SHARING ALCOHOL-RELATED CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA MEDIATES ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOTYPES AND ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT ALCOHOL USE AND CONSEQUENCES

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Introduction

Sharing alcohol-related content (ARC) on social media is associated with greater alcohol use. Holding a favorable prototype (i.e., mental image) of the typical person who posts ARC on social media is associated with greater odds of sharing ARC. Despite drinker prototypes (e.g., light drinkers, heavy drinkers) being well-established antecedents of drinking among adolescents and young adults, no studies have examined whether prototypes of people who post ARC on social media may be associated with drinking behavior indirectly via sharing ARC, which is the goal of the present study.

Method

Participants
- *N* = 306 adolescents and young adults (range 15-20 years; *M* age = 18.38, *SD* = 1.32)
- 53% female; 55.9% White, 27.5% Asian/Asian American

Materials
Sharing ARC
- Participants were asked whether they shared ARC in the past month (1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*)

Prototypes
- Assessed <u>favorability</u> and <u>similarity</u> for each prototype (Gerrard et al., 2008)
- Prototypes: Light drinker (drinks less than 2 drinks per occasion), heavy drinker (drinks at least 4/5 drinks per occasion), and ARC poster (shares ARC on social media)
- *Favorability*: assessed by asking the degree to which the 13 adjectives described each prototype (e.g., smart, lonely, impulsive, etc.) from 0 (*not at all*) to 6 (*extremely*)
- *Similarity*: assessed using a single item per prototype asking how similar the participant is to that individual from 1 (*not similar at all*) to 7 (*very similar*)

Alcohol Consumption
- Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ; Collins et al., 1985)
- Report standard drinks consumed each day of a typical week for the past 30 days
- Calculated *quantity* (total number of drinks for the week), and *peak drinks* (highest number of drinks on any one day)

Alcohol Consequences
- Brief Young Adult Alcohol Consequences Questionnaire (B-YAACQ; Kahler et al., 2005)
- Selected "*yes*" if they had experienced a particular consequences in the past 30 days (24 items)

Results

Sharing ARC indirectly explained the association between ARC poster prototype favorability and all alcohol outcomes
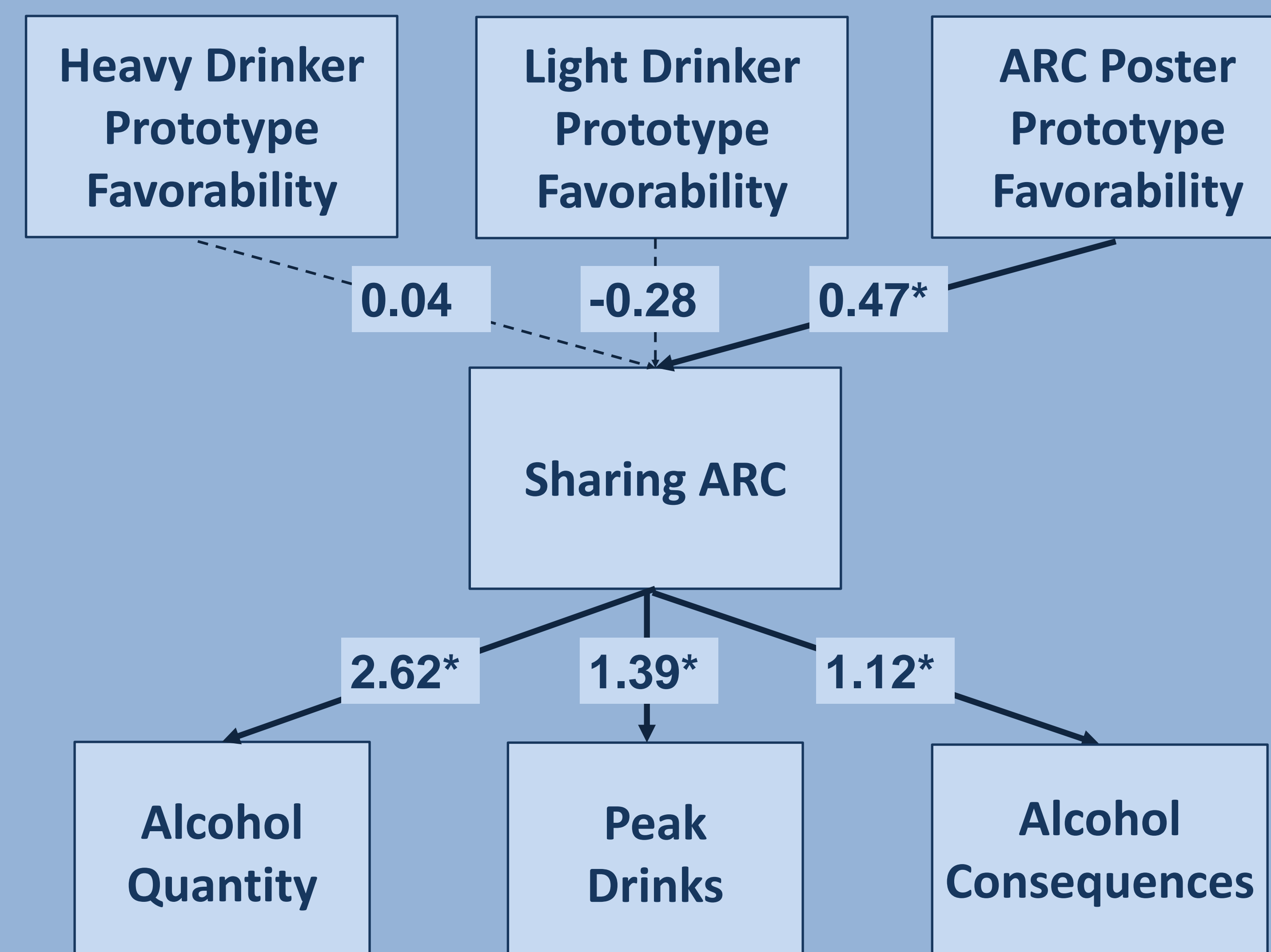
Sharing ARC indirectly explained the association between ARC poster and light drinker prototype similarity and alcohol quantity and peak drinks
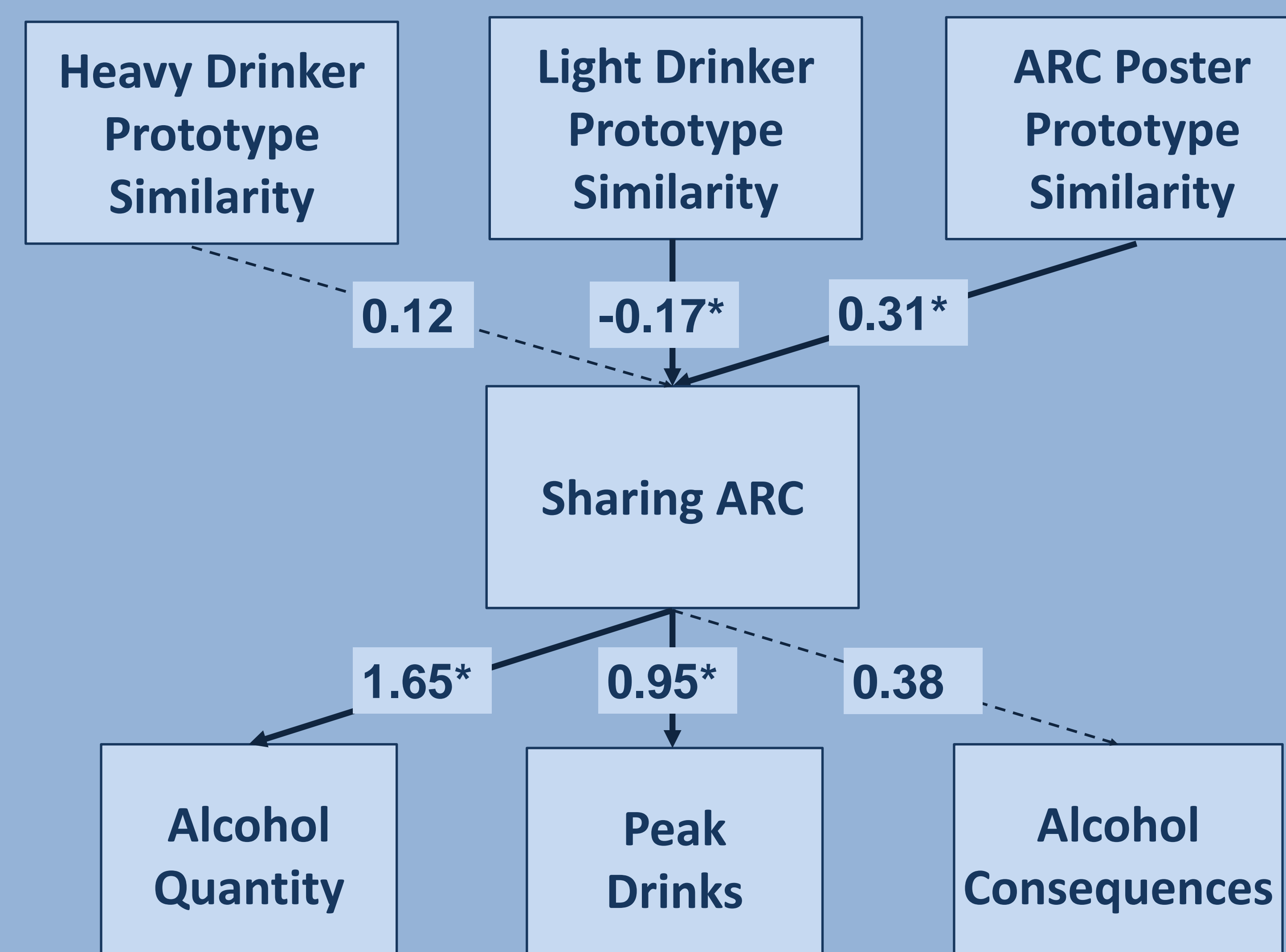
Procedure

- Online surveys at baseline and 1-month later, $75 total compensation, collected March 2017 through April 2018

Analysis Approach
- Four mediation models were conducted to examine:
  - **Model 1**: If sharing ARC in the past month indirectly explains associations between prototype favorability and alcohol outcomes (baseline only)
  - **Model 2**: If sharing ARC in the past month indirectly explains associations between prototype similarity and alcohol outcomes (baseline only)
  - **Model 3**: If sharing ARC 1-month later (control for baseline) mediates associations between prototype favorability at baseline and alcohol outcomes 1-month later
  - **Model 4**: If sharing ARC 1-month later (control for baseline) mediates prototype similarity at baseline and alcohol outcomes 1-month later
- **Covariates**: age, sex, frequency of checking Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat

Results

- **Model 1**: Significant indirect effects for sharing ARC were observed for the association between ARC poster prototype favorability and:
  - <u>Alcohol quantity</u>: *B* = 1.23, 95% CI [0.462, 2.422]
  - <u>Peak drinks</u>: *B* = 0.66, 95% CI [0.225, 1.400]
  - <u>Alcohol consequences</u>: *B* = 0.53, 95% CI [0.162, 1.146]
- **Model 2**: Significant indirect effects for sharing ARC were observed for the associations between:
  - <u>Light drinker prototype similarity and quantity</u> (*B* = -0.27, 95% CI [-0.695, -0.044]) <u>and peak drinks</u> (*B* = -0.16, 95% CI [-0.432, -0.019]), but not consequences
  - <u>ARC poster prototype similarity and quantity</u> (*B* = 0.51, 95% CI [0.135, 1.056]) <u>and peak drinks</u> (*B* = 0.30, 95% CI [0.073, 0.617]), but not consequences
- **Models 3 and 4**: Sharing ARC was not a significant mediator of longitudinal associations between prototype favorability or similarity and alcohol outcomes

Discussion

These findings suggest targeting ARC poster prototypes in particular may help to address sharing ARC on social media among youth, which could in turn impact high-risk drinking. Additionally, non-significant longitudinal associations suggest that 1-month may be too long of a lag between these constructs. As such, future studies may wish to investigate in-the-moment effects of ARC poster prototypes on behavior.
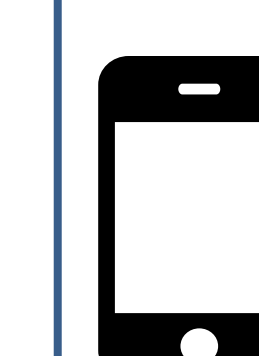
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