Untangling the Relationships between Alcohol Use, Employment, and Offending

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Both substance use and employment are correlates of crime that are heavily examined by criminological research. Efforts to explore these connections have produced two rich bodies of literature that provide insight into the nuances of the relationship between substance use and offending and the relationship between employment and crime. Research shows that while substance use increases subsequent criminal behavior, employment seems to reduce offending. Given the strong positive association between substance use and crime and the inverse effect of employment on offending, it is possible that drug use and employment interact in their impact on crime. In addition to potential moderation, the relationship between drug use, employment, and crime may be explained by mediation mechanisms. Thus, the current study uses data from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) to examine the possibility of moderation and/or mediation between substance use and employment in their impact on offending.

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