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# **Directional Influences in the Relation between Parenthood and Alcohol Involvement**

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# Introduction

- **Marriage and parenthood are negatively related to alcohol involvement.** (e.g., Harford et al., 1994; Leonard & Rothbard, 1999; Umberson, 1987)
- **Longitudinal studies have provided inconsistent results about the direction of influence between entry into marriage and parenthood and decreased alcohol involvement.** (Bachman et al., 1996; Chilcoat & Breslau, 1996; Miller-Tutzauer et al., 1991)
- **It is unclear if there is an association between parenthood and alcohol involvement over and above the relation between marriage and decreased alcohol involvement.** (Bachman et al., 1997; Power & Estauth, 1990)



# Explanations of these Associations

- **Marriage/parenthood influences alcohol involvement**
  - Adult roles place demands on people that are incompatible with problem behaviors (e.g., heavy drinking).
- **Alcohol involvement influences marriage/parenthood**
  - Heavy alcohol use prevents or postpones the attainment of adult roles.
- **Third variable explanation**
  - A third variable (e.g., personality characteristic) influences alcohol involvement *and* the likelihood of getting married or becoming a parent.

## Goal of the study

To distinguish among these explanations for the relation between alcohol involvement and entry into parenthood, controlling for the association between marriage and decreased alcohol involvement



# Method

- **Participants were assessed with self-report questionnaires and an interview.**
- **Data collection occurred on six occasions over eleven years (Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 11).**
- **Initial sample**
  - 489 participants (47% male; 51% FH+; Mean age=18.2)
  - Screened from incoming, first-time freshmen at a large, Midwestern university in the fall of 1987
- **Year 11 sample**
  - 410 participants (84% of the original sample) were still involved in the study at Year 11 (46% male; 51% FH+; Mean age=29.0).
  - 396 participants provided complete interview and questionnaire data at Year 11.



# Variables

- **Marriage**

- At each wave, participants reported current marital status (never married, married, widowed, separated, divorced).
- Year 11: 131 (33%) never married, 246 (62%) currently married, 3 (1%) separated, and 16 (4%) divorced
  - 32 (8% of the Year 11 sample) currently living with someone as though married
  - 163 (42% of the Year 11 sample) got married for the first time between Years 4 and 11.

- **Parenthood**

- Number of biological children also assessed at each wave
- Year 11: 253 (64%) no biological children, 82 (21%) one child, 54 (14%) two children, and 7 (2%) three or more children
  - 129 (33% of the Year 11 sample) became parents for the first time between Years 4 and 11.



- **Baseline control variables**

- **Sex**
- **FH**
- **Neuroticism - *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire* (EPQ; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) ( $\alpha = .85$ )**
- **Conventionality/Religiosity (3 items;  $\alpha = .74$ )**
- **Peer alcohol involvement (6 items;  $\alpha = .89$ )**
- **Behavioral undercontrol composite ( $\alpha = .70$ )**
  - **Psychoticism - *EPQ* ( $\alpha = .61$ )**
  - **Novelty Seeking - *Tridimensional Personality Questionnaire* (TPQ; Cloninger, 1987) ( $\alpha = .77$ )**
  - **Impulsiveness - *Eysenck Personality Inventory* (EPI; Rocklin & Revelle, 1981) ( $\alpha = .56$ )**
  - **Psychopathic Deviate Scale - *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Questionnaire - 168* (MMPI-168; Overall et al., 1973) ( $\alpha = .65$ )**



- **Alcohol Involvement**

- **Quantity\*Frequency**

- **Quantity\*Frequency per week based on past year (alcoholic beverages assessed generally) (ALCQF)**
- **Quantity\*Frequency per week based on past 30 days (sum of beer, wine, wine coolers, and liquor) (TOTQF)**

- **Heavy drinking**

- **Heavy drinking (5+ drinks) occasions per week based on past month (HEAVY)**

- **Alcohol dependence symptoms**

- **14 past year symptoms ( $\alpha = .70-.85$ ) (ADEP)**

- **Alcohol consequences**

- **14 past year alcohol consequences ( $\alpha = .72-.75$ ) (ACON)**



# Data Analysis

- **A trait model, in the family of state-trait models, was used.** (Jackson et al., 2000; Schmitt & Steyer, 1993; Sher & Wood, 1997)
  - Well suited for modeling longitudinal data with three or more times of measurement in that they estimate both occasion-specific variability and general traitlike tendency in a given construct (in this case, alcohol involvement).
- **Maximum likelihood (ML) estimation was employed.**
- **Direct paths from potential exogenous baseline predictors to Year 1 and Year 11 alcohol involvement variables were included.**
- **Errors of adjacent alcohol involvement assessments were correlated.**



# Control Variables Results

- **Effects of baseline control variables (in the context of all other variables)**
  - Peer alcohol involvement predicted higher levels of all trait alcohol involvement variables.
  - Neuroticism was positively related to trait levels of ALCQF, TOTQF, and HEAVY among women and trait ACON among men.
  - Behavioral undercontrol predicted trait levels of ALCQF, TOTQF, and ACON among women and trait ADEP among men.
  - Conventuality/Religiosity was negatively related to Year 11 TOTQF, trait HEAVY, and trait ACON among women.
  - FH predicted trait ADEP among women.
  - Female sex predicted entry into marriage and parenthood between Years 4 and 11.



# Marriage/Parenthood Results

- **Marriage/Parenthood  $\blacktriangle$  Alcohol Involvement**
  - Controlling for trait alcohol involvement and all baseline control variables:
    - Marriage between Years 4 and 11 negatively predicted TOTQF at Year 11 among women only and ALCQF and ACON at Year 11 among women and men.
    - Parenthood between Years 4 and 11 was related to decreased TOTQF at Year 11 among women and men and decreased ALCQF at Year 11 among women.
- **Alcohol Involvement  $\blacktriangle$  Marriage/Parenthood**
  - Among males only, trait levels of HEAVY negatively predicted entry into parenthood between Years 4 and 11 over and above the relation between HEAVY and marriage.

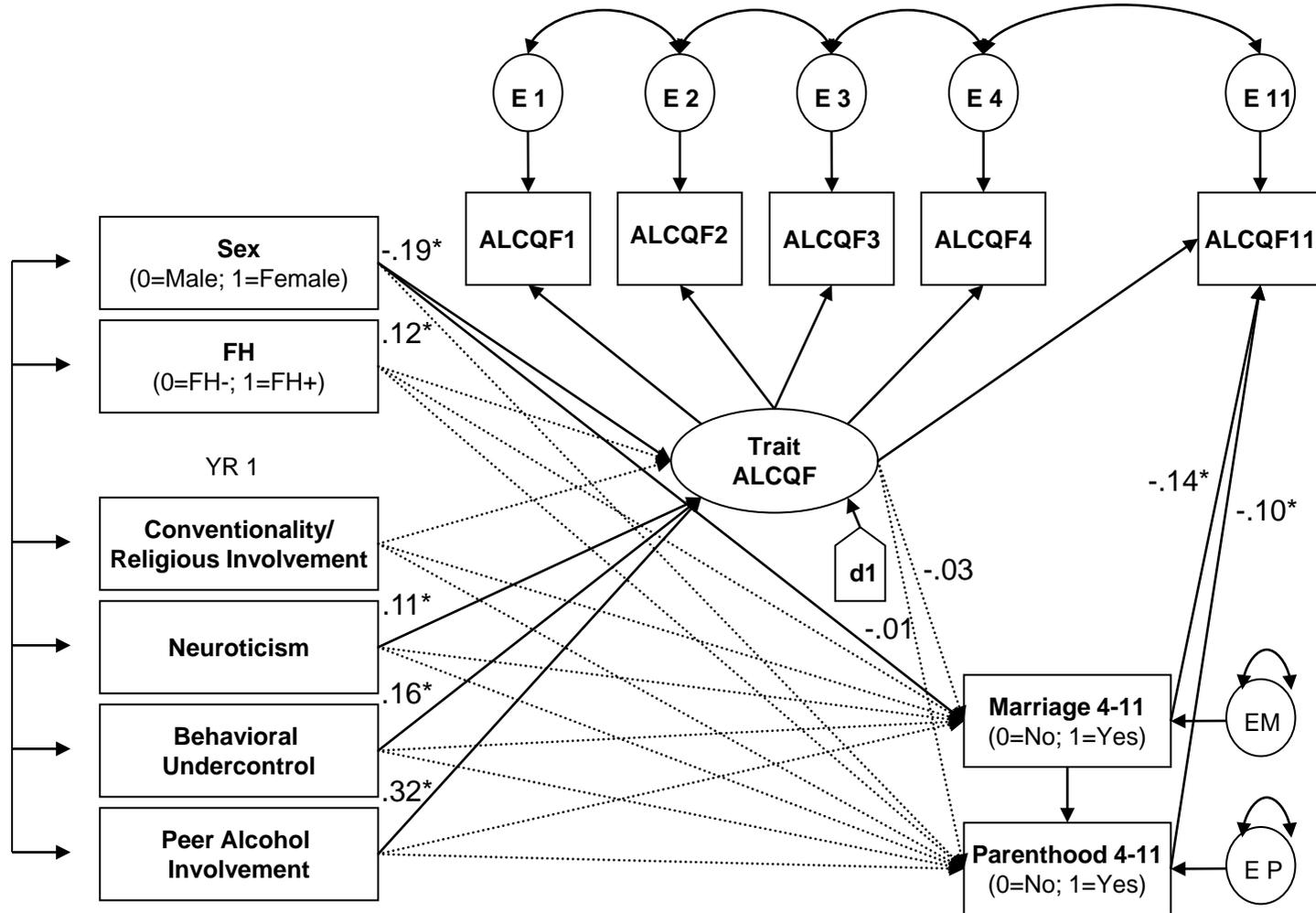


# Conclusions

- **Several baseline control variables were related to alcohol involvement, but only female sex predicted entry into marriage or parenthood.**
- **Differential evidence for the direction of influence between parenthood and alcohol involvement was found depending on sex and on the specific measure of alcohol involvement used.**
- **These results provide evidence for alcohol use, especially heavy consumption, delaying entry into adult roles (including parenthood when controlling for marriage), as well as for the influence of marriage and parenthood on subsequent alcohol involvement.**



# Alcoholic Beverages Quantity\*Frequency

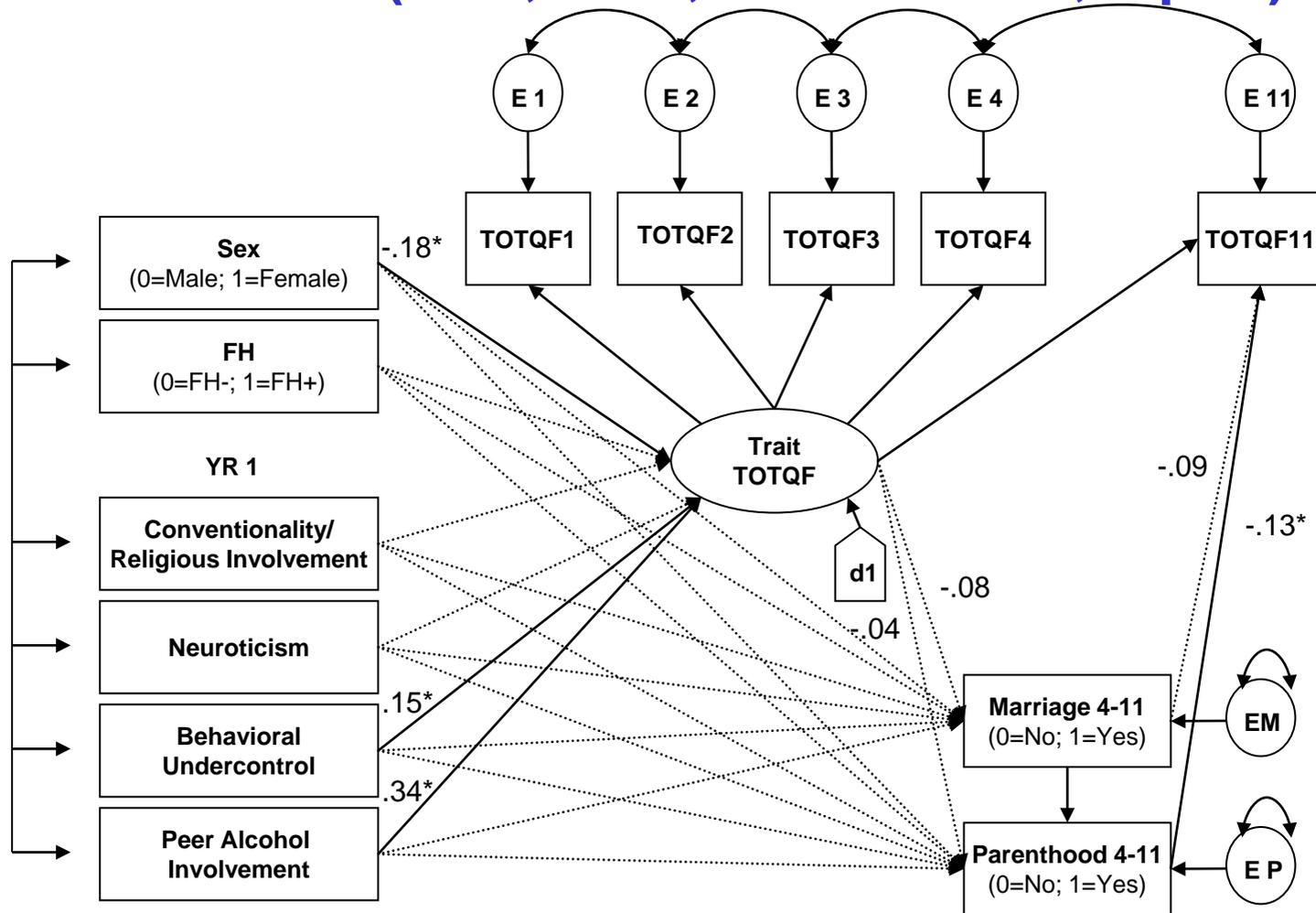


$\chi^2 (19) = 20.24 (p > .05)$ ; RMSEA = .01; CFI = .99



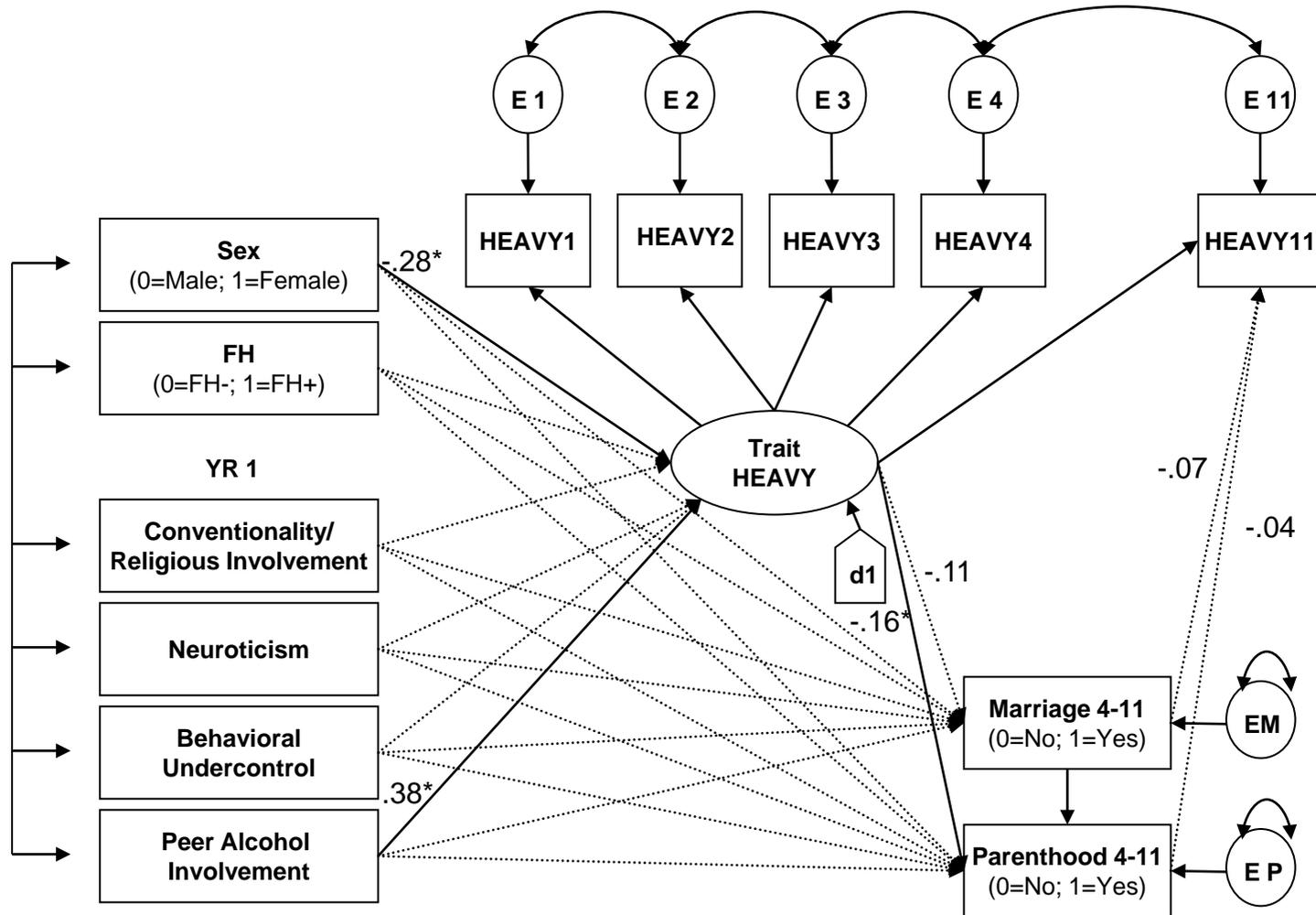
# Total Alcohol Quantity\*Frequency

(beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor)



$\chi^2(19) = 15.078 (p > .05)$ ; RMSEA = .00; CFI = 1.00

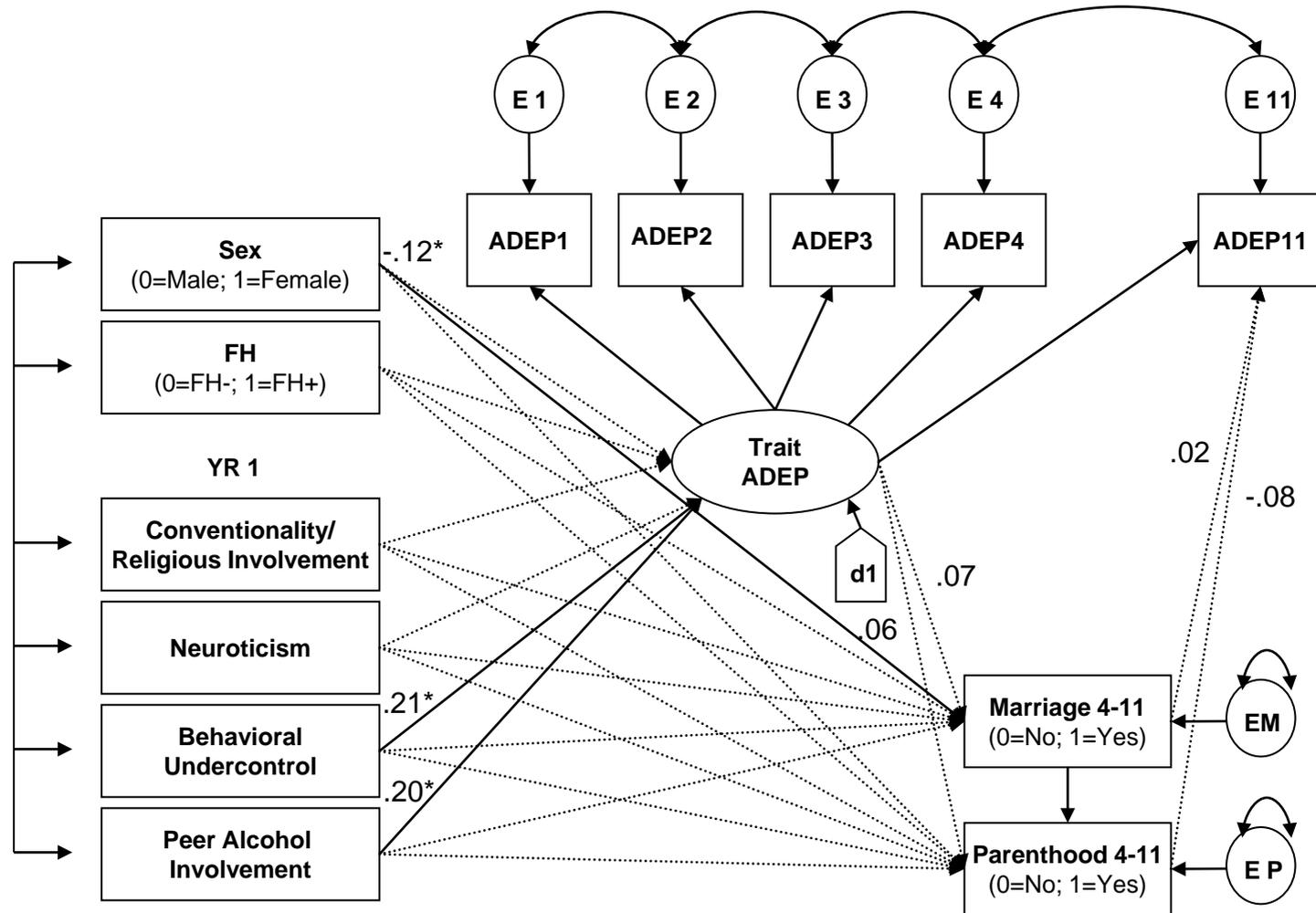
# Heavy Alcohol Use Occasions



$\chi^2 (19) = 19.31 (p > .05)$ ; RMSEA = .01; CFI = .99



# Alcohol Dependence Symptoms



$\chi^2 (19) = 36.24 (p < .05)$ ; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .98

# Alcohol Consequences

