek membership, academic class, and religious connection, chi-squares and MANOVAs and ANOVAs were conducted. In cases of multiple post hoc comparisons (for race), the Scheffe test was used to detect significant differences.

Results

Drinking Habits

The vast majority of the students indicated they "drink alcohol" (83.6%). When asked "on average how many days per week do you drink?" the overall mean for the sample was 2.53 (SD = 1.40) days. Respondents were also asked, "on average how many drinks do you have per occasion?" and the mean for this response was 5.70 (SD = 3.20) drinks. However, some of these findings varied by sex, race and whether the respondent belonged to a fraternity or sorority. Men were more likely than women to report that they drink alcohol ($X^2 = 6.28$; $p < .05$). Further, men tended to drink more frequently ($F = 16.73$; $p < .01$) and more intensely ($F = 91.43$; $p < .01$). When comparisons were made by race, significant differences were also found ($X^2 = 65.80$; $p < .01$). African Americans had the lowest percentage of students indicating that they drink alcohol, and they also tended to drink less frequently ($F = 11.32$; $p < .01$) and less intensely ($F = 14.30$; $p < .01$) than Caucasian students. Additionally, students who belong to the Greek system were significantly more likely to indicate that they drink alcohol ($X^2 = 23.76$; $p < .01$), they tended to drink more frequently ($F = 37.50$; $p < .01$), and more intensely ($F = 9.53$; $p < .01$). When comparisons were made between those students who reported that they consider themselves religious and those who did not, no significant differences were found. Comparisons were also made by academic year in college, and no significant differences were found. These findings are presented in Table 1.

Those who indicated that they do not drink alcohol were asked "why not?" Options included "costs too much," "don't like the taste," "peer/parent pressure," "not legal drinking age," "religious reasons," "don't have access." The response with the greatest support was "don't like the taste" and the option with the least support was "don't have access." MANOVA results

TABLE 1
Alcohol Consumption among College Students

Do you drink alcohol?	*% indicating yes*	*Chi-square*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	79.4	6.28	.008
Men	86.7		
By *race*			
Caucasians	88.8	65.80	.000
African Americans	55.2		
Asians	62.3		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	92.9	23.76	.000
Non-members	78.4		
How many days each week?	*Days*	*F-value*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	2.24	16.73	.000
Men	2.73		
By race			
Caucasians	2.63[a]	11.32*	.000
African Americans	1.60[b]		
Asians	2.18[a,b]		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	2.98	37.50	.000
Non-members	2.24		
How many drinks per occasion	*Drinks*	*F-value*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	4.30	91.43	.000
Men	6.67		
By race			
Caucasians	5.95[a]	14.30*	.000
African Americans	3.40[b]		
Asians	4.66[a,b]		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	6.21	9.53	.002
Non-members	5.38		

*Means with different letters are statistically significant.

indicated that these responses did not vary by sex, race, or whether the student belonged to a fraternity or sorority. The findings are reported in Table 2.

For those who reported that they *do* drink alcohol, they were asked, "what are the main reasons you drink?" Based on a review of the literature, options included "social reasons," "to relax," "to escape," "reduce stress," "fun," "peer pressure," "for the effects." The option with the greatest support was "social reasons" and the option with the weakest support was "peer

TABLE 2
Reasons for Drinking or Not Drinking Alcohol

Reasons for Not Drinking	*Mean**	*sd*
Don't like the taste	2.20	1.10
Religious reasons	2.73	1.42
Costs too much	2.81	1.10
Not legal drinking age	3.02	1.50
Peer/parent pressure	3.16	1.27
Don't have access	4.08	1.08
Reasons for Drinking	*Mean*	*sd*
Social reasons	1.60	.61
Fun	1.71	.57
To relax	1.96	.93
Reduce stress	2.44	1.06
For the effects	2.54	1.13
To escape	2.67	1.19
Peer pressure	3.23	1.38

*Means are based on a five-point Likert-type scale with strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5.

pressure." Again, MANOVA results indicated that these responses did not vary by sex, race, or whether the student belonged to a fraternity or sorority, and the findings are reported in Table 2.

Students were asked when they began drinking and with whom. Most (64.8%) indicated they began in high school, but others indicated college (25.5%) or junior high (8.3%). When this was compared to frequency and intensity, significant differences were found. For example, those students who reported that they began drinking in junior high tended to drink more frequently ($F = 7.14$; $p < .01$) and more intensely ($F = 13.51$; $p < .01$). The results are presented in Table 3. Additionally, the majority of the students (79%) said that they had their first drink with their friends, followed by parents (13.5%) and siblings (5.8%). Moreover, most (84.4%) reported that they are "usually with" their friends when they drink. These findings did not significantly affect frequency or intensity.

Respondents tended to either agree or strongly agree with the statement, "I believe drinking alcohol is a leisure activity" and this response did not vary by sex or by whether the students belonged to a fraternity or sorority; however it did statistically differ by race. The findings are displayed in Table 4. Caucasian students were significantly more likely than Asian students to indicate drinking is a leisure activity ($F = 10.50$; $p < .01$). Comparisons were also made between those students who reported that they *do* drink alcohol and those who do *not* drink alcohol. Not surprisingly, students who do drink alcohol were significantly more likely to view it as a leisure activity than were those who do not drink alcohol ($F = 19.24$; $p < .001$).

TABLE 3
Frequency and Intensity of Alcohol Consumption and Drug Use Based on Initial Time of Involvement

Initial Time of Drinking Involvement	*# of days/week drink alcohol**	*F value*	*p value*
Junior High	3.01[a]	7.14	.000
High School	2.62[b]		
College	1.90[c]		
Initial Time of Drinking Involvement	*# of drinks/ occasion**	*F value*	*p value*
Junior High	7.79[a]	13.51	.000
High School	6.06[b]		
College	4.45[c]		
Initial Time of Drug Involvement	*# of days/wk use drugs**	*F value*	*p value*
Junior High	6.21[a]	3.34	.040
High School	3.19[b]		
College	4.02[a,b]		

*Means with different letters are statistically significant.

Drug Use

Students were asked, "Do you use illegal drugs?" Some students (22%) indicated yes, but this response statistically differed based on sex, race, and membership in the Greek system. The findings are presented in Table 5. Men were more likely to report that the use drugs ($X^2 = 8.62$; $p < .01$), as were Caucasian students ($X^2 = 8.07$; $p < .05$). Students who belong to a fraternity or sorority were also more likely to report they use drugs ($X^2 = 11.09$; $p < .01$). Again, the reaction to this question was not significantly affected by whether the respondent considers herself or himself a religious person. The responses did statistically vary by academic year ($X^2 = 12.87$; $p < .01$). Interestingly, the percentages were lowest for freshman (16% reported using drugs) and seniors (18%), compared to sophomore (30%) and juniors (28%). Respondents who indicated that they use drugs were also asked, "On average, how many days a week do you use drugs?" and this response did not vary by sex, race, membership in the Greek system, or academic year. The overall average number of days per week that students reported using drugs was 3.47 days.

Those who indicated that they do not use drugs were asked, "why not?" The options included "cost too much," "it is illegal," "it is immoral," "fear of the effects," "don't have access." The respondents were most likely to agree with "it is illegal" and "fear of the effects" while the response with the weakest support was "don't have access." These findings are reported in Table 6. MANOVA results indicated responses did not statistically vary based on sex, race or membership in fraternities or sororities.

TABLE 4
Are These Activities Considered Leisure?

Drinking is a leisure activity	*Means**	*F value*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	2.09	.493	.483
Men	2.04		
By race			
Caucasians	1.99[a]	10.50**	.000
African Americans	2.24[a,b]		
Asians	2.56[b]		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	1.99	1.63	.202
Non-members	2.10		
By use			
Users	1.99	19.24	.000
Non-users	2.45		
Using drugs is a leisure activity	*Means**	*F value*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	2.82	.353	.553
Men	2.74		
By race			
Caucasians	2.73	3.11	.061
African Americans	2.85		
Asians	3.35		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	2.65	.865	.353
Non-members	2.84		
By user			
Users	2.17	55.61	.000
Non-users	3.16		

*Means are based on a five-point Likert-type scale with strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5.

**Means with different letters are statistically significant.

Those who reported that they *do* use drugs were asked to indicate their main reasons. Options included "social reasons," "to relax," "to escape," "to reduce stress," "fun," "peer pressure," "for the effects." The response with the greatest support was "fun," while "peer pressure" received the least support. The findings are displayed in Table 6. MANOVA results indicated that the responses did not vary by sex, race or fraternity or sorority membership.

Respondents were asked when they began using drugs and with whom. Most indicated that they began using drugs in high school (67.5%) or college (24.6%); some began in junior high (7.0%). When this was compared to frequency (average number of days per week) for each group, significant differences were found ($F = 3.34$; $p < .05$). The results indicated that those who began in junior high used drugs 6.21 days each week, compared to 3.19

TABLE 5
Drug Use among College Students

Do you use drugs?	*% indicating yes*	*Chi-square*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	16.5	8.62	.003
Men	27.5		
By race			
Caucasians	23.9	8.07	.018
African Americans	10.7		
Asians	14.6		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	29.2	11.09	.000
Non-members	18.1		
How many days each week?	*Days*	*F-value*	*p value*
By sex			
Women	3.99	2.60	.110
Men	3.31		
By race			
Caucasians	3.52	.506	.604
African Americans	3.08		
Asians	2.50		
By fraternity/sorority			
Members	3.35	.101	.752
Non-members	3.51		

TABLE 6
Reasons for Using Drugs or Not Using Drugs

Reasons for Not Using Drugs	*Mean**	*sd*
Fear of the effects	1.89	1.26
It is illegal	1.89	1.06
It is immoral	2.19	1.21
Costs too much	2.75	1.28
Don't have access	3.69	1.20
Reasons for Using Drugs	*Mean*	*sd*
Fun	1.57	.61
For the effects	1.67	.78
To relax	1.69	.77
Social reasons	2.17	.87
Reduce stress	2.24	1.11
To escape	2.62	1.25
Peer pressure	3.73	1.13

*Means are based on a five-point Likert-type scale with strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5.

days for those who began in high school and 4.02 days for those who started in college. (see Table 3). Most students (94.3%) were introduced to illegal drugs by their friends and most (89.1%) indicated that they are usually with their friends when they use drugs.

For those who indicated that they use drugs, they were asked to indicate the types of drugs they use. The most commonly used drug was marijuana (98.1%), followed by ecstasy (27.5%), cocaine (11.6%), LSD (6.6%), valium (6.6%) and heroin (4.1%).

Respondents were fairly neutral on whether drug use is considered a leisure activity (see Table 4). This finding did not vary based on sex, race or membership in the Greek system. Comparisons were also made between those who reported that they use drugs and those who indicated that they do not use drugs. As expected, those students who are drug users were significantly more likely to consider it a leisure activity than were non-users ($F = 55.61$; $p < .01$). Students who reported they used drugs had a mean of 2.17 compared to non-users who had a mean of 3.16.

Discussion

The findings lend some support for both differential association and casual leisure as theoretical frameworks for understanding college students' drinking and drug choices. Differential association states people learn from those with whom they are closest that participation in certain activities (e.g., drinking, illegal drug use) is acceptable (Bridges & Desmond, 2000). Yet the influence of intimate personal groups varies depending on the how frequently they assemble, the amount of time they spend together, and the priority and intensity of the friendship group.

Our findings support differential association as an explanatory framework in two ways. First, we found the majority of students had their first drink or drug experience with friends. Previous research regarding first drinking experiences has shown friends play a key role in influencing a youth's decision to drink (Lo, 2000). Second, although the current study did not question students directly about the nature of their friendship groups, our findings did indicate that college students frequently get together with their friends and spend a significant amount of time socializing. That is, college students spent two to three days a week with friends drinking or consuming drugs and when asked why they chose these leisure pursuits, the majority indicated for social reasons and to have fun with their friends. These findings speak to the level of involvement and importance that friendships play in affecting the leisure choices of college students. Further, these two results seem to confirm Lo's (2000) assertion that "college drinking is highly affected by the perception and retention of favorable definitions of drinking obtained through associations with friends" (p. 278), and thus lend support for differential association in explaining the influence of peer groups on leisure choices.

Our findings also supported casual leisure as a theoretical explanation for these leisure choices. The students' responses support Stebbin's notion

that casual leisure is hedonistic in that it offers a level of pleasure for those who participate. More specifically, many of the students who participated in drinking indicated that they did so for social reasons and to have fun, two common benefits of casual leisure (Stebbins, 1997; 2001). Students' primary reasons for illegal drug use was to have fun, to relax, and "for the effects." Again these motivations are consistent with casual leisure participation. Stebbins (1997) suggested that terms such as 'pleasure' and 'enjoyment' were appropriate descriptors of the rewards of casual leisure, in contrast to terms such as 'satisfaction' and 'rewardingness,' which better describe serious leisure. Another benefit of some types of casual leisure is the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Again, this was evident in our findings. Most of the students reported they are "usually with their friends" when they drink and use illegal drugs, and that they were introduced to these activities by their friends. Moreover, students who engaged in drinking and drug use were significantly more likely to view these pursuits as leisure than were nonusers.

It appears, therefore, that differential association and casual leisure are helpful explanations for students' involvement in leisure's "other" side. But, as Lo (2000) noted,

> applied research designed to answer practical policy questions has produced little theoretical explanation of alcohol-using [and drug] behavior beyond what descriptive analysis and simple correlational analysis have revealed about drinking [and drug use] on campus. It is desirable to test theoretical explanations of the social process leading collegians to drink [and use drugs] and of the rationales underlying drinking [and drug] problems among them." (p. 266)

While it is important to note that our study did not directly test theoretical explanations, we support Lo's contention that more theoretical explanations for drinking and drug use by college students is needed in order to bring a leisure perspective to bear on these issues.

The findings of this study support the results of previous research in this area. For example, previous research has documented that most Americans drink under-age. Lo and Globetti (1991) found that young Americans usually have their first drink around the age of 13. The current study found most students had their first drink in high school, and thus were about 14 years old, well under the legal age of 21. Wechsler et al. (1995) stated that what this means is that "legal drinking age fails to predict binge drinking, raising questions about the effectiveness of the legal minimum drinking age of 21 in college alcohol policies" (p. 922).

Moreover, the current study found significant differences based on the age at which a student had his or her first drink and college drinking patterns. Students who reported having their first drink in junior high tended to drink more frequently and more intensely than those who began in high school or college. This finding is also supported by Lo (2000) who found that students who began drinking earlier in life drank more heavily while in college, but commented that other factors such as parental influence, the context in which they were introduced to alcohol, and whether they had

their first drink at home also played a role and had a long-term impact on adult consumption patterns. Similar to the comments made by Wechsler et al. (1995), Lo (2000) hoped the results "encourage those heading up prevention efforts to emphasize the importance of the first drinking experience in how collegians manage their behavior while drinking" (p. 277).

Along a similar line of research, the findings of the current study lend support for the issue of binge drinking among college students. Wechsler et al. (1995) defined binge drinking as consuming more than five drinks in one sitting for men and more than four drinks in one episode for women. In their study of 140 campuses across the U.S, Wechsler et al. (1995) reported that 44% of their sample (50% of the male respondents and 39% of the female respondents) engaged in binge drinking. Our results indicated that, on average, men consume 6.7 drinks and women 4.3 drinks in one sitting. Our study also indicated that White males were likely to drink more frequently and intensely than women or other racial groups such as African American or Asian students, which was also found by Wechsler et al. (1995). Being a member of the Greek system was also linked to higher rates of alcohol consumption in both the current study and the study conducted by Wechsler et al. (1995).

One surprising difference between the current study and that conducted by Wechsler et al. (1995) deserves highlighting. They found "a particularly strong attitudinal item predictive of binging was the student's assessment of the importance of religion. Those who stated that participating in religion was 'not at all important' to them had a much higher likelihood of binging" (p. 926). Our results do not support that finding. In contrast, our results did not indicate any significant differences with respect to drinking or drug use based on religious affiliation, even though a significant number of students identified themselves as religious. This finding is somewhat surprising given that other studies have found religious affiliation to be an important dimension for drinking behavior. However, Wechsler et al. (1995) conducted their study across 40 different states with 140 colleges, both public and private, in both urban and suburban settings. Moreover, 23 of the colleges they included in the sample were church-related and in particular, 11 were Roman Catholic schools. The current study, in contrast, utilized one university located in the midwest region of the United States that was not affiliated with any church, which might explain why students were not overly influenced by their religious affiliation when making their leisure choices. Further, research has shown the diminishing centrality of religion is most apparent with 18-29 year olds—these are the people least likely to attend church or synagogue (Stein Wellner, 2001). While this is not to suggest most 18-29 do not identify with religion in general, it does suggest that they may be less likely to center their decisions on their religious beliefs. Moreover, Stein Wellner reported that this trend spans across all different types of religious groups, racial groups and ethnicities (2001).

The results of the current study, however, should be interpreted through the limitations imposed by the methods used. The data were collected at only one university in the midwest and therefore, the results cannot be gen-

eralized to other universities across the United States or Canada. Further, structured as a quantitative study, the survey instrument did not allow for clarification or probing. However, because the study was conducted over several semesters, questions were added and/or modified based on earlier results and this helped clarify some of the study's trends. Another limitation of the study is the results are based on self-reported levels of activity. Although we assured respondents that the information collected would be anonymous and confidential, given the sensitivity of the questions asked students might have been reluctant to respond honestly. For example, based on our conversations with students and other University personnel, the percentage of respondents who indicated that they use drugs seems quite low.

Despite these limitations, the present study suggests a number of areas for future research. For example, other research conducted with students on drinking, drug use or other behaviors labeled as deviant (such as theft or smoking) have taken into account a number of dimensions that the current study did not consider. Lotz and Lee (1999), for instance, conducted a study that examined the effects of active sociability and negative school experiences on the level of attraction students felt towards hedonistic activities. Their results indicated that some adolescents are attracted to hedonistic activities (such as drinking and smoking marijuana) because of their active sociability (association and involvement with peers) and negative school experiences (poor academic standing). Additionally, Wechsler et al. (1995) found binge drinkers were more likely to have a B average or lower, and thus it seems plausible that academic standing could also influence drug use. Therefore, future leisure research in this area might also benefit by examining academic standing and level of sociability. Research has indicated that paid employment might also be a factor that influences these leisure activities. For example, Miller and Matthews (2001) examined youth employment and juvenile delinquency and found that students gainfully employed throughout the academic year participated in more delinquent behavior, such as stealing and under-age drinking. Interestingly, while attempting to understand the impact of paid employment on delinquent behavior, they found the biggest influence on delinquent behavior was contact with delinquent peers at school, again suggesting support for differential association.

An area for future research that is specific to a leisure context is found in a study conducted by Carruthers (1993). She examined how adult populations expect alcohol to affect their leisure experiences, and the relationship between those expectations and alcohol consumption patterns. Her results indicated that "individuals expect alcohol to affect their experiences in three ways: 1) facilitate disengagement from responsibilities and tensions, 2) increase self-assurance and acceptance, and 3) heighten engagement in the immediate experience" (p. 229). In addition, Carruthers (1993) found people with more positive leisure related expectancies had higher rates of alcohol consumption. It would be interesting to extend this line of research within leisure studies to drug use.

Given that the current study only examined two of many possible "other" leisure pursuits, this topic warrants attention beyond those reported

herein. Rojek (1999) makes the case that leisure provides the context in which most activities considered deviant or on the fringe of social acceptability occur and stated "one of the challenges facing leisure studies is to incorporate deviant leisure as a central category of theory and research" (p. 93). Wearing and Wearing (2000) echoed this comment when they stated, "we agree with Rojek for the need to explore and develop leisure theory that provides a more developed understanding of destructive or deviant leisure activities" (p. 55). Rojek (1989) suggested particular activities such as "home taping, unlawful sexual activity, trespass" (p. 82) require further research, and we would add gambling, smoking, and pornography consumption to the list. Given that Wechsler et al. (1995) found "students who engaged in other forms of risky behavior—in particular, using marijuana within the past month, but also having several sex partners in the month before the survey and smoking cigarettes—were much more likely to binge drink" (p. 926), it seems clear that there are other leisure choices of college students that warrant attention.

Some leisure researchers have pointed out that not all leisure that is on the fringe of social acceptability is associated with costs. For example, while studying raves and drug use, Glover (2003) noted that such pursuits also might have benefits. He wrote, "as long as they do not harm others, youth must be free to engage in the leisure activities that they enjoy, even if such activities are subversive, for they, too, have their benefits" (p. 30). Robertson (1999) also noted that subversive leisure pursuits might have benefits. She commented, "this [benefits] literature does not address the possibility that individuals may realize benefits through leisure activities that are not generally considered to be socially acceptable" (p. 336). While it is important not to ignore the benefits that people may gain from their participation in these types of leisure pursuits, we must not lose site of the harm these activities may cause on both an individual and social level. Carruthers (1993) noted that alcohol consumption had negatively impacted the lives of many individuals. Moreover, Wechsler et al. found,

> that the evidence demonstrates clearly that binging is associated with substantially higher risks of acute health problems such as serious injury, especially resulting from auto crashes; unplanned and unsafe sex; assault and aggressive behavior, and a spectrum of drinking-related social and psychological problems. Thus, binge drinking is arguably the No. 1 public health hazard and the primary source of preventable morbidity and mortality for the more than six million full-time college students in America (p. 926).

Iso-Ahola and Crowley (1991) also noted the large social implications of substance abuse. Thus, leisure's "other" side is an important issue that, as leisure researchers, we should not continue to ignore.

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