Interpersonal Goals, Social Norms and Adolescent Alcohol Use

Craig R. Colder and Jennifer P. Read
Department of Psychology
University at Buffalo, State University at New York

Acknowledgements:
NIDA grant R01DA019631
C.R. Colder (PI)

Paper Presented at the CRDH/ISSBD Peer Video Conference
November 6, 2013
Social Context and Alcohol Use

- Peers play an important role in the etiology of adolescent alcohol use
- Risky behavior most often occurs in the context of peers
  - Alcohol use is a social behavior
- Social context shapes attitudes and beliefs about alcohol
  - Norms
Social Norms

• Conforming to norms is particularly important for adolescents
  • Peer relationships are strongly valued in adolescence
  • Increased attention to the opinions and behavior of peers
  • Sensitivity to peer approval.

• Two types of norms associated with adolescent alcohol use:
  • Descriptive Norms: Perception of the behavior most people engage in (what people do)
  • Injunctive Norms: Perception of judgment about whether a behavior is acceptable or approved of (what people ought to do).
What might enhance or diminish the salience of descriptive and injunctive for adolescents?

• One possibility is interpersonal goals.
What are interpersonal goals?

• Individual differences in the value placed on appearing a certain way in social interactions.
• Interpersonal goals are organized around a circumplex
• Two primary orthogonal dimensions
  • Agentic (value status & dominance)
  • Communal (value belongingness & warmth).

Research Question

• Do interpersonal goals moderate the impact of social norms on adolescent alcohol use?
  • High communal goals: value unity and close social networks
    • Injunctive norms (perceived approval) would more strongly predict drinking at high levels of communal goals
  • High agentic goals: value status and respect
    • Descriptive norms (perceptions of peer drinking) would more strongly predict drinking at high levels of agentic goals

• Do these moderating effects change with age?
  • Interpersonal goals shift with age (Trucco, Wright, & Colder, in press, *Journal of Personality*)
    • Maybe moderating effects stronger in middle adolescence
Sample

• Prospective study of a community sample of 387 adolescents
• Four annual assessment
  • 11-12 years old at 1st assessment
  • Study spanned
    • 11-16 years of age
    • 5th to 10th grade
• Demographics
  • 54% female
  • Race/ethnicity
    • 83% Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)
    • 9% African American
    • 2% Hispanic
    • 1% Asian
    • 5% other
  • 75% two parent families
Measures

- **Alcohol Use** (Waves 1-4). Adolescents self-reported alcohol use without parental permission in the past year.
  - Rates of use were low as expected given the young age of our sample, and increased over time (1%, 3%, 7%, 20%, 35%, and 40% at grades 5-10, respectively).
- **Perceived Social Norms** (Waves 1-3) (from Monitoring the Future).
  - **Injunctive Norms**: How would your close friends feel if you drank alcohol occasionally/regularly; 1=strongly disapprove to 5=strongly approve
  - **Descriptive Norms**: How many of your friends drink alcohol occasionally /regularly; 1=none to 6=all
- **Interpersonal goals** (Waves 1-3)
  - Interpersonal Goals Inventory for Children (Trucco, Wright, & Colder, 2011, Assessment)
Interpersonal Goals Inventory

• When with your peers, in general how important is it to you that...?
  • **Agentic Vector:**
    • **Agentic:** you appear dominant, you appear self-confident, your peers admire you
    • **Submissive (reversed coded):** you go along with your peers to avoid arguments or upsetting others, you let your peers make decisions.
  • **Communal Vector**
    • **Communal:** your peers help you when you have a problem, you feel close to your peers
    • **Separate (reversed coded):** you keep your thoughts to yourself, you don’t give away too much about yourself
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations of External Criteria with Communal and Agentic Vector Scores</th>
<th>Communal Goals</th>
<th>Agentic Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Self-Report Behavior Problems (ASEB A)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing Symptoms</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing Symptoms</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation with Delinquent Peers</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Social Preference Scale -Revised</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un sociability (prefer being alone)</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicted Shyness (like to play with other kids but sometimes too nervous to)</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated (I’d like to play with other kids but I’m often excluded)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant (I try to avoid other kids)</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Anxiety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Negative Evaluation</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress novel Social Situations</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress general social situations</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analytic Plan

• Multilevel models
• Crossed lagged associations between norms/interpersonal goals and alcohol use.
  • Norms and interpersonal goals predicted alcohol use in the subsequent assessment controlling for prior drinking.
• Predictor variables were standardized within grade.
• Models included
  • Statistical control variables (gender, prior alcohol use)
  • a random intercept
  • 3-way interaction terms (grade x norms x interpersonal goals).
  • 5th grade data excluded due to low levels of alcohol use.
• Preliminary analysis suggested that gender did not operate as a moderator
Results from the Cross-Lagged Multilevel Regression Models Predicting Likelihood of Past year Alcohol Use

| Effect                     | Estimate | Std. Error | Pr > |t| |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|------|---|
| Intercept                  | -2.53    | 0.24       | <.01 |  |
| Prior alcohol use          | 0.79     | 0.27       | <.01 |  |
| Gender                     | -0.05    | 0.21       | .81  |  |
| Grade                      | 0.62     | 0.11       | <.01 |  |
| Descriptive Norm (DN)      | 0.19     | 0.20       | .34  |  |
| Injunctive Norm (IN)       | 0.40     | 0.24       | .09  |  |
| Communal Goals (CG)        | 0.65     | 0.19       | <.01 |  |
| Agentic Goals (AG)         | 0.32     | 0.21       | .13  |  |
| IN x CG                    | -0.67    | 0.26       | <.01 |  |
| DN x CG                    | 0.52     | 0.30       | .08  |  |
| IN x AG                    | 0.21     | 0.28       | .45  |  |
| DN x AG                    | -0.34    | 0.22       | .11  |  |
| Grade x DN                 | 0.10     | 0.12       | .40  |  |
| Grade x IN                 | 0.12     | 0.12       | .32  |  |
| Grade x CG                 | -0.27    | 0.10       | <.01 |  |
| Grade x AG                 | -0.12    | 0.11       | .25  |  |
| Grade x DN x CG            | -0.33    | 0.15       | .03  |  |
| Grade x IN x CG            | 0.30     | 0.13       | .03  |  |
| Grade x DN x AG            | 0.26     | 0.13       | .04  |  |
| Grade x IN x AG            | -0.15    | 0.14       | .30  |  |
### 6th Grade Desc. Norms ---> 7th Grade Drinking

- **Low Communal Goals (OR=.72)**
- **High Communal Goals (OR=2.07*)**
- **Low Agentic Goals (OR=1.71)**
- **High Agentic Goals (OR=.86)**

### 9th Grade Desc. Norms ---> 10th Grade Drinking

- **Low Communal Goals (OR=2.58*)**
- **High Communal goals (OR=.76)**
- **Low Agentic Goals (OR=1.09)**
- **High Agentic Goals (OR=2.43*)**

### 6th Grade Inj. Norms ---> 7th Grade Drinking

- **Low Communal Goals (OR=2.91*)**
- **High Communal goals (OR=.76)**

### 9th Grade Inj. Norms ---> 10th Grade Drinking

- **Low Communal Goals (OR=1.80*)**
- **High Communal Goals (OR=2.68*)**
Acknowledgements

• Support from NIDA
  • R01DA019631
• Co-Investigators: Larry W. Hawk, Jr., Liliana J. Lengua, Jennifer P. Read, William F. Wieczorek
• Project Coordinator (Dawn Keough)
• Families who donated their valuable time to participate