

# Theory of Deterrence and DWI: A Relationship in Question within the State of New Mexico

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## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

New Mexico is ranked one of the top states in the nation for fatal crashes related to alcohol within the past few years.

### Purpose of the Study

- Test the theory of Deterrence in relationship to New Mexico State Laws to the Crime of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI).
- Many studies focus mainly on crash trends, recidivism rates, etc. Data is mainly collected from traffic statistics rather than individuals behind the wheel. It would seem evident to take accountability from those whom this data is based from for a more psychological approach.
- I would like to address the drivers themselves regarding what thoughts or factors led up to their decision to operate a vehicle after consuming alcohol, or of the complete opposite decision, what made them refrain from doing so. Did New Mexico DWI laws make a difference in their decisions?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Main Topics Reviewed:

- Crash Trends, Recidivism, Arrest Rates
- Legislative Changes
- Treatment Programs for Offenders
- Prevention Methods

### Acknowledgements towards literature:

- Lack of studies within New Mexico
- Lack of acknowledgement to deterrence in methods
- Research is not centered on the attitudes and opinions of drivers

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Approach:

- Postpositive Approach/View
- Qualitative Research Design
- Survey/Questionnaire

### Population, Sample, Participants

- Northern New Mexico Residents
- College Students of NNMC & Facebook Platform participants

### Data Collection

- Electronic survey created through Google Forms and dispersed through NNMC email & Facebook platform.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis conveyed through Google Sheets, in connection to discovering a relationship of deterrence and NM DWI Laws from data collected.

### Ethical Issues

- Study is related to illegal actions and behaviors.
- COVID-19 prompted adjustments to the original study design.

## RESULTS

I was able to achieve a collection of data from 59 participants through the format of an online survey. In terms of my participants the demographics show majority of the participants were female (77.6%) and most are in the age groups of 18-24 (30.5%) and 25-34 (33.9%) years of age, the remainder percentages are of older age. In terms of driving experience ranging from less than 1 year to more than 10 years, more than half of the participants stated their driving experience to be more than 10 years (57.6%).

In response to the question: Do you drink alcohol either regularly or occasionally, of the 59 participants 76.3% indicated yes that they do. Whereas 23.7% of participants claim no, they do not drink alcohol.

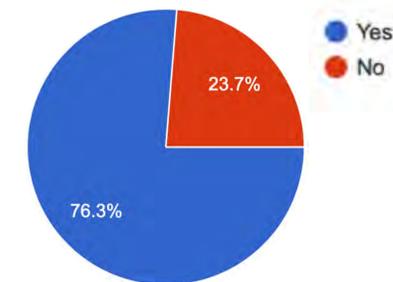
76.3% indicated that they consume alcohol either regularly or occasionally, a total of 78% stated that in the past 30 day they did not drive a motorized vehicle within 2 hours of consuming an alcoholic beverage. Those that admitted to having 1 to 2 beverages before driving stand at 15.3% of the participants.

On a scale of how easy or difficult participants found alcohol purchase availability in New Mexico, 76.3% claimed that alcohol is very easy to purchase.

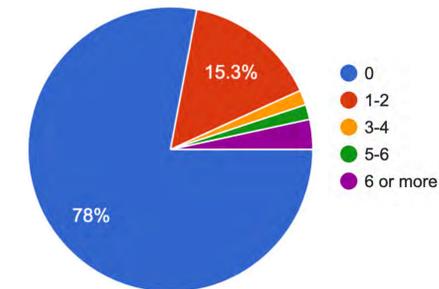
For additional information to this study I asked participants if they had ever been arrested or convicted of a DWI, and of the 59 participants only 10.2% have been convicted or arrested for the crime, whereas 89.8% had never been convicted nor arrested for the crime. In response to how aware individuals are in terms of New Mexico DWI laws on a scale from 1-5, 1 being completely unaware and 5 being very aware, about 86.2% responded as being somewhat aware to very aware of the laws.

In an overall attempt to connect DWI Laws to decisions of drinking and driving, 49.1% agree that DWI laws affects their decisions compared to 23.8% who disagree. In response to how fearful individuals are of being either arrested or convicted of a DWI about half of participants expressed that they would be very fearful (52.5%).

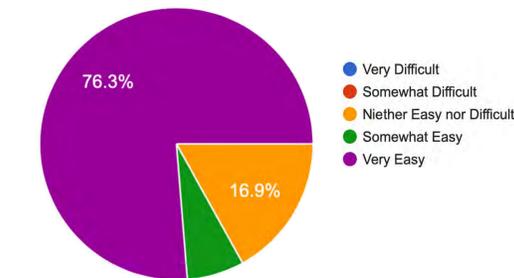
### Participants who Consume Alcohol



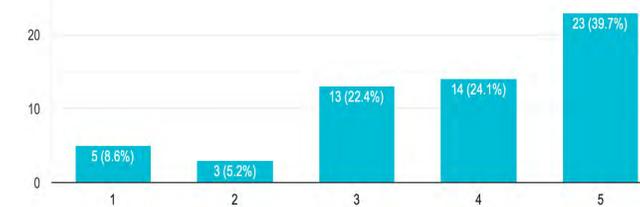
### Number of Drinks Consumed towards Driving Capability



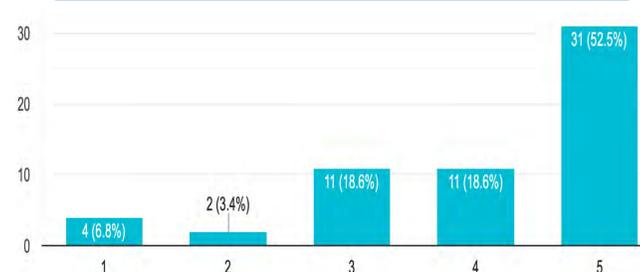
### Alcohol Purchase Availability



### Scale of Awareness/Knowledge of NM DWI Laws



### Scale of Fear Level towards a DWI Arrest or Conviction



## CONCLUSIONS

Participants do take somewhat of an account of the laws in place following a crime such as DWI, many respondents show that that they feel they are at least somewhat aware of what consequences may come following the crime. In addition at least half of the respondents do show a great amount of fear of being caught and/or penalized for the crime, concluding that deterrence is perhaps present in New Mexico DWI laws.

It's fair to claim that deterrent effects are present in New Mexico DWI laws.

### Limitations

DWI laws comprise of multiple statues, prevention methods, and tactics. Limitations arise in measuring the effectiveness or presence of deterrence in each factor individually.

Instead I must draw upon the overall approach of New Mexico DWI laws as a whole.

### Future Research

Individual studies be produced focusing on specific prevention methods, rather than assessing laws as a whole, in order to better test their effectiveness and how strongly they influence the general public in relation to deterrence.

Future research with greater sample sizes would also produce more efficient results as well as provide a better sample of participants within different counties of New Mexico (being that each counties DWI rates vary from one another). Based on the limitations it would be also beneficial to perhaps conduct studies toward DWI in relation to alcoholism.

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