

BACKGROUND

- Research has shown that university students with a history of reading difficulties (**HRD**) face unique academic challenges compared to students without a history of reading difficulties (**NRD**).^{1,2}
- Hazardous drinking levels have been found to be comparable between HRD and NRD groups.³
- Previous research indicates that elevated alcohol consumption in university students is negatively correlated with GPA.⁴

OBJECTIVES

- Examine the relationship between university students’ drinking patterns—specifically hazardous drinking, drinking frequency, and drinking quantity— and GPA changes from first (Y1) to fourth year (Y4).
- Assess whether a history of reading difficulties moderated the relationship between hazardous drinking and academic performance.

METHODS

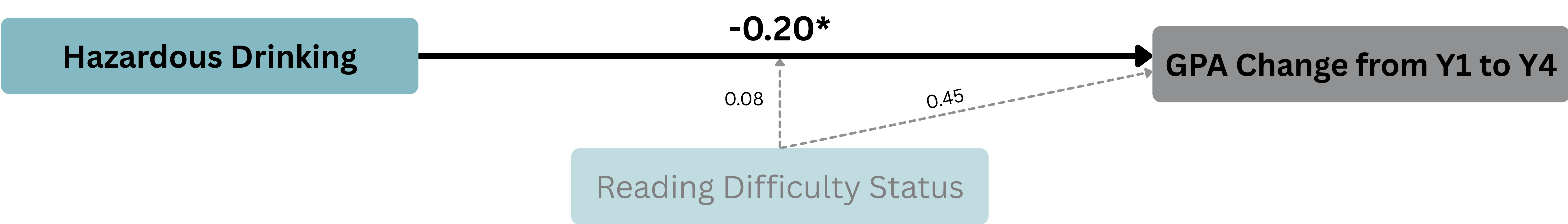
We recruited 93 first-year university students (46 HRD and 47 NRD participants; Mean age = 18.61) from two larger longitudinal studies on learning strategies, substance use, and mental health.

MEASURES:

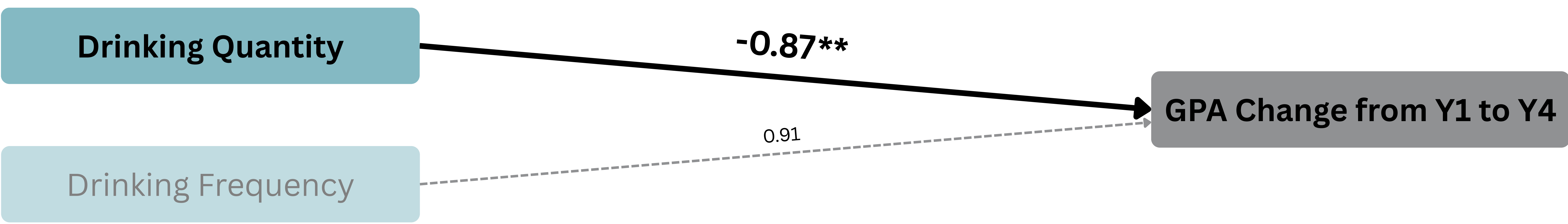
- Elementary sub-scale of the *Adult Reading History Questionnaire–Revised (ARHQ-R)*.
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)*.
- GPA was obtained from university records.


RESULTS

A multiple linear regression assessing the the impact of hazardous drinking on GPA changes:
Conducted with Year 4 GPA as the outcome, Year 1 GPA as a covariate, and Hazardous Drinking (AUDIT scores), Reading Difficulty Status, and their interaction as predictors.



Separate regressions assessing which aspects of hazardous alcohol use predicted GPA changes from Year 1 to Year 4:
Conducted with Year 4 GPA as the outcome, Year 1 GPA as a covariate, and Drinking Quantity and Drinking Frequency (AUDIT sub-scale scores) entered in separate models as predictors.



 ***Hazardous drinking in first year—particularly greater drinking quantity—predicted a decline in academic performance by fourth year, regardless of reading difficulty status.***

DISCUSSION

- Results support previous research showing that risky alcohol use is linked to lower academic performance.⁴ In particular, it was the amount of alcohol students drank—not how often they drank—that was associated with lower grades, which is in line with past studies highlighting the stronger impact of drinking quantity over frequency on academic outcomes.^{5,6}
- Overall, findings emphasize the need for university-based interventions targeting excessive drinking behaviour to support academic outcomes, regardless of reading history.

REFERENCES

