Social Identification with coworkers and the association between drinking norms and college student drinking

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INTRODUCTION

o The normative environment is one of the most consistent predictors of college student drinking[1].

- Descriptive, injunctive and subjective norms are associated with heavy drinking[2,3].
- The strength of social identity with a group moderates the strength of the association between that groups drinking norms and individual group member drinking[4,5].
- Example: Stronger identification with a fraternity is associated with a stronger relationship between fraternity drinking norms and individual drinking.

o Various occupation types are also associated with drinking level[6-8].

- Workers in construction, military and hospitality industries have consistently been found to drink heavier and suffer more drinking related illness than workers in other occupations[6-8].
- The social environment of these occupations explains part of the association between occupation and individual drinking[6-8].

o An estimated 46% of fulltime college students work and an estimated 79% of part-time college students work[9].

- There is little evidence of how work effects college student drinking.
- There is a complicated relationship between drinking and stress, time working and extra money[10,11].
- Working at a non-school related job may reduce the available time for drinking while providing more money for buying alcohol[10,11].
- Not much is known about how work related norms effect drinking among college students.

PRESENT STUDY

o Given this lack of information regarding work drinking norms and college drinking, the present study seeks to:

1. Examine the role of descriptive drinking norms of coworkers on college student drinking,
2. And assess social identity with coworkers as a moderator of the relationship between coworker drinking norms and drinking.

METHODS

Participants

Table 1. Demographics

	Working Students (N=330)
Age	23.68(6.4)
Female	70%
GPA	3.10(.48)
Committed or Married	18%
Live On Campus	46%
Transferred from other college	45%

Procedure

o The data was collected via web-survey in the Fall of 2009. Students were randomly selected from the registrar (n=5250) and sent an email inviting them to participate in the survey.

o 761 completed the survey and 330 of those reported that they had a job.

o Structural Equation Modeling in AMOS was used to test

(1) the association between the descriptive norm and problem drinking and

(2) social identity as a moderator of that relationship.

➢ The interaction term was computed by multiplying the factor score for Social Identity by the zero centered descriptive norm.

o Post hoc analyses were conducted by comparing the model for testing social identity stratified by hospitality work and non-hospitality work.

Measures

o Four questions assessed social identity (α=.908). Social identity was used as a latent variable in the model. Responses ranged from 1 to 7.

o Problem drinking was assessed with four items: (1) # of days drinking, (2) max number of drinks in one day, (3) usual number of drinks on drinking days and (4) number of heavy drinking days (5+/4+ drinks). All items were asked for the past 30 days. Problem drinking was used a latent variable in the model.

o The descriptive norm was represented by the percentage of coworkers that drank 5 or drinks on one occasion in the past 2 weeks.

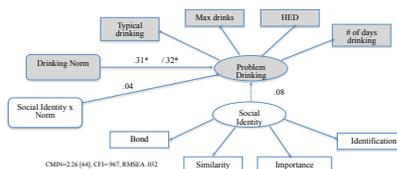Reprints are available in the Report Vault at iprevention.com

RESULTS

Table 2. Drinking Comparison by work type

	Non-workers	Hospitality workers	Non-Hospitality Workers
Strength of Identity		3.9(1.3)	3.8(1.5)
% of Heavy Drinking Coworkers		45(30)	26(26)*
Freq. of Heavy Drinking	1.33(2.6)	2.76(3.5)ab	1.19(2.3)
Usual Drinking	1.66(2.0)	2.31(2.0) ab	1.60(1.7)
Max Drinking	3.64(4.6)	5.28(4.1) ab	3.45(3.6)
Days drinking in past 30 days	3.26(4.56)	6.35(6.4) ab	3.52(4.3)

Main Analysis

o Social Identity (β=.042, p=.423) did not moderate the relationship between the norm and problem drinking.

o The norm (β=.32, p<.001), being older (β=-.11,p<.05), being female (β=-.20, p<.001), and being white (β=.17, p<.001) were associated with problem drinking.

o Social identity by it self was not associated (β=.08, p=.130).

Figure 1. Social Identity interaction with coworker drinking norms

CMIN=2.26 [64], CFI=.967, RMSEA .052

Post Hoc Analysis

	β (p-value)	CMIN [df]	CFI	RMSEA
Hospitality work		1.779 [128]	.940	.049
Descriptive Norm	.36(.002)*			
Social Identity	.11(.285)			
Social ID X Desc Norm	-.18(.086)			
Other Work				
Descriptive Norm	.25(.01)*			
Social Identity	.10(.13)			
Social ID X Desc Norm	.14(.05)*			

*p<.05,

DISCUSSION

o This study provides some evidence that the social work environment is important in predicting drinking among college students that work. Considering the large percentage of students that are working these environments may have a strong impact on student drinking overall

o This study also shows that students working in hospitality industries may be drinking heavier than students working in other industries. However, this is based on a relatively small sample(n=74).

o Social Identity might moderate the relationship between drinking norms and drinking, but in groups with stronger norms, strength of identity may have a smaller measurable effect.

FUTURE RESEARCH

o To determine the possible impact of working in hospitality in college populations, a national prevalence of students working in that field is important

o Explore possible interactions of identification with various pro-drinking social groups and working

o Examine work influence on other drug use behavior, especially smoking and stimulant use

o Explore social identity influences on other behaviors, such as beliefs about alcohol and attitudes towards drug use.

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