Examining the Potential Factors that Influence Alcohol Usage Among Irish College Students.

Aoíbhe Garrett

14417342

BA (Hons) Psychology

Supervisor: Dr Fearghal O'Brien

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of BA

(Hons) in Psychology

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland

March 2017

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Aoibhe Garrett   Student number: 14417342

School: School of Business   Course: BA (Hons) Psychology

Degree to be awarded: Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology

Title of Thesis: Examining the Potential Factors that Influence Alcohol Usage
among Irish College Students.

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (http://trap.ncirl.ie/), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate: Aoíbhe Garrett

For completion by the School:
The aforementioned thesis was received by_____ Date:_____

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Aoíbhe Garrett

Student Number: 14417342

Degree for which thesis is submitted: Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology

Material submitted for award

(a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.

(b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

(c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)

(d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

_____

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student: Aoíbhe Garrett

Date: 31st March 2017

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Fearghal O'Brien, for all of his help, advice and guidance throughout the production of this project. I am sincerely grateful.

I would also like to thank my Final Year Project lecturer, Dr Rebecca Maguire, for her additional help and support throughout the process of this project.

To everyone who took the time to participate in this study, I would like to express my gratitude towards every single one of you, because without you all, I would not have had the results I needed in order to conduct this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their consistent love and support throughout the year.

Abstract:

Objective: Alcohol utilization among college students still remains a serious health problem today. This study looked at potential factors that may be influencing the use of alcohol among Irish college students. Factors assessed were; age, gender, perceived stress, peer pressure, type of personality and alcohol expectancy.

Methodology: 92 participants (23 males and 69 females) completed basic demographic questions (age, gender, nationality) along with a number of questionnaires; The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale (SEAS), The Alcohol Consumption Measure (ACM), The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), The Resistance to Peer Influence Scale (RPIS) and The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The data was then evaluated using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, bivariate correlation analysis and hierarchical correlation analysis.

Results: Significant results were established between genders on levels of alcohol consumption. With regards to age and perceived stress, levels of alcohol consumption appeared to decline in the older students and in those with higher levels of perceived stress. Extroverts were found to be slightly more likely to drink larger quantities of alcohol than introverts. Furthermore, peer pressure was not found to have an effect on levels of alcohol consumption.

Discussion: Limitations of the study included; the sample size was quite small and there was an uneven distribution of male and female participants. Suggestions for future research in this area should include a larger sample size including an equal sample of both male and female participants. A longitudinal design could also be implemented in the future in order to achieve a more accurate understanding of the underlying reasons behind the large quantities of alcohol consumed by college students within Ireland.

Introduction:

Alcohol consumption still remains a severe health problem amongst college students (White & Hingson., 2014). It has been discovered in previous years that over 1,800 college students between the age of eighteen and twenty-four die from injuries related to alcohol every year, 599,000 are estimated to be injured, 646,000 are said to have been assaulted by other students, and roughly 2.7 million students drive under the influence of alcohol every year (Hingson et al., 2009). It has also been found that approximately twenty percent of college students meet the criteria for Alcohol Use Disorder in a given year (Blanco et al. 2008). Alcohol Use Disorder can be defined as a pattern of alcohol use that comprises trouble controlling alcohol intake, and continuing to consume alcohol even when it begins to cause problems. It also involves having to drink larger quantities of alcohol in order to get the same effect and experiencing withdrawal symptoms (for example, the shakes) when not drinking alcohol. It was discovered that Irish third level students spend more money on alcohol than food, every month (Condon, 2005). It was also found that the majority of times drinking took place, it consisted of binge drinking. Binge drinking can be defined as consuming four or more pints of beer or a bottle of wine in a single sitting. These findings were discovered in the College Lifestyle and Attitudinal National survey (CLAN), which involved students from twenty-one colleges nationwide. With regards to alcohol consumption, it was discovered that students averagely spent €109 on food and €110 on alcohol per month. For males, three out of four drinking sessions were binge drinking occasions. For women, three out of five were binge drinking occasions. It was also reported that students who regularly binge drink had a range of problems, which included problems with money, engaging in unprotected sex and having an overall poor work performance in college.

Alcoholism throughout adulthood is unfortunately, very common with more than half of 18-75-year-old Irish drinkers classified as "harmful" drinkers (Long & Mongan, 2014). This

means that a staggering 1.35 million people in Ireland are harmful drinkers. In 2013, it was realised that 75% of the alcohol consumed within Ireland that year was drank during a binge drinking session- with 20% of Irish drinkers engaging in binge drinking at least once a week (Long & Mongan, 2014). These figures are huge and really need to be lowered in the future. Alcoholism affects not only the person but the family members and friends surrounding them. It affects so many people worldwide but it can be prevented by either not drinking at all or drinking in moderation. Many alcoholics become addicted due to binge drinking regularly and then being unable to stop themselves from taking a drink. As time goes on, many alcoholics begin to suffer from a number of health issues such as; liver problems, alcohol related diabetes, cirrhosis, cancer, depression, high blood pressure, pancreatitis, nerve damage and many other health problems (Room, Babor & Rehm, 2005).

Research in the past has established that there is a persistent relationship between alcohol consumption and aggressive behaviour (Collins & Messerschmidt, 1993; Arseneault et al, 2000). Perpetrators and the victims of violent crimes are extremely likely to have consumed alcohol before committing aggressive acts, such as; rape, domestic violence and murder. However, an exploration into relational aggression and its relation to alcohol usage was studied in a college population (Grimaldi et al., 2014). It was discovered that the use of alcohol was not associated with the frequency of being the target of aggression. Although larger frequencies of committing relational aggression and greater levels of positive or negative urgency was correlated with negative outcomes. Research suggests that many factors influence college drinking (White& Hingson, 2014). There are many consequences of college drinking such as; missing class, bad grades, injuries, overdoses, blackouts and changes in the functioning of regions of the brain. This can lead to many college students becoming stressed and overwhelmed with the workload that college brings (White & Hingson, 2014).

Martin and Colleagues (2016) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between perfectionism, perceived stress and drinking alcohol to cope using a sample of college students. Maladaptive perfectionists (people with high levels of discrepancy that believe their personal high standards are not being met) had higher levels of stress and used alcohol to cope, compared to adaptive perfectionists (a normal, healthy type of perfectionism) who did not use alcohol as a coping mechanism. The study suggested that healthy levels of perfectionism and high standards could potentially protect a person from drinking alcohol to cope with perceived levels of stress. Fuertes and Hoffman (2016), investigated levels of alcohol usage at two colleges in the United States (urban and rural campuses). Out of 288 college students, alcohol dependence was reported by 29.5% of students. Abusive alcohol use was reported by 14.9%, and problematic drinking was reported by 23.6% of college students. This study found that urban administration (the institutional framework) did not get rid of problematic alcohol consumption and abuse of alcohol. However, they are correlated with significant declines in the onset of alcohol dependence.

Patel (2015) researched alcohol usage on perceived stress and burnout in undergraduate students. In this study, he compared regular drinkers to non-regular drinkers discovering that alcohol usage was negatively correlated with perceived stress- when perceived stress levels increased, alcohol usage decreased. Peer pressure and conformity to adult norms were significantly associated with the use of alcohol among adolescents. However, the sociocultural factors that may influence this relationship is of limited knowledge. Recent theories and research has suggested that norms of masculinity have been thought to both directly and indirectly contribute to the use of alcohol through both peer pressure and conformity to adult norms. Typically, being male is a risk factor for the use of alcohol, however, masculinity levels are a greater predictor of alcohol consumption than gender alone. This is a reason why some boys drink more than others. Adolescents living in rural areas in

the United States were used for the purposes of this study. Overall, this study established that masculinity was associated with levels of peer pressure and alcohol consumption levels.

Alcohol Use Disorder is a mental health disorder in which a person finds it difficult to control their drinking, continues to consume alcohol even when it causes problems and drinks larger quantities of alcohol over time in order to get the same effect from it. In a population of regular drinkers aged sixty and above, stressful life events, perceived stress, and social support relationships with consumption, at risk drinking and Alcohol Use Disorder were calculated (Sacco, Bucholz & Harrington, 2014). It was found that Alcohol Use Disorder was correlated with stressful life events for both men and women. With regards to high levels of perceived stress, women consumed less alcohol, whereas males had a greater chance of developing Alcohol Use Disorder. This study pin points the differences between men and women in relation to their levels of stress and use of alcohol. Although this study is current, the sample consists of men and women aged sixty plus years. This does not represent the younger generation. The future lies within the young people of today, therefore it is very important to explore the underlying reasons as to why young people consume alcohol. The present study will be examining students in college over the age of eighteen, in order to achieve a better understanding of the younger generation and their associations with stress-leading to the consumption of alcohol. The consumption of alcohol within a student's lifestyle could possibly be used as a coping mechanism from their stress levels as a route of short-lived escape from their problems. In relation to peer pressure, Crawford & Novak (2007), operated a study under the assumption that college students are in a vulnerable position if they think that other students in their college drink more alcohol than them. It was found that the students who drank the same amount as or close to what they considered to be normal for their gender type tended to have high levels of self-consciousness with a background history of alcohol abuse. The students who limited their alcohol intake in order to

avoid unfavourable events, tended to drink considerably less than what they thought to be the norm for their gender type. This suggested that they were able to resist peer pressure the most out of the different groups of students.

With regards to personality and alcohol consumption, Loxton and Colleagues (2015) tested impulsivity related and anxiety related traits and drinking motives as predictors of alcohol usage. Students living on campus were tested for the first six months of college. They took personality tests for impulsivity, anxiety sensitivity, hopelessness and sensation-seeking. Measures of alcohol consumption and drinking motives were also distributed and recorded. Impulsivity was found to be the best predictor of drinking at the start of the college year. Over the course of six months, impulsivity was also established to be a predictor of a change in drinking patterns. Students with high levels of impulsivity tended to maintain a higher level of alcohol consumption, in comparison to students with low impulsivity levels. Overall, the study strongly presented impulsivity as a main predictor of alcohol consumption and misuse within college students. Although this study suggested impulsivity as a predictor of alcohol use and misuse, the sample used does not represent Ireland or the reasons behind why Irish students drink alcohol. The participants in the above study were from a metropolitan city in Australia and were all in their first year of college. Whereas the current study will be examining college students from any stage in college. This study is important for the Irish youth of today because it will be examining the possible factors that influence college students to reach for alcohol, so as that the overuse of alcohol consumption can be reduced- or even make people more aware of some of the factors that influence the consumption of alcohol within the college setting.

Survey data was collected in 1988 in the United States of America with regards to alcohol consumption and gender type (Dawson & Archer, 1992). It was discovered that men were more likely to drink larger amounts of alcohol than women, with beer being the main type of

alcohol consumed. Men were also found more likely to heavily drink, in comparison to women. Much literature has been reviewed with regards to current and recent research on alcohol consumption among college students in The Republic of Ireland and The United Kingdom. Taken from a number of articles, the proportion of male and female hazardous drinkers was reported (Davoren et al., 2016). Hazardous drinking can be defined as a pattern of alcohol consumption that may lead to negative health outcomes over a period of time. Snow and Colleagues (2003), reported that 69.2% of males and 62.8% of females, out of 187 students were hazardous alcohol consumers. Another study reported that 85% of males and 73% of females from a South Wales University reported a hazardous alcohol score, using the Alcohol Use Disorder Test (AUDIT). This test was developed by the World Health Organisation in order to identify excessive drinkers. Although there have been a few studies addressing the relationship between gender and alcohol consumption, the literature is quite scarce in relation to college students in Ireland. In a college setting, are Irish men more likely to drink heavily or more often than women? This question will be addressed in the current study.

Generally, many college students go out and drink alcohol in order to socialise, make friends and have a good time- but this is not always the case, unfortunately (Colby et al., 2009). The purpose of this study is to examine factors that could potentially be contributing to college students using alcohol as a means to socialise. Could it be something to do with gender type? For example, do males consume more alcohol than women? (or vice-versa?). Is peer-pressure from classmates, personality type (introversion/extroversion) and/or levels of stress contributing to student's desires/need to consume alcohol? The aim of this study is to try and answer these questions. Studies have been conducted in relation to alcohol usage and college students in the past, however, the literature is very scarce in relation to college students in Ireland and alcohol consumption. It seems to have been considerably overlooked in the

psychological research. This study will be addressing the reasons as to why Irish college students feel the need to consume alcohol in order to socialise. Although there have been studies conducted addressing factors such as peer pressure, personality type and stress levels in relation to alcohol consumption, there really isn't many findings for Irish college students and the underlying reasons as to why they might drink alcohol, and the quantities that they may consume. This is important to investigate in order to achieve a better understanding of College students within Ireland and the underlying reasons behind their drinking habits. If there are factors distinguished that influence college students to drink alcohol, the factors can be addressed in the future in order to help college students by introducing other means to socialise. Drinking responsibly is very important in the long run in order to live a happy and healthy lifestyle (Sturm, 2002). A longitudinal study was conducted in order to explore the changes in alcohol usage from late teens to early adulthood (Pape & Hammer, 1996). From a sample of two thousand Norwegians, alcohol usage was assessed at the ages of 19-22, 21-24 and 25-28 years. Results of this study revealed that the majority of respondents increased their level of alcohol intake as they got older, along with a small minority of respondents declining their intake. However, the original level of drinking for those whose alcohol consumption declined was quite high. Furthermore, the level of drinking for those whose initial level of alcohol consumption was low, increased. Overall, the results suggested that there was a significant stability in alcohol usage over time.

The aim of this project is to examine the factors that may influence alcohol usage among college students in Ireland. The factors that will be measured are; alcohol use, perceived stress levels, peer pressure, age, gender, nationality and personality type. There will be four hypotheses tested throughout this study; High levels of perceived stress will influence the use of alcohol, peer pressure will play a significant role in alcohol consumption, male and female

students will differ in their levels of alcohol usage and extroverts will drink more alcohol than introverts.

Method:

Participants:

The research sample consisted of a total of 92 college students mainly from Ireland. Twenty-three males (25%) and sixty-nine females (75%) took part in the study. Five participants were English (5.4%) and eighty-seven participants were Irish (94.6%). The age of participants range from eighteen to twenty-nine years old. One participant was eighteen (1.1%), six participants were nineteen (6.5%), nineteen participants were twenty (20.7%),thirty-one participants were twenty-one (33.7%), nine participants were twenty-two (9.8%), fourteen participants were twenty-three (15.2%), four participants were twenty-four (4.3%), two participants were twenty-five (2.2%), one participant was twenty-six (1.1%), three participants were twenty-seven (3.3%), one participant was twenty-eight (1.1%) and one participant was 29 (1.1%). The average age of participants was 21.66 (SD=2.07, range 18-29). This sample was gathered via an online questionnaire. Snowball sampling was used in order to recruit participants. This was done through sharing the questionnaire on social media sites such as Facebook and asking friends and family to complete it and share it with their friends. However, it was also a self-selecting sample of participants due to the fact they all volunteered themselves to take part in the study online. The sampling techniques used are types of non-probability sampling. The identity of all participants remained anonymous throughout the study. They were also presented with a consent form at the beginning of the questionnaire that they read and agreed to before taking part in the study.

Gender Split

Male ■ Female ■

23

69

Nationality

Irish ■ English ■ ■ ■

5

87
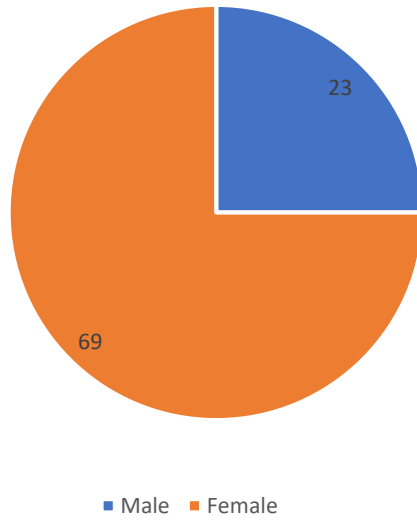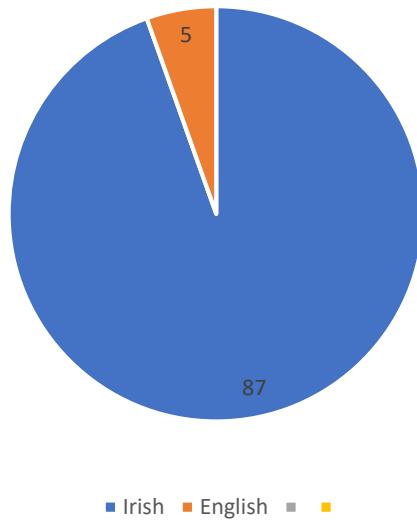
Design:

This research involved a cross-sectional, correlational, quantitative design, where levels of perceived stress, peer pressure, age, gender and personality type were related to alcohol usage among college students. Therefore, alcohol was the dependent variable (DV), and stress levels, peer pressure, age, gender and personality type were the independent variables (IV's).

Measures/Materials:

Data collection took place over a period of three weeks. The data was collected using an online questionnaire- Google Forms. The questionnaire was then shared on Facebook in order to recruit participants. To measure alcohol use, The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale (Ham et al., 2016) and The Alcohol Consumption Measure (Dillard et al., 2009) were used. The Social Expectancies of alcohol Scale was used to find the average response of positive and negative social alcohol expectancies. It is a 30-item measure with a 1 (not at all likely) to 5 (very likely) scale (see appendix 1). The Alcohol Consumption Measure is a 4-item questionnaire which received numerical responses in relation to the quantity of alcohol consumed (see appendix 2). To measure stress, The Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983) was used. This questionnaire consists of 10 items and is answered on a five-point (0= never, 1=almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, 4=very often) scale (see appendix 3). To measure peer pressure, The Resistance to Peer Influence Scale (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007) was used. This consists of 10 pairs of statements. The statements were answered with "really true for me" or "sort of true for me" (see appendix 4). Finally, to measure personality, the "Ten-Item Personality Inventory" (Gosling et al., 2003) was used. This is a 10-item test, measured on a 7 point Likert scale (see appendix 5).

Data Analysis:

Descriptive Statistics was run on the data, using SPSS in order to measure the central tendency, variability, normality and any outliers. Two Independent Samples T-tests were then conducted in order to see if males differed from females in their levels of alcohol consumption and if English and Irish students differed in their levels of alcohol consumption. Before carrying out regression analysis, it was first necessary to conduct bivariate correlation analysis to ascertain the relationships between the Independent variables and the Dependent variable; as well as the relationship between the Independent variables. A Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis was then performed, putting Age, Gender and Nationality into block one and Perceived Stress, Peer-pressure and Personality Type into block two. Block one was assessed in terms of the percentage of variance it explained in the Dependent variable (alcohol). Block two was assessed in terms of the percentage of variance it explains in the Dependent Variable, in addition to block one.

Participant Demographic Information:

In order to measure the age, gender and nationality of participants, demographic questions were asked (see appendix 8).

Ethical Procedures:

Alcohol can be a sensitive topic for many people, due to family members, relatives and friends having issues/problems with it (alcoholism). Therefore, the potential to cause some minor distress to participants throughout the study was there. However, they were ensured that they could withdraw from the study at any time, if they wished to do so. They were also under no pressure whatsoever to take part in the study. The Samaritans web address and phone number were made available at the end of the online questionnaire in the case that a participant became distressed. In that circumstance, they would be able to seek help and/or

advice from professional counsellors. Although it was very unlikely that the measures used in this study would cause any distress to participants, the risk was always there. In order for participants to take part in the study, they were required to be over the age of eighteen and had to be in College. Participants were informed of the nature and participation of the study before they began. There was a consent form at the beginning of the questionnaire that the participants read through (see appendix 6). Information on this form included the nature of the study and stated that participants could withdraw from the study at any time, if they wished to do so. If they agreed with the information at the beginning and were happy to proceed with participating in the questionnaire, they simply clicked "I consent to take part in this study" and began the questionnaire.

Procedure:

An online questionnaire using Google Forms was distributed to potential participants via Facebook. The questionnaire was initially shared on Facebook by the researcher, and then subsequently shared by the researchers Facebook friends in order to gain more participants. A consent form was attached to the beginning of the questionnaire in which the participants read and agreed to take part if they wished to do so. They then stated their age, gender and nationality. This was followed by *The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale* (see appendix 1)- a thirty item scale answered from 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The "*Alcohol Consumption Measure*" (see appendix 2) was then presented to the participants. This measure consisted of 4 questions in relation to the quantity of drink consumed by the participant, and also how often they consumed alcohol. These questions were answered numerically by the participants depending on how much alcohol they consumed in an average week and/or month. This was followed by *"The Perceived Stress Scale"* (see appendix 3)- a ten-item scale answered from 0-4 (0=never, 1=almost never, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, 4=very often) which is used to measure the perception of stress.

The *"Resistance to Peer Influence Scale"* (see appendix 4) was then answered by participants. This consisted of 10 pairs of statements in which the respondents chose the statement that best described them, choosing between the options of "really true for me" or "sort of true for me". The *"Ten-item Personality Inventory"* (see appendix 5) was then answered by participants. This scale consisted of 10 items that were answered on a scale of 1-7 (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=disagree a little, 4=neither agree or disagree, 5=agree a little, 6=moderately agree, 7=strongly agree). This scale was used in order to discover the participant's personality types (extroversion/introversion). This brought the online questionnaire to an end and the participants were then debriefed (see appendix 7). Overall the questionnaire took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Results:

Out of the 92 students in this study, the average amount of times they consumed alcohol in a typical month was 4.6 times. The average number of drinks consumed in a typical week was 6 standard drinks, and the average number of drinks a person had at one time was 6.

Reliability Statistics:

The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale (SEAS), the Alcohol Consumption Measure (ACM), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the Ten-Item Personality Scale (TIPS) were assessed for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha analyses. The SEAS consisted of 30 items (a=.77), the ACM consisted of 4 items (a=.75) and the PSS consisted of 10 items (a=.85), the TIPS also consisted of 10 items (a=.56) (see table 1). The scales used were all found to be internally consistent, with the exception of the Ten-Item Personality Scale, so were therefore used for examining the descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, bivariate correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression analysis

Table 1- Reliability Statistics:

Variables	No. Of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale	30	.77
The Alcohol Consumption Measure	4	.75
The Perceived Stress Scale	10	.85
The Ten-Item Personality Inventory	10	.56

Descriptive Statistics:

A total of 92 participants took part in this study. The categorical variables of interest in this study were *Gender* and *Nationality*. The frequency and valid percentage of these variables are presented in table 2, below.

Table 2- Categorical Variables:

Frequencies for the current sample on each demographic variable (N = 92)

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender		
Male	23	25
Female	69	75
Nationality		
Irish	87	94.6
English	5	5.4

In table 3, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations for the Expectancies of Alcohol, Alcohol Consumption, Perceived Stress, Peer-pressure, Age and Personality type are presented. The mean total *Expectancies of Alcohol* score was 3.50 (SD=.38, median=3.53, range= 2-4). Inspection of the confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 3.42-3.57 range. Results indicate that expectancies of alcohol among the current sample was normally distributed. The mean total *Alcohol Consumption* score was 5.00 (SD=3.93, median=4.13, range=0.5-25). Inspection of the confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 4.19-5.81 range. Results indicate that alcohol consumption was not normally distributed within the data set. The mean *Perceived Stress* score was 2.51 (SD=.75,

median=2.47, range=1.1-5). Inspection of the confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 2.35-2.66 range. Results indicate that perceived stress is normally distributed. The mean total *Personality Type* score was 4.60 (SD=.70, median= 4.6, range= 2-6.4) inspection of the confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 4.45-4.74 range. Results indicate that personality type is normally distributed. The mean total Peer-pressure score was 1.49 (SD=.22, median=1.5, range=1-2). Inspection of confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 1.45-1.54 range. Results indicate that Peer Pressure is normally distributed within the data set. The total mean *Age* score was 21.66 (SD=2.01, median=21, range= 18-29). Inspection of confidence intervals determine that at the 95% confidence level, the true population mean lies within the 21.23-22.09 range. Results indicate that Age is normally distributed. Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests of normality were also analysed for each variable. The three variables *Expectancies of Alcohol* (Sig.=.847), *Perceived Stress* (Sig.=.176) and *Personality Type* (Sig.=.253) all had a sig.>.05. This supports the assumption of normality.

However, the variables *Peer-pressure* (Sig.=.026)*, Age* (Sig.=.000) and *Alcohol Consumption* (Sig.=.000) had a sig.<.05. This violates the assumption of normality.

Table 3- Continuous Variables:

	Mean (95% Confidence Intervals)	Std. Error Mean	Median	SD	Range
Alcohol Expectancy	3.50 (3.42-3.57)	.04	3.53	.38	2-4
Alcohol Consumption	5.00 (4.19-5.81)	.41	4.13	3.93	.5-25
Perceived Stress	2.51 (2.35-2.66)	.08	2.47	.75	1.1-5
Age	21.66 (21.23-22.09)	.22	21	2.07	18-29
Personality Type	4.60 (4.45-4.74)	.07	4.6	.70	2 -6.4
Peer Pressure	1.49 (1.45-1.54)	.02	1.5	.22	1-2

Independent Samples T-test:

An Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the levels of Alcohol Consumption between males and females. There was a significant difference in scores between the two groups, $t(24.82)= 2.24$, $p=.03$, two-tailed with males ($M=7.91$, $SD=6.90$) scoring higher than females (M=4.59, SD= 2.96). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= -3.32, 95% Cl= 1.48- 0.26) was large (cohen's d= 0.7).

Another Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare the levels of Alcohol Consumption between Irish and English participants. There was no significant difference in scores between the two groups, $t(90)= -.78$, $p= .44$, two-tailed with Irish participants

(*M*=5.34, *SD*=4.54) scoring similarly to English participants (*M*=6.95, *SD*=3.97). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference= -1.61, 95% Cl: -5.74 to 2.51) was medium (cohen's d= 0.4).

Bivariate Correlation Analysis:

Prior to carrying out regression analysis, it was first necessary to conduct bivariate correlation analysis to ascertain the relationships between the Independent variables and the Dependent variable; as well as the relationship between the Independent variables (see table 4). *Age* was negatively, weakly correlated with *Alcohol Consumption*, r= -.113, n=92, p=.284, with a shared variance of 1.3%. *Perceived Stress* was negatively, weakly associated with *Alcohol Consumption*, r= -.278, n=92, p=.007, with a shared variance of 7.7%. *Personality* was positively, weakly/moderately correlated with *Alcohol Consumption*, r=.253, n=90, p=.016, with a shared variance of 6.4%. *Gender* was negatively, moderately correlated with *Alcohol Consumption,* r=-.321, n=92, p=.002, with a shared variance of 10.3%. *Alcohol Expectancy* was positively, weakly correlated with *Alcohol Consumption,* r=.10, n=92, p=.596, with a shared variance of .3%. *Peer Pressure* was positively, weakly correlated with *Alcohol Consumption*, r=.10, n=92, p=.551, with a shared variance of 0.4%. The results suggest that *Age* and *Perceived Stress* did moderately contribute to alcohol consumption. An extroverted personality was weakly/moderately associated with alcohol consumption, suggesting an extroverted person was more likely than an introverted person to consume alcohol. Males were found to be more likely to consume alcohol than females. Finally, *Peer Pressure* did not particularly contribute to *Alcohol Consumption.*

Table 4:

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	1						
2. Gender	-.302**	1					
3. Nationality	.225*	-.194	1				
4. Alcohol Expectancy	-.003	-.117	-.019	1			
5. Perceived Stress	-.208*	.254*	-.209*	-.067	1		
6. Personality	.065	-.085	.172	-.054	-.430**	1	
7. Peer Pressure	-.090	-.134	-.179	.010	-.174	-.046	1

Note. Statistical significance: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

A Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis was then conducted. The results from the analysis are presented below.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression:

Hierarchical Multiple Regression was performed to investigate the ability of Alcohol Expectancy, Personality Type, Peer Pressure and Perceived Stress to predict levels of Alcohol Consumption, after controlling for age, gender and nationality. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and

homoscedasticity. Additionally, the correlations amongst the predictor variables (age, gender and nationality) were examined and these are presented in Table 3. All correlations were weak ranging between r= -.32 to .08. this indicates that multicollinearity was unlikely to be a problem (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All of the predictor variables with the exception of Nationality were correlated with Alcohol Consumption which indicates that the data was suitable for Multiple Linear Regression Analysis.

In the first step of Hierarchical Multiple Regression, three predictors were entered: age, gender and nationality. These variables were entered into the first box in order to control for age, gender and nationality when discussing perceived stress, peer pressure, personality type, alcohol expectancy and their relationship with alcohol consumption. This model was statistically significant $F_{(3,86)} = 5.253$, p=.002, and explained 16% variance in Alcohol Consumption. After the entry of Alcohol Expectancy, Personality Type, Peer Pressure and Perceived Stress at step two, the total variance explained by the model was 23%, $F_{(7,82)} = 3.516$, p=.002. The introduction of step two explained an additional 7.5% variance in Alcohol Consumption scores, after controlling for age, gender and nationality (R Squared Change= .076; $F_{(4,82)} = 2.03$, p=.099).

In the final model, Age, Gender and Perceived Stress predicted lower levels of Alcohol Consumption, whilst extroversion predicted higher levels of alcohol consumption. However, gender was found to have the strongest effect (see Table 5 for full results).

Table 5- Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model of Alcohol Consumption:

	R	R^2	R^2 Change	B	SE	β	t
Step 1	.39	.16**					
Age				-.53	.23	-.24*	-2.3
Gender				-3.95	1.09	-.38***	-3.6
Nationality				1.2	2.03	.06	.61
Step 2	.48	.23	.076				
Alcohol Expectancy				.14	1.18	.01	.12
Personality Type				1.04	.70	.16	1.48
Peer Pressure				-.62	2.09	-.03	-.30
Perceived Stress				-1.09	.70	-.18	-1.56

Note. Statistical Significance. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Discussion:

The aim of the current study was to strengthen the research that has been regulated in the area of alcohol consumption in Irish Colleges, by specifically examining potential factors that were likely to cause College students to consume alcohol. For this study, four research hypotheses were examined. It was first hypothesised that high levels of Perceived Stress would influence the use of alcohol. Secondly, it was hypothesised that Peer Pressure would play a significant role in the consumption of alcohol among college students. The third hypothesis proposed that male and female students would differ in their levels of alcohol usage. Lastly, it was hypothesised that extroverts would consume more alcohol than introverts.

The results of this study were inconsistent with the first hypothesis. After conducting Hierarchical Multiple Regression, the results suggested that high levels of perceived stress predicted a decline in levels of alcohol consumption. In relation to the second hypothesis, Peer pressure was not found to play a significant role in alcohol consumption. With regards to hypothesis three, after conducting an Independent Samples T-test, males were found to consume more alcohol than women. This supported the hypothesis that males and females would differ in their levels of alcohol usage. The fourth and final hypothesis was also supported which stated that extroversion would predict higher levels of alcohol consumption.

Age:

It was found that, with regards to age, the older students were in college, the level of alcohol consumed appeared to slightly decline. This could have been due to the increase in workload and pressure as they progressed through college towards their final year. Some of the students that took part in this study were in fact in their final year of college, potentially making them less likely to go out socialising and consuming alcohol than that of a first-year student in

college. Another potential factor could have been maturity levels increasing with age, and some of the participants who took part in the study may also have been mature students (the participants in the study from 24-29 years old). This could have also made them less likely to go out as often as, for example, an eighteen or nineteen-year old. The results of this study contradicted Pape and Hammer's (1996) study which resulted in the majority of respondents increasing their alcohol intake as they got older.

Gender and Nationality:

The results of the present study found that there was a significant difference in the levels of alcohol consumption between males and females. From conducting an Independent Samples T-test, male college students were discovered to consume a significantly larger quantity of alcohol than female college students. The results of this study agreed with Dawson and Archer's (1992) study which also found that men were more likely to consume larger quantities of alcohol than women. They were also found to drink more heavily, in comparison to women. As there were both English and Irish participants in this study, another Independent Samples T-test was conducted in order to examine whether there were any differences in the levels of alcohol consumption between the two nationalities. There were no significant differences found between the two nationalities with regards to levels of alcohol consumption.

Perceived Stress:

With regards to perceived stress and alcohol consumption, it was found that high levels of perceived stress indicated a decline in levels of alcohol consumption. These results supported Patel's (2015) study which investigated alcohol usage on perceived stress and burnout in undergraduate students. Results of that study also proposed that alcohol usage was negatively

correlated with perceived stress- when perceived stress levels increased, alcohol usage decreased.

Peer Pressure:

After conducting bivariate correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression analysis, Peer pressure was not found to affect levels of alcohol consumption in this study. A study was conducted under the assumption that college students were in a vulnerable position if they thought other students in their college drank more alcohol than them (Crawford & Novak, 2007). This study found that the students who drank the same amount of alcohol that they thought to be the norm, tended to have high levels of self-consciousness. The students who drank considerably less than the college norm were suggested to be able to resist peer pressure the most out of the two groups. This study can be related to the results of the current study which showed that peer pressure simply did not prove to have an effect on Irish students level of alcohol consumption. Overall, in a college setting, peer pressure did not seem to predict higher or lower levels of alcohol usage. It did not appear to have a significant effect at all. There has been very little research on peer pressure and alcohol consumption. It might be interesting to look at the difference in levels of peer pressure and alcohol usage between school students and college students in the future, in order to see the extent in changes in attitudes towards peer pressure as a school student transitions into college.

Personality:

From conducting a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, extroversion was found to predict higher levels of alcohol consumption. In relation to Loxton and Colleagues (2015) study on personality and alcohol consumption, they discovered impulsivity as a significant predictor of alcohol consumption and misuse within college students. Impulsivity is typically

associated with an extroverted personality, therefore the findings of this study can be related to Loxton and Colleagues (2015) study.

Major Implications:

The results of the current study provided additional information to the subject of alcohol consumption among college students. Males were shown to consume more alcohol than women in this study. Although there was an uneven distribution of male and female respondents, the results were consistent with research that has been conducted in the past (Archer, 1992). Implications for the future could potentially involve interventions in order to introduce college students to other ways and means to socialise without turning to alcohol. Campaigns could also be set up in colleges in order to address problematic drinking, binge drinking, other fun ways to socialise without alcohol, how to cope with the stresses of college without turning to alcohol and so forth. There could be a campaign to promote a healthy balance between college work, and socialising with and without the involvement of alcohol. The findings of this study may have important implications for studies in the future and for the development of effective interventions in order to promote a healthy balance between alcohol consumption and a person's general lifestyle.

Limitations:

Firstly, the sample size was quite small (N=92), which could have potentially affected the statistical power of the results. Along with a small sample size comes the risk of voluntary response bias. As the questionnaire for this study was posted and shared on the researchers private Facebook account, only a small number of people had access to or knowledge about the questionnaire. It is likely that the participants were mostly from the same area as well, potentially skewing the results of the data. A questionnaire posted only on Facebook significantly limited the number of potential participants that could have partook because

only the people with Facebook accounts could have participated in the study. This could have possibly caused a voluntary response bias.

Secondly, there was an uneven distribution of male and female participants (M=23, F=69). Although the results of the study showed that males consumed more alcohol than women, it wasn't a particularly accurate result due to the imbalance of male and female participants. There was also a substantial difference in the distribution of Irish and English participants in the study (Irish=87, English=5). Although there was no significant difference found between the two nationalities in relation to alcohol consumption, the result was inaccurate due to the imbalance of Irish and English participants.

The participants in this study were also self-selected, so it should be noted that there may have been a degree of self-selection bias. This could have led to an unrepresentative sample or exaggerated findings within the study. The measures used in this study consisted of self-report questionnaires. It can be argued that these measures lack ecological validity as they do not authentically measure an individual's true interpersonal interactions.
Another limitation to this study involves the Ten-Item Personality Scale (TIPS; Gosling et al., 2003). This scale was found to have inadequate reliability (a=.56), therefore the results of this measure should be interpreted with caution.

Finally, as the study was cross-sectional, the results do not infer causality. It is recommended that studies of a similar nature take these limitations into account in the future.

Future Recommendations:

If similar research was to be conducted in the future, researchers should take into account the limitations of this study when conducting their research. A larger sample size would be beneficial to the statistical power of the results and to achieve a more accurate representation of the population. It would also be beneficial to achieve an even distribution of male and

female participants in order to achieve more significant findings. Future researchers could use longitudinal designs in order to achieve more accurate results and a more accurate understanding of the underlying reasons as to why college students consume the quantities of alcohol that they do.

Conclusion:

The aim of the current study was to strengthen the research that has been regulated in the area of alcohol consumption in Irish Colleges, by specifically examining potential factors that were likely to cause College students to consume alcohol. In order to accomplish this aim, four hypotheses were tested. It was first hypothesised that high levels of perceived stress will influence the use of alcohol. Secondly, it was hypothesised that peer pressure will play a significant role in alcohol consumption. The third hypothesis stated that male and female students will differ in their levels of alcohol consumption and lastly, it was hypothesised that extroverts will consume more alcohol than introverts. Results indicated that levels of perceived stress were associated with a decline in levels of alcohol consumption. Peer pressure was not found to have an effect on levels of alcohol consumption. There was a significant difference between males and females on the levels of alcohol consumption, with males consuming more than females. Finally, extroverts were found to be slightly more likely to drink larger quantities of alcohol than introverts. In conclusion, the significant results that have been established further strengthen research regarding alcohol consumption and the underlying reasons as to why college students drink to the extent that they do.

References:

Arsenault L, Moffitt TE, Capsi A, Taylor PJ & Silva PA (2000), Mental Disorders and
Violence in a Total Birth Cohort. *Dunedin Study Archives of General Psychiatry.
57*(1), 979-986.

Blanco C., Okuda M., & Wright C., (2008), Mental Health of College Students and their
Non-college-attending Peers. *The National Epidemiologic Study on Alcohol and
Related Conditions, 65*(12), 1429-1437.

Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived
stress. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 385-396.

Colby, S. M., Colby, J. J., & Raymond, G. A. (2009). College versus the real world: Student
perceptions and implications for understanding heavy drinking among college
students. *Addictive behaviors*, *34*(1), 17-27.

Collins JJ & Messerschmidt MA (1993). Epidemiology of Alcohol Related Violence. *Alcohol
Health and Research World, 17*(1), 93-100.

Condon, D. (2005, April 25). College students binge drink regularly. Retrieved from
Irishhealth.com, http://www.irishhealth.com/article.html?id=7388

Crawford, L. A., & Novak, K. B. (2007). Resisting peer pressure: Characteristics associated
with other-self discrepancies in college students' levels of alcohol
consumption. *Journal of alcohol and drug education*, *51*(1), 35.

Davoren, M. P., Demant, J., Shiely, F., & Perry, I. J. (2016). Alcohol consumption among
university students in Ireland and the United Kingdom from 2002 to 2014: a
systematic review. *BMC public health*, *16*(1), 173.

Dawson, D. A., & Archer, L. (1992). Gender differences in alcohol consumption: effects of
measurement. *British Journal of Addiction*, *87*(1), 119-123.

Dillard, A. J., Midboe, A. M., & Klein, W. M. P. (2009). Alcohol Consumption Measure

    [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t19157-

    000

Faulkner, S., Hendry, L. B., Roderique, L., & Thomson, R. (2006). A preliminary study of

    the attitudes, triggers and consequences of hazardous drinking in university

    students. *Health Education Journal*, *65*(2), 159-169.

Fuertes, J. N., & Hoffman, A. (2016). Alcohol Consumption and Abuse among College

    Students: Alarming Rates among the Best and the Brightest. *College Student*

    Journal, *50*(2), 236-240.

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2003). Ten-Item Personality Inventory

    [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t07016-

    000

Grimaldi, E. M., Napper, L. E., & LaBrie, J. W. (2014). Relational aggression, positive

    urgency and negative urgency: Predicting alcohol use and consequences among

    college students. *Psychology of addictive behaviours*, *28*(3), 893.

Ham, L. S., Bacon, A. K., Carrigan, M. H., Zamboanga, B. L., & Casner, H. G. (2016).

    Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS.

    doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t50257-000

Hingson R., Zha W., & Weizman ER. (2009), Magnitude of and trends in Alcohol-related

    Mortality and Morbidity among U.S. College Students ages 18-24, *Journal of Studies*

    on Alcohol and Drugs, 16(1), 12-20.

Iwamoto, D. K., & Smiler, A. P. (2013). Alcohol makes you macho and helps you make

    friends: The role of masculine norms and peer pressure in adolescent boys' and girls'

    alcohol use. *Substance use & misuse*, *48*(5), 371-378.

Long, J., & Mongan, D. (2014). Alcohol consumption in Ireland 2013.

Loxton, N. J., Bunker, R. J., Dingle, G. A., & Wong, V. (2015). Drinking not thinking: A prospective study of personality traits and drinking motives on alcohol consumption across the first year of university. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *79*, 134-139.

Martin, R. J., Chaney, B. H., Cremeens-Matthews, J., & Vail-Smith, K. (2016). Perceptions of breath alcohol concentration (BrAC) levels among a sample of bar patrons with BrAC values of 0.08% or higher. *Psychology of addictive behaviors*, *30*(6), 680.

Pape, H., & Hammer, T. (1996). How does young people's alcohol consumption change during the transition to early adulthood? A longitudinal study of changes at aggregate and individual level. *Addiction*, *91*(9), 1345-1358.

Patel, A. (2015). *Effects of Caffeinated Energy Drink and Alcohol Usage on Perceived Stress and Burnout In Undergraduate Students* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida Orlando, FL).

Room, R., Babor, T., & Rehm, J. (2005). Alcohol and public health. *The lancet*, *365*(9458), 519-530.

White, A., & Hingson, R. (2014). The burden of alcohol use: excessive alcohol consumption and related consequences among college students. *Alcohol research: current reviews*, *35*(2), 201.

Sacco, P., Bucholz, K. K., & Harrington, D. (2014). Gender differences in stressful life events, social support, perceived stress, and alcohol use among older adults: results from a national survey. *Substance use & misuse*, *49*(4), 456-465.

Snow, P., Wallace, S., Staiger, P., & Stolz-Grobusch, B. (2003). "As long as it doesn't spill over into class": harms arising from students' alcohol use, and the role of policy in reducing them. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, *14*(1), 5-16.

Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Resistance to Peer Influence Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t26201-000

Sturm, R. (2002). The effects of obesity, smoking, and drinking on medical problems and costs. *Health affairs*, *21*(2), 245-253.

Tabachnick, B.G., & Fidell, L.S. (2007). *Using Multivariate Statistics, Fifth Edition*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

White, A., & Hingson, R. (2014). The burden of alcohol use: Excessive alcohol consumption and related consequences among college students. *Alcohol research: current reviews*, *35*(2), 201.

Appendices:

Appendix 1:

The Social Expectancies of Alcohol Scale:

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

After a few drinks . . .

1. It would be easier for me to mingle at a party. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I would feel less shy around others. 1 2 3 4 5

3. People will have a hard time understanding what I am saying. 1 2 3 4 5

4. I would make a fool of myself. 1 2 3 4 5

5. I would embarrass myself. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I would try to avoid people so I won't do or say something stupid. 1 2 3 4 5

7. I might lose track of what I'm saying in a conversation. 1 2 3 4 5

8. I would feel more comfortable in a large group situation. 1 2 3 4 5

9. Others would think poorly of me. 1 2 3 4 5

10. My performance would be impaired in social situations. 1 2 3 4 5

11. I would feel more comfortable talking to people. 1 2 3 4 5

12. I would feel more confident when calling someone on the telephone. 1 2 3 4 5

13. I would have more self-confidence. 1 2 3 4 5

14. I would feel more comfortable entering a room when others are already seated. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I would feel more sociable and friendly. 1 2 3 4 5

16. It would be easier to act, speak, or perform in front of an audience. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I would talk about things I shouldn't. 1 2 3 4 5

18. I would feel free to be myself and do whatever I want. 1 2 3 4 5

19. People would find me less attractive. 1 2 3 4 5

20. It would be easier to approach someone. 1 2 3 4 5

21. People would react negatively towards me. 1 2 3 4 5

22. I would talk too much. 1 2 3 4 5

23. I would feel more at ease when talking to someone of the opposite sex. 1 2 3 4 5

24. I would be more outgoing around people I don't know well. 1 2 3 4 5

25. It would be easier to be in a large group of people. 1 2 3 4 5

26. It would be easier to express my feelings. 1 2 3 4 5

27. I might say something that I regret later. 1 2 3 4 5

28. I would slur my speech. 1 2 3 4 5

29. I won't be able to monitor what I am saying as well. 1 2 3 4 5

30. I would do something I would regret later. 1 2 3 4 5

Note. Scoring information:

Positive SEAS: Average of the following 15 items – 1, 2, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26

Negative SEAS: Average of the following 15 items – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30

Appendix 2:

Alcohol Consumption Measure:

Items

(a) How many times in a typical month do you drink alcohol?

(b) How many drinks have you had in the past week?

(c) How many drinks do you have in a typical week?

(d) How many drinks do you typically have at one time?

Appendix 3:

The Perceived Stress Scale:

(0= Never, 1= Almost Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Fairly often, 4= Very often)

In the last month. how often…

1 …have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

2 …have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

3 …have you felt nervous and "stressed"?

4 …have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

5 …have you felt that things were going your way?

6 …have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

7 …have you been able to control irritations in your life?

8 …you felt that you were on top of things?

9 …you been angered because of things that were outside your control?

10 …have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Scoring: PSS scores are obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing across all scale items

Appendix 4:

Resistance to peer influence scale:

Read through these statements and choose the one that best describes you. Respond with a "really true for me" or "sort of true for me".

Some people go along with their friends just to keep their friends happy.

BUT

Other people refuse to go along with their friends want to do, even though they know it will make their friends unhappy.

Some people think it's more important to be an individual than to fit in with the crowd.

BUT

Other people think it is more important to fit in with the crowd than to stand out as an individual.

For some people, it's pretty easy for their friends to get them to change their mind

BUT

For other people, it's pretty hard for their friends to get them to change their mind.

Some people would do something that they knew was wrong just to stay on their friends' good side.

BUT

Other people would not do something they knew was wrong just to stay on their friends' good side.

Some people hide their true opinion from their friends if they think their friends will make fun of them because of it.

 BUT

Other people will say their true opinion in front of their friends, even if they know their friends will make fun of them because of it.

Some people will not break the law just because their friends say that they would.

 BUT

Some people will not break the law just because their friends say that they would.

Some people change the way they act so much when they are with their friends that they wonder who they "really are".

BUT

Other people act the same way when they are alone as they do when they are with their friends.

Some people take more risks when they are with their friends than they do when they are alone.

BUT

Other people act just as risky when they are alone as when they are with their friends.

Some people say things they don't really believe because they think it will make their friends respect them more.

BUT

Other people would not say things they didn't really believe just to get their friends to respect them more.

Some people think it's better to be an individual even if people will be angry at you for going against the crowd.

BUT

Other people think it's better to go along with the crowd than to make people angry at you.

Appendix 5:

Ten-Item Personality Inventory

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

1= Disagree strongly

2= Disagree Moderately

3= Disagree a little

4= Neither agree or disagree

5= Agree a little

6= Agree moderately

7= Agree strongly

I see myself as:

1. _____ Extraverted, enthusiastic.

2. _____ Critical, quarrelsome.

3. _____ Dependable, self-disciplined.

4. _____ Anxious, easily upset.

5. _____ Open to new experiences, complex.

6. _____ Reserved, quiet.

7. _____ Sympathetic, warm.

8. _____ Disorganized, careless.

9. _____ Calm, emotionally stable.

10. _____ Conventional, uncreative.

Scoring: items 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 are reverse scored.

Appendix 6:

Consent form:

You are being asked to take part in a research study that examines factors that influence alcohol usage among college students. Please read this form carefully before agreeing to take part.

The purpose of this study is to examine factors that may influence alcohol usage among college students. You must be currently attending college to take part in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be answering an online questionnaire. This will include questions about your levels of stress, ability to cope with peer pressure, demographic questions, questions about your personality, self-esteem and your intake of alcohol. This questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Your answers in this study will be kept confidential. I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The research will be stored in a locked file, with only the researcher having access to the file.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are not obliged to take part. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, if you wish to do so.

* Required

I have read the above information, and I consent to take part in the study. *

☐ I consent to take part in the study.

Appendix 7:

Debrief:

Thank you for taking part in this study. The aim of the current study is to figure out what exactly causes college students to consume alcohol. Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions in relation to the questionnaire, do not hesitate to email me x14417342@student.ncirl.ie, or my supervisor Fearghal O'Brien via email Fearghal.obrien@ncirl.ie. Also, if you have any feelings of distress after taking part in the study, there are details below in which you can get in contact with.

Thank you again for taking part in the study.

Contact details in case of distress:

Name: Samaritans

Number: 01-872 7700

Website: http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/samaritans-ireland-scotland-and-wales/samaritans-ireland

Appendix 8:

Demographic Questions:

Gender:

- o   Male

- o   Female

Nationality

[   ]

Age

[   ]