

Abstract

College students all around the country have encounters with peers, in which they are pressured to consume alcohol or other substances. This research project investigates the extent to which gender and social anxiety influence an individual's likelihood to conform to peer pressure in the context of substance use. Conformity to peer pressure and its relationship to substance use is a critical area of study due to its implications for public health, prevention strategies, and gender-specific interventions. We will be assessing the potential of social anxiety and peer pressure influencing binge drinking on college campuses. We expect that (1) peer pressure will act on social anxiety to lower inhibitions, such that higher social anxiety will be more easily influenced by peer pressure, (2) biological females with high social anxiety will be more likely to conform to peer pressure than biological males, (3) there will be gender differences in substance use related to peer pressure. By identifying potential vulnerabilities and protective factors unique to each gender, health professionals, educators, and policymakers can better address the complex relationship between gender, peer pressure, and substance abuse. Participants were Murray State University students, 18 years or older who had access to Murray State's SONA application. Participation is voluntary and everyone must provide consent prior to moving forward with the survey. The study consists of four scales related to peer pressure and substance use. Work is in progress and currently in the data collection phase.

Keywords: Social Anxiety, Peer Pressure, Substance Use, Binge Drinking,