Problematic alcohol consumption, primarily in the form of binge drinking, is a prevalent concern on college campuses (Wechsler & Nelson, 2001). Binge drinking, defined as the consumption of four drinks for women or five drinks for men in a span of two hours, is most common among people ages 18 to 34 years (Kanny et al., 2018). A national survey conducted by The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) in 2015 found that 58% of full-time college students ages 18–22 reported drinking alcohol in the past month and 37.9% reported binge drinking in the past month; the rate of binge drinking among people of the same age who were not in college was 32.6% (NIAAA, 2015). These findings suggest that there are characteristics of the college environment that may increase risk for developing problematic habits involving alcohol consumption, including binge drinking. The consequences of problematic alcohol use may include serious long-term effects on health such as brain damage, liver disease, heart problems, cancer, and infertility (Spanagel, 2009). In addition, 88,000 people die each year from alcohol-related causes, which makes alcohol abuse the fourth leading preventable cause of death in the United States (NIAAA, 2015). For example, 45.8% of deaths attributed to liver disease involved alcohol use as a contributing factor (NIAAA, 2015). In 2014, drunk driving was the cause of 9,967 fatalities, accounting for 31% of driving fatalities that year (NIAAA, 2015).

Problematic alcohol use among those still under the legal age to purchase and consume alcohol (21 years in the United States) is particularly concerning. Most people who drink prior to turning 21 years old report problematic alcohol use, despite it being illegal to purchase and/or consume alcohol at their age (Kanny et al., 2018). Approximately 5.1 million people between the ages of 12–20 years old...
report binge drinking in the past month (NIAAA, 2015). How underage drinkers gain access to alcohol can be explained by various factors such as from family members having alcohol in the home and through using fake or falsified identification to purchase alcohol illegally. Chan and colleagues (2018) found that adolescents with a high exposure to alcohol in their home, either through drinking with family members or taking alcohol from family members, drank more frequently within the past month. Owning a fake ID, which is a crime, also gives underage drinkers easier access to alcohol by allowing them to purchase it at a liquor store or at a bar; as such, owning a fake ID is related to problematic alcohol use (Martinez & Sher, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2011). Given the prevalence of problematic alcohol use among those who are underage, the immediate and long-term negative health consequences associated with alcohol use, and the ease with which underage consumers can obtain alcohol with a fake ID, determining the factors that predict who owns fake IDs can be extremely useful to efforts designed to prevent problematic alcohol use on college campuses.

The current study conceptualized owning a fake ID as a risky behavior due to its illegal nature and potential for legal consequences. The penalty for being caught with a fake ID varies by states, but in most cases, consists of a fine (the lowest maximum fine throughout America is $500, the highest is $100,000), probation or prison time (the shortest sentence being 90 days, the longest being 10 years), points on one’s driver’s license that could lead to increased insurance premiums, and driver’s license suspension or revocation (The Morales Law Firm, 2016). This has not stopped underage drinkers from obtaining and using fake IDs. Martinez and Sher (2010) found that, among college students who owned a fake ID, most obtained that ID from a stranger. This is done today, generally, by buying a fake ID through the internet via websites that are determined to be reliable through trial and error, prior experience, and word of mouth. Previous studies have found that the attainment and use of fake IDs increases greatly when a student is involved in Greek life on university campuses (Nguyen et al., 2011). Aside from being a part of Greek life and alcohol use in general, other predictors of fake ID ownership have not been identified. The present study addressed that gap by examining potential personality traits associated with fake ID ownership.

The Five Factor Model of personality is a widely accepted theory of personality that includes the traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Many studies have looked at these personality traits in relation to risk taking behaviors such as sexual promiscuity, engaging in dangerous sports, and alcohol use (Diehm & Armatas, 2004; Gullone & Moore, 2000; Hoyle et al., 2000; Lauriola & Levin, 2001; Schmitt, 2004; Wagner, 2001; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). However, no research to date has examined any of these personality traits in direct relationship to owning a fake ID, which could be considered a relevant risky behavior among college students. To address this gap in the literature, the current study examined the association between fake ID ownership and each of the traits from the Five Factor Model.

Neuroticism can be broken down into two subsets of traits: impulsiveness and vulnerability (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Those who score high in neuroticism have an inability to adequately deal with stress and control their desires (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Many studies of undergraduate students have found that neuroticism is negatively related to risk-taking behavior (e.g., Hoyle et al., 2000). For example, Lauriola and Levin (2001) found that those who were more emotionally stable, or lower in neuroticism, tended to participate in more risky behavior; the inverse of that finding is that higher levels of neuroticism were associated with less participation in risk-taking behavior. In a study examining substance abuse, risk-taking, and anxiety sensitivity, Wagner found that high anxiety-sensitivity was negatively correlated with substance abuse. This contradicts other findings that substance use is positively correlated with anxiety as a self-medicating practice; however, Wagner (2001) noted that individuals who are higher in anxiety, which is a marker for higher neuroticism, may be less likely to engage in risk behavior such as substance use out of fear of the physiological arousal associated with thrill-seeking. Collectively, these findings suggest that students who are higher in neuroticism would not be likely to engage in the illegal, or risky, behavior of owning a fake ID. It is important to note that other studies have found no relation between neuroticism and risk-taking behaviors (e.g., Schmitt, 2004; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000).

Extraversion can be sorted into three subtypes of traits reflecting warmth, gregariousness, and assertiveness (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Based on these subsets, an extravert would be friendly, have a strong desire to be around others, and act as a natural leader (McCrae & Costa, 1990). This type
of person is one who converses well with strangers and may make impulsive decisions in the company of others (Depue & Collins, 1999; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). Several studies of college students have found that higher levels of extraversion are related to higher levels of risk-taking behavior. Several studies of personality and sexual risk taking have found that extraversion is positively related to sexual promiscuity (Lauriola & Levin, 2001; Schmitt, 2004; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). Extraversion was also found to be positively related to sensation-seeking activities such as sexual behavior and alcohol consumption (Eysenck, 1976). These are not surprising findings considering that extraverts are more prone to performing activities that will engage them socially, and many social activities in the college context may include underage drinking and sexual activity. With these connections, it is plausible to think that someone who scores high in extraversion would also be more likely to own a fake ID in order to facilitate social interactions involving alcohol use.

Openness encompasses six domains, the most pertinent to this study being openness in actions and openness in values (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Scoring high in openness in these two areas means that someone is willing to try new things without a second thought and that they have a looser set of values than others, meaning that they may believe something society considers wrong is not always wrong (McCrae & Costa, 1990). Several studies of college students have found that openness is positively related to risk taking. In a review of research on personality traits and sexual risk-taking behavior, Hoyle and colleagues (2000) found that openness was positively related to infidelity and promiscuity. Lauriola and Levin (1999) also found that openness was positively related to general risk-taking behavior, which they measured by presenting each subject with 60 risky decision-making trials for which they were forced to pick either a straightforward contract, which offered either a sure gain or a sure loss, or a risky contract, which offered a potential gain or potential loss. Before completing the risk-taking trials, participants were given the Short Adjective Checklist measuring the Big Five personality traits in order to measure their levels of openness. In another study conducted by Diehm and Armatas (2004), openness was considered in relation to participation in surfing, a risky sport activity. The results indicated that surfers had significantly higher scores in openness compared to individuals who were avid golfers (a low-risk sport). A review of studies examining the relation between openness and sensation-seeking, which is highly correlated with risk-taking, reported that sensation seeking positively correlates with openness (Hoyle et al., 2000). With this positive relationship between openness and risk taking well-supported, it is reasonable to propose that those who score high in openness to experiences would have a positive probability of owning a fake ID, another risky behavior. However, there is some inconsistency in the literature, with some studies finding no relation between openness and risk-taking behavior (Schmitt, 2004). In addition, a study of adolescents 15–18 years of age found a negative relationship between openness and risky or rebellious behavior (Gullone & Moore, 2000). The authors of that study speculated that their finding might be due to the fact that they used a measure of riskiness that has been widely used with adults, but not adolescents, suggesting that perhaps they did not accurately capture risk behavior for this age group (Gullone & Moore, 2000).

Those who score high in conscientiousness have been found to be organized, disciplined, careful, deliberate, and precise (Hoyle et al., 2000; Weller & Tikir, 2011). Given these traits, conscientious people are said to thoughtfully weigh the pros and cons for the decision they make, especially when it comes to behaviors that are risky (Weller & Tikir, 2011). Several studies have found lower rates of risk-taking behavior among those who score higher on measures of conscientiousness (e.g., Czerwonka, 2019, Gullone & Moore, 2000; Weller & Tikir, 2011). For example, Czerwonka (2019) found that higher levels of conscientiousness were a significant predictor of lower risk-taking behavior in a study of Polish and American students and Nicholson et al. (2005) and Weller and Tikir (2011) both found that conscientiousness was significantly negatively correlated with several domains of risk-taking behavior. In contrast, Gullone and Moore (2000) found that conscientiousness was significantly negatively correlated with rebellious and reckless acts but not overall risk-taking.

Agreeableness encompasses traits such as being cooperative, patient, tolerant, and forgiving, while those who are lower in agreeableness tend to be argumentative or combative (Weller & Tikir, 2011). As such, lower levels of agreeableness have been found to predict more risk-taking, especially as it relates to violating rules or societal expectations for behavior (Weller & Tikir, 2011); however, the results are inconsistent. For example, Gullone and Moore (2000) found that agreeableness was
significantly negatively correlated with rebellious acts but not with overall risk-taking behavior among adolescents. In two studies on domain specific risk-taking behavior, Nicholson et al. (2005) and Weller and Tikir (2011) found that agreeableness was significantly negatively correlated in several domains of risk-taking behavior. In contrast, agreeableness was not found to predict risk taking in Polish and American college students (Czerwonka, 2019).

The reviewed literature paints a fairly consistent picture linking higher levels of extraversion and openness, and lower levels of neuroticism, with higher levels of risk-taking, particularly in relation to risk behaviors that would be considered normative within the college environment, such as substance abuse and sexual risk behavior. As such, the hypothesized associations between each of these three personality traits and fake ID ownership, another risk behavior that is common among college students, are easily guided by existing research. The literature is less clear with respect to conscientiousness and agreeableness, for which the existing research highlights associations with risk taking behavior that reflect less normative risks, such as rebelliousness and rule violations (e.g., Gullone & Moore, 2000), and less consistent associations with other aspects of risk taking that might be considered more normative in a college setting. The present study examines a risk-taking behavior that is a common practice within collegiate society and would not be considered “outside the norm.” Due to this discrepancy and inconsistency, the foundation on which to base predictions about how conscientiousness and agreeableness might relate to fake ID ownership is less certain. As such, the present study focused on the traits that have been studied more often in terms of risk-taking behaviors common on college campuses: neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience. The primary purpose of the study was to understand the relationship between these personality traits and ownership of a fake ID. A secondary purpose of the study was to examine how ownership of a fake ID relates to problematic alcohol use. It was hypothesized that neuroticism would be lower for those who owned a fake ID than those that did not own one. It was also hypothesized that extraversion would be higher in those who owned a fake ID than those who did not. It was hypothesized that openness to experience would also be higher among those who owned a fake ID than those who did not. It was lastly hypothesized that problematic alcohol use would be higher among those who owned a fake ID compared to those who did not.

Method

Participants
The 153 participants for this study were recruited from a small, private, liberal arts university located in a metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States with an enrollment of approximately 4,000 undergraduate students. The average age for participants in the sample was 19.28 years (range = 18–20, SD = 0.76). The sample consisted of 137 women (90%) and 16 men (10%). Most participants (n = 134; 88%) identified as White, 6 (4%) as Asian American, 5 (3%) as Black or African American, 3 (2%) as biracial, and 5 (3%) as other. The sample consisted of 3 (2%) seniors, 33 (22%) juniors, 65 (42%) sophomores, and 52 (34%) first-year students. The sample consisted of 51 (33%) psychology majors, 21 (14%) biology-psychology majors, 14 (0.09%) biology majors, 6 (0.04%) political science majors, 6 (0.04%) speech pathology majors, 6 (0.04%) accounting majors, 6 (0.04%) communications majors, 6 (0.04%) undecided majors, and several other majors with less than 5 participants in each (22%). A summary of participant demographic characteristics, divided by whether or not they owned a fake ID, can be found in Table 1.1

Measures

Demographics
The first part of the survey was the demographic section. It consisted of seven questions with regard to participants’ race, age, major, religion, class, and gender.

Personality Traits
For the purposes of this study, the Big Five Inventory was used to assess personality traits (John & Srivastava, 1999). The scale consisted of 44 questions, which are designed to measure the

| TABLE 1 |
| Demographics of the Sample |
| Do you own a fake ID? | Yes (n = 83) | No (n = 70) |
| Age (in years) | M = 19.37, SD = 0.73 | M = 19.17, SD = 0.78 |
| Gender | 79 Women, 4 Men | 58 Women, 12 Men |
| Race | 77 White, 1 Asian, 1 Black, 2 Biracial | 57 White, 5 Asian, 4 Black, 1 Biracial, 3 Other |

Note. Frequencies of demographics split into “Yes” and “No” in response to “Do You Own a Fake ID?”

1 It should be noted that the legal age for purchasing and consuming alcohol in the state where data was collected is 21 years.
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prototypical components of the Five Factor Model of personality (John & Srivastava, 1999). The inventory consists of five subscales, one for each personality trait: Extraversion (8 items), Neuroticism (8 items), Openness (10 items), Conscientiousness (9 items), and Agreeableness (9 items). For each item, participants indicated how much they agree or disagree that a given statement describes them using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In total, 14 questions were reverse-scored, and the rest were scored as answered; items for each subscale were then summed, with higher total scores indicating higher agreement with items reflecting that trait (John & Srivastava, 1999). In prior studies, responses on the five subscales were shown to have good internal consistency, with alpha coefficients ranging from .75 (openness) to .86 (extraversion; Feldt et al., 2014) and the measure has been validated by examining correlations between subscales and other measures of similar personality traits (John & Srivastava, 1999). For the current sample, alpha coefficients were .88 (extraversion), .65 (neuroticism), .71 (openness), .79 (agreeableness), and .81 (conscientiousness).

Alcohol Use
Problematic alcohol use was measured using the Alcohol Use Disorder International Test, or AUDIT for short (Hayes et al., 1995). The section consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions that assessed participants’ alcohol consumption habits. A set of eight multiple-choice questions developed by the authors was used to assess behaviors related to fake ID ownership and use. These items included whether or not someone owns a fake ID, how/where they use it, if they have been caught using their fake ID, and if there were any consequences that followed being caught. Items in this section were pulled from several studies that have examined fake ID ownership (e.g., Martinez et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2011). Each item individually assessed a unique aspect of fake ID ownership or usage, so internal consistency reliability cannot be determined. Because this measure was designed for the current study, its validity has not yet been established.

Procedure
Prior to data collection, this study was approved by the Loyola University Maryland institutional review board (HS-2019-057). Participants were recruited through the psychology department research participant pool, email, and Facebook. Students who took the survey through the participant pool were eligible to receive academic credit for their class, but the other participants did not receive compensation for their participation. The email recruitment was sent to groups accessible by the researcher. This consisted of clubs, classes, and residence halls. The Facebook post was posted to the researcher’s class page. Both the email prompt and Facebook prompt were developed by the researcher. There were no incentives for participation, beyond the possibility of course credit or extra credit as determined by course instructors. Recruitment was designed to target students in many different majors and classes, although there ended up being a heavier concentration of psychology majors (32%) given that the participant pool is geared toward psychology classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from the AUDIT official website (https://auditscreen.org/check-your-drinking/). In the public domain.
The study was conducted through an online survey generator. Participants were given a link to follow through the portal or in the email, and once they reached the home page, they were presented with the consent form. Once the participant read the consent form and agreed to participate, they were directed to the survey. The order of the survey was the demographic questions, the Big 5 Inventory (measuring personality traits), the AUDIT (measuring problematic alcohol use), and the fake ID ownership and usage questions. Participants answered the questions as instructed at the top of each page. Once participants completed the survey, they were debriefed and given contact information for who to contact if they have any questions about the survey and to counseling services in case the questions caused them any distress.

Results

Just over half \((n = 83, 54\%)\) of the sample reported that they owned a fake ID (see Table 3 for descriptive data for fake ID owners). Most fake ID owners reported obtaining their IDs during their first year of college, and the most frequent method of obtaining a fake ID was purchasing it (as opposed to being given one from someone else). Most students reported using their IDs weekly and using them the mostly in bars, at retailers, and in clubs. Although the most students \((n = 52\) had not been caught using their fake IDs, a notable number of students had been caught \((n = 28\).

Due to the number of significance tests performed, only those results with at least a small effect size (Cohen’s \(d = 0.20\)) will be considered meaningful.\(^2\) To evaluate each of the study hypotheses, independent-samples \(t\) tests were performed comparing those who owned fake IDs \((n = 83)\) to those who did not \((n = 70)\). In terms of personality traits, results indicated that participants owning a fake ID scored significantly higher on extraversion \((M = 3.40, SD = 0.84)\) than those who did not own a fake ID \((M = 3.11, SD = 0.86), t(151) = 2.10, p = .037, d = 0.34\), which is a small effect. The difference between neuroticism in those who did or did not own a fake ID was marginally significant, with fake ID owners scoring lower on neuroticism \((M = 3.13, SD = 0.80)\) than nonowners \((M = 3.38, SD = 0.79), t(151) = −1.94, p = .054, d = −0.36\), which is a small effect. Those who owned a fake ID also scored significantly lower on openness \((M = 3.47, SD = 0.49)\) than those that did not own a fake ID \((M = 3.69, SD = 0.57), t(151) = −2.48, p = .01, d = −0.40\), which is a small effect. Although not the major focus of the current study, independent \(t\) tests were also conducted to evaluate whether the two groups differed in the other two traits in the Five Factor Model. There was no significant difference in conscientiousness between those who owned a fake ID \((M = 3.73, SD = 0.65)\) and those who did not \((M = 3.84, SD = 0.63), t(151) = −1.06, p = .288, d = 0.17\). Likewise, agreeableness did not significantly differ between those who owned a fake ID \((M = 4.06, SD = 0.59)\) and those who did not \((M = 3.89, SD = 0.62), t(151) = 1.68, p = .095, d = −0.28\). Finally, those who owned a fake ID \((M = 7.56, SD = 0.49)\) scored higher on problematic alcohol use than those who did not \((M = 3.69, SD = 0.57), t(120) = 2.61, p = .02, d = 0.42\), which is a small effect. Note that the discrepancy between the degrees of freedom for the comparison for alcohol use is because some of the people who owned a Fake ID did not consume alcohol, so there were fewer cases analyzed in that statistical test.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between personality traits and owning a fake ID. More than half \((54\%)\) of the sample owned a fake ID, which is much higher than the results of previous studies. For example, a study by Martinez and Sher (2010) found that 21% of their sample of college students (1,098 participants from a large Midwestern university) owned a fake ID, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you use your fake ID?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly: 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly: 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every other month: 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been caught using your fake ID?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 28</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 52</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also performed to ensure that the results did not reflect an increased risk of a Type I error. All differences found with the \(t\) tests were also statistically significant \((p < .05)\) within the multivariate analysis.
Nguyen et al. (2011) found that 7.7% of first-year students (7,293 participants from 194 colleges in 37 states) reported owning a fake ID. In this study, 38% of first-year students owned a fake ID and most students initially obtained their IDs during their first year in college. Although the specific demographic characteristics of these comparison schools are not known, it could be suggested that the students in the current study were more affluent and might have more means to purchase fake IDs. Alternatively, the higher prevalence of fake ID ownership in the current sample reflects a sharp increase in the number of students buying fake IDs and suggests the need for further research to understand this problematic behavior, such as the social motivations to get a fake ID (e.g., peer-pressure, access to social events). Further research could also address how much fake ID use is tolerated by owners or managers of the establishments that sell alcohol in college towns and how enforcement of laws prohibiting fake IDs might impact their popularity.

For the current study, the first hypothesis stated that those who owned a fake ID would score higher in extraversion than those who did not. This hypothesis was supported by the data, validating the results of previous studies that found higher rates of extraversion associated with other forms of risk-taking behavior, including alcohol use and sexual risk behavior (Schmitt, 2004; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). This could be because extraverts are more sociable, and on a college campus, much of the social life centers around alcohol use (Lucas et al., 2000; Murphy et al., 2006; Rabow & Duncan-Schill, 1995; Watson & Clark, 1997). Thus, students who are more extraverted may feel the need to own a fake ID in order to have access to social events or settings where alcohol is served because that is where socializing occurs.

The next hypothesis stated that those who owned a fake ID would score lower in neuroticism than those who did not own a fake ID. The results of the analyses indicated that neuroticism was trending toward a negative relationship with owning a fake ID, meaning that those who owned a fake ID scored lower on neuroticism than those who did not. This finding is consistent with the results of previous literature that found that higher levels of anxiety, as would be experienced by someone who scores higher on neuroticism, are associated with greater risk aversion; in other words, those who are more neurotic would be less willing to break the law by owning a fake ID (e.g., Hoyle et al., 2000; Wagner, 2001). On the surface, the current findings are also inconsistent with research finding a positive association between anxiety and alcohol use, which implies that those who are high in neuroticism would score high in alcohol use because they use the alcohol as a way of coping with their anxiety (Wagner, 2001). This explanation was suggested by Lauriola and Levin (2001) when they found that those who scored high in risk taking behavior scored high in neuroticism only when the act ended in a gain for the person such as alleviating anxiety. However, the association examined in the current study was specific to fake ID ownership, and not general alcohol use. It is possible that those who are higher in neuroticism do drink more alcohol, but do so in a way that does not involve owning an illegal ID.

In contrast to the hypothesized positive association between openness and fake ID ownership, the results of the current study demonstrated that those who owned a fake ID scored lower in openness than those who did not. Although these findings are different than those of most prior research on the association between openness and risk-taking, a study by Gullone and Moore (2000) did find that openness was not a predictor of risk-taking behavior. Schmitt (2004) also found that the lower participants scored in openness the more likely they were to engage in risk taking behavior. This could be because those who are more open to varied experiences may partake in activities other than the usual college social activities centered around drinking alcohol, such as outdoor experiences or events involving the arts or culture. In contrast, those who are lower in openness may have a more narrowly defined set of expectations about social options on campus and may therefore lean toward events that involve alcohol consumption and thus require access to a fake ID.

Though not a primary focus of the study, conscientiousness and agreeableness were also examined in relation to fake ID ownership. The results of these analyses were not significant. Past research on the association between conscientiousness and risk-taking behavior has found significant negatively correlations (Czerwonka, 2019; Gullone and Moore, 2000; Nicholson et al., 2005; Weller and Tikir, 2011). The nonsignificant findings of this study could be explained by the fact that previous research has not looked at conscientiousness and specific risk-taking behaviors, but rather broad domains of risk-taking behaviors that include behaviors that would put someone outside of the social norm, such as rebellious behavior (Gullone
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It is possible that owning a fake ID on a college campus, which is less likely to be considered nonnormative within the context of being a college student, is not related to conscientiousness, at least as it was measured in this study. The same logic can be applied when looking at the nonsignificant results for agreeableness. In addition, there has been less consistency in the literature with respect to agreeableness and risk taking; with some studies similarly finding nonsignificant results (e.g., Czerwonka, 2019). Further research is warranted to better understand how these personality traits may be related to fake ID ownership and use.

Finally, alcohol use and owning a fake ID were positively related, which means that those who owned a fake ID scored higher in problematic alcohol use than those who did not. This finding is not surprising, as the motivation for owning a fake ID is likely to increase one’s access to alcohol. Students who owned a fake ID were using it to purchase alcohol, and they drank the alcohol they purchased. Indeed, past research has found that underage people partook in more drinking simply when they had easier access to it (Chan et al., 2018), and undergraduate students have reported that alcohol is relatively easy to obtain, which may largely reflect having access to fake IDs that make purchasing alcohol easier (Nguyen et al., 2011). Such easy access to alcohol is associated with more alcohol consumption, and when underage college students consume alcohol, they tend to do so in a way that constitutes problematic alcohol use (Nguyen et al., 2011).

Although several significant differences in alcohol use and personality traits were found between students who owned fake IDs and those who did not, the results should be interpreted cautiously due to the limitations of the current study. The greatest limitation of this study is the sample size and skew in gender that heavily favored female students. The university from which the sample was drawn has a predominately female student body, which resulted in most of the sample being White. As such, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results of this study to more ethnically diverse students. The best way to correct this would be to conduct a multischool study and widen the population, therefore increasing the sample size and diversity. Performing this study at more schools and with a more diverse demographic would further verify whether personality traits can predict who owns fake IDs. It should also be noted that this study did not make the distinction between owning and using a fake ID, although the purpose of the study was to look at ownership of a fake ID only.

These results should be considered exploratory and may be used to guide future research. Perhaps the most useful finding of the current study is documentation that college students who owned a fake ID either got it before they started college or during their first year of college. This means that, if students are to be deterred from buying a fake ID, they need to be better educated about the risks and consequences of doing so at the high school level. If fewer students own fake IDs, they will not be able to purchase alcohol while underage and will therefore participate in less problematic alcohol use. It would be interesting to know how many students are aware of the consequences of getting caught using a fake ID and if having that knowledge deters them from purchasing one. These findings also underscore the importance of offering a wide range of social activities and events for students so that those who are more extraverted and open have options for social interaction and new experiences that do not involve alcohol or the need to have a fake ID.

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Guilford Press.


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Materials and data for this study can be furnished upon request. We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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