**BACKGROUND**

Alcohol use by college students has been well-documented by previous research. Risky drinking behaviors are related to traffic fatalities (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, n.d.), increased mortality (Yi, Chen, & Williams, 2004), academic difficulties (Parkin, 2002) and sexual assault (Porter & Pryor, 2007; Powell, Williams, & Wechsler, 2004). It is estimated that each year approximately 1700 college students: Results of an email survey. 2) online food log. A sample comprised of 427 participants during the Spring 2009 semester. Participants were recruited from classes through class visitation allowed by their professors. Females made up 66% of the sample (n = 287) and the mean age was 23.15 (SD=5.13) years, and the majority were upper classmen; 41% were reported as juniors (n = 176) and 46% as seniors (n = 196). Among the total sample, 30.2% were White/non-Hispanic (n = 129), 26.7% were Hispanic/Latino (n = 114), 27.4% were Asian-Pacific Islander (n = 117) 4.0% were Black (n=5), and 11.7% were Multi-race/ethnicity or other (n = 50).

**METHODS**

**Sample**

Data was collected from 427 participants during the Spring 2009 semester. Participants were recruited from classes through class visitation allowed by their professors. Females made up 66% of the sample (n = 287) and the mean age was 23.15 (SD=5.13) years, and the majority were upper classmen; 41% were reported as juniors (n = 176) and 46% as seniors (n = 196). Among the total sample, 30.2% were White/non-Hispanic (n = 129), 26.7% were Hispanic/Latino (n = 114), 27.4% were Asian-Pacific Islander (n = 117) 4.0% were Black (n=5), and 11.7% were Multi-race/ethnicity or other (n = 50).

**Procedure**

Students were informed of the study protocol and asked to sign an informed consent form if they agreed to participate. Data collection was done 1) by paper pencil surveys and 2) online food log. A Student Health Survey was constructed to test the Multi-Attribute Utility Model and to assess Psychological parameters using a range of existing Psychological parameters, Big Five Trait Taxonomy (Goldberg, 1993); Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck, Epstein, Greenberg & Steer, 1988); Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969); Personalized Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Food intake, including alcohol consumption, was recorded for a week using Survey Monkey.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Multi-Attribute Utility (MAU) model maintains the two main constructs of Subjective Expected Utility (SEU) theory: subjective value and subjective probability (likelihood), with the addition of a more temporal, flexible and dynamic construct, momentary salience. Momentary salience is the importance of the outcomes of a behavior at the moment a decision is made. Whereas the value and likelihood of a behavior are fixed, momentary salience is impermanent and will reflect current priority of interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental factors (Weiss, et al., 2009).

MAU predicts that decisions are made based on the sum of the factors subjective value (SV), subjective probability (SP), and momentary salience (MS) as they apply to all possible outcomes for a decision. Mathematically, it is expressed as:

\[
MAU = \sum_j (SV_j * SP_j * MS_j)
\]

where \(SV\) is subjective value of the outcome \(j\), \(SP\) is subjective probability of the outcome \(j\), and \(MS\) is how important the outcome \(j\) is at the moment of the decision (Weiss, Weiss, & Edwards, 2009). High MAU will be associated to specific behaviors.

**FINDINGS**

1. College students’ MAU scores were significantly different between drinkers and non-drinkers. MAU scores were more positively related to drinking status than psychological measures. Further, MAU scores predicted actual drinking behavior with a positive correlation between MAU scores and alcohol consumption.

2. When adjusted for all demographic and psychological interactions, MAU had the strongest association with drinking status, and those with high MAU for drinking outcomes were 1.84 times more likely to drink. This provides support for using the MAU framework in developing health promotion programs related to college student alcohol consumption.

3. The findings of this project support the MAU theoretical framework and its ability to predict drinking status. Future studies in this area may provide additional support for the use of MAU as a theoretical framework for health promotion planning and evaluation.

**REFERENCES**


**CONCLUSIONS**

The Multi-Attribute Utility (MAU) model maintains the two main constructs of Subjective Expected Utility (SEU) theory: subjective value and subjective probability (likelihood), with the addition of a more temporal, flexible and dynamic construct, momentary salience. Momentary salience is the importance of the outcomes of a behavior at the moment a decision is made. Whereas the value and likelihood of a behavior are fixed, momentary salience is impermanent and will reflect current priority of interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental factors (Weiss, et al., 2009).

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