

Introduction

Prior research suggests that there may be racial differences in drinking behaviors and outcomes. For example, individuals who identify as White are more likely to report heavier drinking behaviors and experience greater alcohol-related consequences than those who identify as Black or African American (Banks & Zapolski, 2017; Gardner et al., 2020). Conversely, few studies have examined why these differences exist, namely, how race may play a role in alcohol expectancies and drinking motives, both of which have been found to be robust predictors of alcohol use and alcohol problems in college students (Kuntsche, 2005; 2017; Merrill et al., 2014).

The present study explored how race moderates the relationships between alcohol expectancies and drinking motives when predicting alcohol outcomes and alcohol-related consequences in young adults. It was hypothesized there would be a difference in moderation across racial groups, such that White participants would report greater associations between positive expectancies and enhancement motives and Black participants would report greater associations between negative expectancies and coping motives.

Method

Participants

- $N = 398$ college students
- Mean age = 19.83, $SD = 2.07$
- 67.4% female; 58.3% Black; 41.7% White

Materials

Alcohol Expectancies

- Comprehensive Effects of Alcohol (CEOA; Fromme et al., 1993)
- 38 items measuring *positive* ($\alpha = 0.82$) and *negative* alcohol expectancies ($\alpha = 0.69$; Lac & Brack; 2018)

Drinking Motives

- Drinking Motives Questionnaire (DMQ; Cooper, 1994)
- 10 items measuring *coping* ($\alpha = 0.83$) and *enhancement* ($\alpha = 0.86$; Martens et al., 2008) drinking motives

Alcohol Consumption

- Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ; Collins et al., 1985)
- Participants reported drinks per day in a typical week: Calculated quantity and frequency of alcohol use

Alcohol Problems

- Young Adult Alcohol Consequences Questionnaire (YAACQ; Read et al., 2006)
- 48 items measuring drinking problems

Procedure

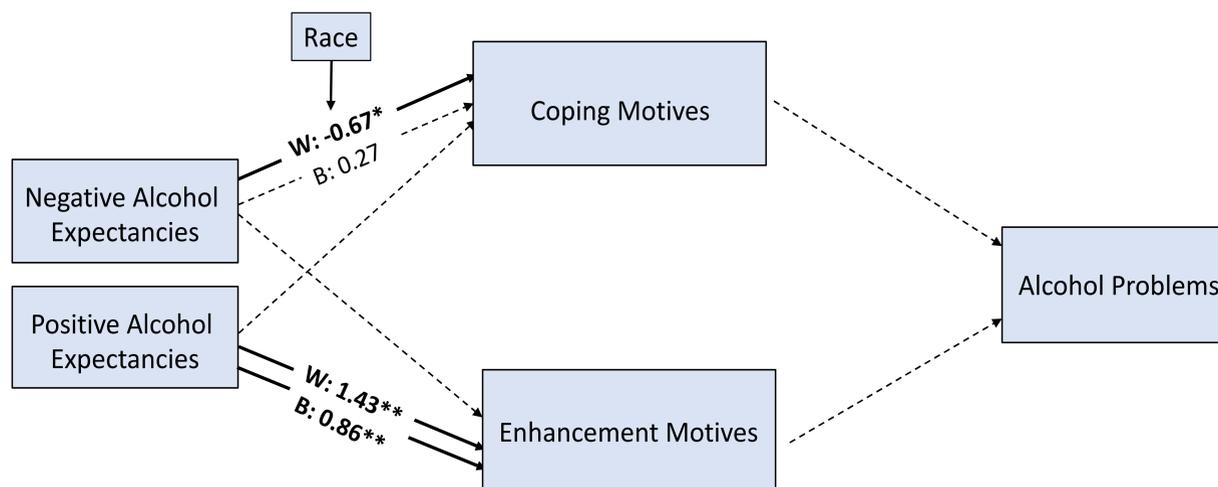
- Online survey completed in research lab
- Pre-intervention data from a randomized controlled trial (Braitman et al., 2021)

Analyses

- A series of multigroup moderated mediation models were conducted in Mplus (v8) to examine:
 - If race moderated the association between alcohol expectancies and drinking motives (*a*-path)
 - If drinking motives mediated the association between alcohol expectancies and alcohol consumption and alcohol-related consequences (alcohol outcomes in separate models).
- Gender was controlled for in all models

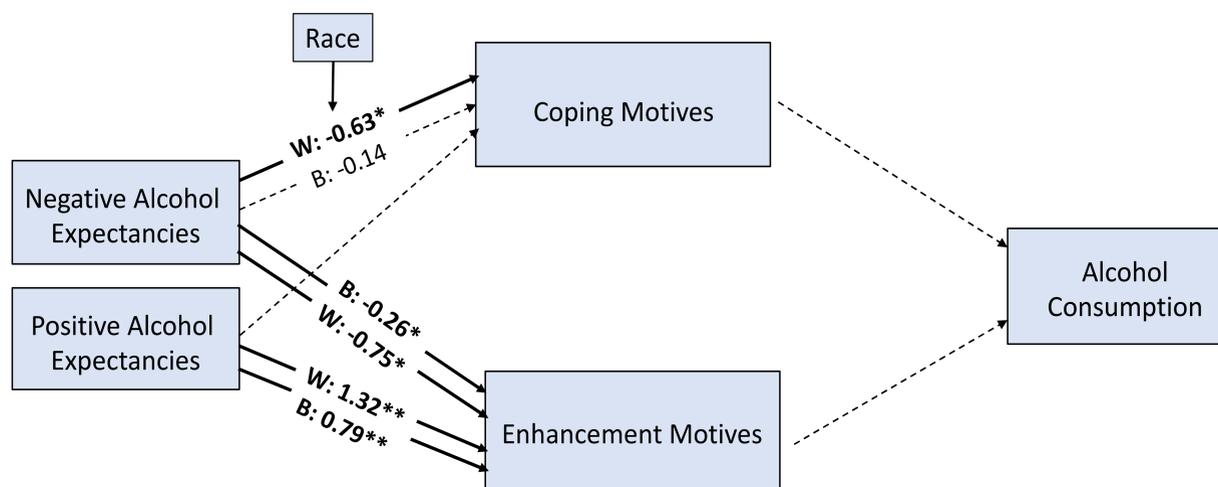
Race as moderator between alcohol expectancies and drinking motives:

On alcohol problems



Note. Bolded lines indicate race as a significant moderator. W = White; B = Black. * $p < .05$.; ** $p < .001$

On alcohol consumption



Note. Bolded lines indicate race as a significant moderator. Consumption indicates quantity and frequency of alcohol use. W = White; B = Black. * $p < .05$.; ** $p < .001$

Results

- No significance found for the indirect effects due to non-significant *b*-paths
- **Significant moderation was found when examining the *a*-paths individually for both alcohol outcomes:**
 - Significant negative association between negative expectancies and coping motives for White participants but not Black participants (*both models*)
 - Stronger significant positive association between positive expectancies and enhancement motives for White participants than for Black participants (*both models*)
 - Stronger significant negative relationship between negative expectancies and enhancement motives for White participants than for Black participants (*consumption model only*)

Discussion

Findings suggest associations between alcohol expectancies and drinking motives differ across Black and White college students. There appears to be a stronger association between alcohol expectancies and drinking motives for White students than for Black students, which could potentially lead to greater levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol problems.

Future research should further examine racial differences in alcohol-related behaviors with the goal of developing more effective alcohol interventions tailored to distinct populations with differing degrees of risk for experiencing alcohol-related problems.

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