Mediational role of motives in the relationship between urgency and alcohol

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Mediation of the Role of Motives in the Relationship Between Urgency and Alcohol Consumption

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ABSTRACT

Previous work has shown that negative urgency (the tendency to engage in risky behavior in response to extreme negative affect) and positive urgency (the tendency to engage in risky behavior in response to extreme positive affect) correlate with problematic alcohol consumption (Cooper, et al., 2000). Research has also shown that coping motives (alcohol use to avoid or escape negative affect (Cooper, et al., 2000) and enhancement motives (alcohol use to pursue or enhance positive affect (Cooper, et al., 2000)) also correlate with problematic alcohol consumption (Smith, McCarthy, & Goldman, 1995). We know, through previous research, that the concept of personality has an effect on acquisition of different learning experiences, which is also known as acquired preparedness (Smith, McCarthy, & Goldman, 1995). However, there has not been a lot of research done that looks at the mediational effects of learning on the relationship between urgency and alcohol problems. Thus, the goal of this paper is to examine whether negative and positive urgency predict drinking quantity through an increase in the coping and enhancement motives respectively. 418 first year students at a public mid-western university participated in the study (75% female, 25% male), they were all sampled three times during the first year of college (beginning of fall semester, end of fall semester, and end of spring semester). Their age ranged from 18 to 32 (mean = 18.2, SD = 0.76), and the majority of the sample was Caucasian. Results showed that negative urgency at time 1 was a significant predictor of drinking quantity (time 2 (β = .393, p < .001), and time 2 coping motives became a significant predictor of drinking quantity (β = .498, p < .001). Positive urgency at time 1 was a significant predictor of drinking quantity at time 3 (β = .258, p < .001). The significance of this relationship was reduced with the addition of time 2 enhancement motives (β = .449, p < .001), and time 2 enhancement motives became a significant predictor of drinking quantity (β = .592, p < .001). This study suggests that the initial presence of the urgency traits leads to learning mood congruent alcohol motives, which then leads to increased alcohol consumption motives during the first year of college (fully for negative urgency and partially for positive urgency).

METHODS

• N=418 (75% female, mean age = 18.2, 95.7% European-American)
• They completed a series of self-report questionnaires that included the following measures: Demographics, DSQ (Drinking Styles Questionnaire) (Cooper, McCarthy, & Goldman, 1995), UPPS-P (Impulsive behavior scale) (Colder et al., 2000), DMQ-R (Drinking Motives Questionnaire-Revised) (Cooper, et al., 2000).
• We conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses (according to Cohen et al., 2003) to test study hypotheses.
• We conducted a mediational test with multiple regression in line with was suggested by MacKinnon et al. (2002).

RESULTS

Table 1: Predicting drinking quantity with negative urgency and coping motives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE of β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1 Urgency</td>
<td>.422</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2 Urgency</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Predicting drinking quantity with positive urgency and enhancement motives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE of β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time 1 Urgency</td>
<td>.449</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2 Urgency</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

• Negative urgency, coping motives and alcohol
  • Negative urgency was a significant predictor of drinking quantity
  • When coping motives were added to the analysis, coping motives fully mediated the relationship between negative urgency and drinking quantity

• Positive urgency, enhancement motives and alcohol
  • Positive urgency was a significant predictor of drinking quantity
  • When enhancement motives were added to the analysis, enhancement motives partially mediated the relationship between positive urgency and drinking quantity

• Positive and negative urgency both lead to engagement in alcohol consumption, but they do so (partially or fully) through their effects on the social learning process.

• These findings lead to more precise understanding of the development of risky alcohol use behaviors during the first year of college, a time period in which students are at a significant risk of increased risk-taking behaviors of clinical interest (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005; Wechsler, Moeykens, Davenport, Castillo, & Hansens, 1995) in part due to their leaving home (Budde & Testa, 2005).

• These findings could inform identification of those at risk and the design of intervention and prevention programs in this population.

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