



Does Drinking Determine the Dyad?

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INTRODUCTION

• Young peoples' social networks often fluctuate during early college years. Old friendships may change, perhaps due to distance between friends or development of new interests. Simultaneously, exposure to a new cohort may lead to new friendships.

• Research on alcohol consumption and college social networks (e.g. Thombs et al, 2005) suggests that these college friendships can have a great deal of influence on the drinking behavior of students both during and after college.

• However, we are interested in a reciprocal question: what influence do students' drinking patterns have on the development or maintenance of friendships in college? Many students establish drinking patterns before they reach college (e.g. Duncan et al, 2006).

• We hypothesized that, similar to assortative mating in romantic relationships, assortative friendships develop based on perceived similarities in salient behaviors, such as drinking patterns, and that similarities in students' drinking patterns are associated with stronger friendships.

METHODS

• 100 students (25 male) 96% Caucasian, mean age = 18.8, sd = 1.2

• 100 partners selected by the students as friends but specifically not romantic interest; 22 males (3 male students brought women friends), 91% Caucasian, mean age = 18.9, sd = 2.4

• Participants were required to arrive together, but were seated in separate rooms immediately upon arrival. Each signed an informed consent agreeing to evaluate themselves and their partner (and agreeing to be evaluated)

• Administered questionnaire in small groups in private rooms on campus.

• The questionnaire included instruments (among many others) to assess drinking, their friend's drinking, how long they had known each other and the quality of the friendship between them.

• **The Quantity-Frequency-Variety Index** (adapted from Cahalan, et al 1969) yields a 90-day drinking summary, and identifies the type of alcohol that the individual consumes (i.e. hard liquor, beer, and wine). Each person completed one for him/herself and one for the partner.

• **Intimate Friendship Scale, IFS**, (Sharabany, 1994) measures friendship along eight dimensions: 1) Frankness and Spontaneity; 2) Sensitivity and Knowing; 3) Attachment; 4) Exclusiveness; 5) Giving and Sharing; 6) Imposition; 7) Common Activities; & 8) Trust and Loyalty

RESULTS

Drinking

Drinking Days (in the last 90)

Self Report = 21.5; sd = 19.2

Range = 0 - 88

Friend's Self Report = 18.8; sd = 15.0

Range = 0 - 75

Amount of drinking per drinking day
 Self report = about 3 – 4 standard drinks
 Friend's self report = about 3 – 4 st. drinks

Friendship

Months Known:
 Median = 6.5 Range = 1 – 216

Friendship scales:
 Scores could range from 1 - 20 for each scale

	M	sd
1) Frankness and Spontaneity	16.3	2.8
2) Sensitivity and Knowing	15.6	3.2
3) Attachment	15.3	3.0
4) Exclusiveness	12.0	2.8
5) Giving and Sharing	16.5	2.5
6) Imposition	14.9	2.6
7) Common Activities	14.9	2.8
8) Trust and Loyalty	17.1	2.3

DRINKING SIMILARITY AND FRIENDSHIP

Analyses of Covariance entering
 1) Discrepancy between Friend and Self on the Frequency of drinking
 2) Discrepancy between Friend and Self on the Amount of drinking per drinking days

Found that:
 The smaller the discrepancy on **FREQUENCY**, the greater the scores on:
 Frankness and Spontaneity
 F = 4.0; df = 1, 78; p < .04
 Attachment
 F = 3.9; df = 1, 78; p < .05
 Giving and Sharing
 F = 4.2; df = 1, 78; p < .04
 Common Activities
 F = 3.9; df = 1, 78; p < .05
 Trust and Loyalty
 F = 3.8; df = 1, 78; p < .05

AMOUNT discrepancy was not associated with any of the friendship scores.

Conclusion: Many limitations of this study (e.g. not enough participants, not longitudinal) so it is very preliminary, but findings suggest that Drinking Days (may) Determine the Dyad.



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