A Comprehensive Examination of Motivational Profiles for Alcohol-Related Behaviors Among College Students

Center on Alcohol, Substance use, And Addictions (CASAA)
University of New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

- College drinking interventions may benefit from an increased emphasis on direct harm reduction as opposed to solely drinking reductions
- Drinking motives are the most proximal antecedent to alcohol use and have been extensively studied among college students
- Recent research has shown the utility of self-determination theory (SDT) for understanding drinking responsibly
- Understanding the simultaneous influence of these motivational constructs on alcohol-related outcomes may inform college drinking interventions for targeting both reduced alcohol use and promoting drinking responsibly
- Thus, we sought to conduct a person-centered examination of these motivational constructs to better capture how these motivations, both within and across constructs

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

- We used data from 2808 psychology students who reported past-month alcohol use (M=20.59, SD=4.18; 72.9% female; 75.7% white) that were recruited to 10 universities in 8 states across the US to complete an online survey for partial course credit

Measures

- Treatment Self-Regulation Questionnaire (TSRQ, 14 items) used to assess SDT motivations for drinking responsibly: autonomous motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation
- Modified Drinking Motives Questionnaire-Revised (M-DMQ-R, 28 items) to assess drinking motives: social, coping-anxiety, coping-depression, enhancement, and conformity
- We also assessed protective behavioral strategies, alcohol use, alcohol problems, dispositional autonomy, and psychological needs

Statistical Analysis

- We conducted a latent profile analysis (LPA) using the TSRQ and M-DMQ-R subscales as indicators
- One- through 8-class solutions were examined
- Optimal profile solution was determined using: 1) goodness-of-fit indices, 2) classification diagnostics, 3) the Lo-Mendell Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test (aLRT), and 4) substantive interpretation of the profiles
- Mean differences across the profiles on outcomes were tested using the automatic BCH method

RESULTS (SUMMARY)

- A 5-profile solution was selected as optimal based on entropy (.895) and substantive interpretation
- As expected, profiles defined by more internalized SDT motivations (autonomous and introjected) for responsible drinking and low drinking motives was the most protective (see Figure 1, Profile 1: High quality/Low)
- In contrast, the opposite pattern was the least protective (see Figure 1, Profile 5: Low quality/High)
- Profile 1: “High quality/Low” reported the most frequent protective behavioral strategies use, least severe alcohol use, fewest alcohol problems, highest dispositional autonomy, and generally the highest and lowest psychological need satisfaction and frustration, respectively
- Profile 5: “Low quality/High” had the opposite pattern of Profile 1

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CONTACT

- e-mail: dkrichards@unm.edu
- Website: http://mateolab.yolasite.com/
- Twitter: @DylanKRichards