Short Communication

Exploring relationships between facets of self-esteem and drinking behavior among diverse groups of young adults ☆

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HIGHLIGHTS

- We explored drinking and facets of self-esteem among diverse college students.
- Global self-esteem associated with drinking for Whites only.
- Collective self-esteem associated with drinking for Asians only.

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Theory and empirical evidence suggest that North American-based measures of self-esteem, which measure individualistic positive self-regard, may be less applicable to Eastern cultures. In the present exploratory study, we examined how different conceptualizations of self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and the Collective Self-esteem (CSE) Scale, predicted drinking behavior among three groups of American college students ($N = 326$) with varying ethnicities: White, Korean, and Chinese/Taiwanese. Hierarchical negative binomial regression was employed to evaluate these relations. Ethnic identity was controlled for in all analyses. Findings indicated that while global self-esteem was positively associated with drinking for the whole sample, ethnicity moderated this relationship such that global self-esteem was related to drinking for White participants but not for their Chinese/Taiwanese counterparts. In addition, while CSE did not associate with drinking for the whole sample, effects emerged for specific ethnicities. Specifically, private CSE was associated with less drinking for Korean and Chinese/Taiwanese participants. Depending on specific Asian ethnicity, public CSE served as a risk (Korean participants) or a protective factor (Chinese/Taiwanese participants) for drinking. Findings suggest that above and beyond ethnic identity, differential relationships between facets of self-esteem and drinking behavior may exist among White, Korean, and Chinese/Taiwanese young adults. Intervention and prevention programs should develop strategies to help Chinese/Taiwanese and Korean American young adults cultivate protective factors within domains of CSE.

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1. Introduction

Although White college students typically consume more alcohol than their Asian American (AA) counterparts (e.g., Larimer et al., 2009; Office of Applied Studies (OAS), 2008; Pascal, Bersamin, & Flewelling, 2005), rates of alcohol use among AA young adults are rising (Grant et al., 2004; So & Wong, 2006; Wechsler, Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998). Some AA subgroups appear to be at a higher risk than others, with differential risk and protective factors depending on ethnicity (e.g., Chang, Shrake, & Rhee, 2008; Lum, Corliss, Mays, Cochran, & Lui, 2009; Office of Applied Studies Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2002). Since alcohol use and related problems are concerning for AA and White young adults, understanding the risk and protective factors is an important priority.

Global self-esteem refers to the appraisal of one's self-worth. Findings regarding alcohol use and self-esteem are mixed in predominately White young adult samples, with some research suggesting a negative association (Brennan, Walfish, & Aubuchon, 1986; Gerrard, Gibbons, Reis-Bergan, & Russell, 2000; Glindemann, Geller, & Fortney, 1999) and others indicating a positive relationship; perhaps due to

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social satisfaction and status (Corbin, McNair, & Carter, 1996; Hsu & Reid, 2012). Research on alcohol and self-esteem among AAs is based on adolescents and has yielded equivocal findings (Hahm, Lahiff, & Guterman, 2003; Maddahian, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1988; Otsuki, 2003). Only one study has examined an Asian subgroup (i.e. Korean Americans) but found no significant association between global self-esteem and drinking (Nakashima & Wong, 2000).

It is possible that global self-esteem may have differential relationships with drinking across cultures because North American and East Asian cultures vary in their construal of *the self* (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 2003). Based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a more interdependent view of self-regard within East Asian cultures is conceptualized as collective self-esteem (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Whereas global self-esteem refers to how one views and evaluates the self as an individual, CSE refers to one's view of the self within the social identity that one holds. Referring to one's racial/ethnic group, CSE contains four components: Membership CSE (i.e., judgment of one's worth as a member of their race/ethnicity), private CSE (i.e., evaluation of the worth of one's own race/ethnicity), public CSE (i.e., evaluation of how others view the worth of one's race/ethnicity), and importance to identity (i.e., how important being a member of one's race/ethnicity is to one's self-concept).

Limited research to date has examined CSE as a predictor of mental health (e.g., depression) (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; David, 2008; Kim & Omizo, 2005; Lam, 2007; Zhang, 2005) and health risk behavior (Pedersen, Hsu, Neighbors, Lee, & Larimer, 2013). Findings indicate that CSE has a stronger association with positive mental health and lower health risk behavior for ethnic minority groups than for Whites. For Whites who find themselves in the majority in most social contexts, collective aspects of the self may not be particularly relevant and may therefore not be associated with mental health (Crocker et al., 1994). For AAs, collective aspects of the self may be particularly relevant and therefore may be more strongly associated with mental health.

We are not aware of research that has examined the relationships between facets of self-esteem and alcohol use among White and AA young adults. To address this gap in the literature, our study examined how self-esteem and CSE predicted drinking behavior by comparing Korean American and Chinese/Taiwanese American young adults to White young adults. Based on empirical evidence, Korean Americans represent a heavier drinking AA subgroup while Chinese/Taiwanese Americans represent a lighter drinking subgroup (e.g. Hendershot, Dillworth, Neighbors, & George, 2008; OAS, SAMHSA, 2002) with distinct ethnic drinking cultures (Cook, Mulia, & Karriker-Jaffe, 2012). Consistent with national surveys, Chinese and Taiwanese individuals were combined into one subgroup.

Ethnic identity refers to one's sense of belonging to their ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). It has been linked to higher global self-esteem among AA and White adolescents (e.g., Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997) and is associated with substance use among ethnic minorities (e.g., Gong, Takeuchi, Agbayani-Siewert, & Tacata, 2003). To clarify the relationships between facets of self-esteem and drinking, we accounted for ethnic identity in all analyses. It was hypothesized that White young adults would drink more than Korean and Chinese/Taiwanese young adults and that greater global self-esteem would be associated with more drinking among White young adults. Facets of CSE would be negatively associated with drinking among Chinese/Taiwanese and Korean young adults while these relations would be weaker or non-significant for White young adults.

2. Method

College students ($N = 326$) from one four-year university completed anonymous surveys in psychology courses. Of the 179 students who identified themselves as AA, 46 identified with Chinese/Taiwanese ethnicity and 28 with Korean ethnicity. Two hundred and fifty-two students

identified as "White/Caucasian." Participants reported a mean age of 19.24 years ($SD = 2.18$) with 61% of them female. Most (89%) were freshmen and sophomores. Approximately 80% of the Chinese/Taiwanese and Korean participants and all the White participants were at least second-generation.

The participants indicated how many drinks they consumed on each day of a typical week in the past month, using the Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ; Collins, Parks, & Marlatt, 1985). A drinks-per-week variable was computed by summing typical drinks consumed during each day of the week. The six-item Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure — Revised (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007) was also used. Each item (e.g., "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group") was rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), $\alpha = 0.89$.

The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was used to assess global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Ten items were rated from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree), $\alpha = 0.88$. The Collective Self-esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) was used to assess the value participants placed on being a member of their ethnic group. Sixteen items were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Factors included membership CSE (e.g., I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group), private CSE (e.g., I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to), public CSE (e.g., Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others), and importance to identity (e.g., The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.). This scale has demonstrated adequate reliability in this (α's value ranged from 0.78 to 0.88) and other studies (Crocker et al., 1994; David, 2008; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

2.1. Analytic plan

Hypotheses for drinks per week outcome were evaluated using negative binomial hierarchical regression (Hilbe, 2008) in three steps. Step 1 consisted of ethnicity (dummy coded White-Korean and White-Chinese/Taiwanese contrasts), ethnic identity, global self-esteem, and CSE factors. Step 2 was designed to test whether the association between global self-esteem and drinking varied across ethnicities, with two-way product terms between the dummy-coded ethnicity variables and global self-esteem. Step 3 was designed to test whether the association between CSE and drinking varied across ethnicities, after accounting for the interactions with global self-esteem, with two-way products between the two dummy coded ethnicity variables and the four CSE factors.

3. Results

On Step 1, Whites drank more than Koreans and Chinese/Taiwanese, and global self-esteem was positively associated with drinking. None of the CSE facets had unique associations with drinks per week after controlling for ethnic identity. Results at Step 2 revealed a two-way interaction between the Chinese/Taiwanese-White contrast and global self-esteem but not between the Korean-White contrast and global self-esteem. For Whites, greater global self-esteem was associated with increased drinking (simple slope $e^\beta = 1.05$, $p = .001$), while the simple slope for Chinese/Taiwanese was not significant ($e^\beta = 0.95$, $p = 0.40$).

Results at Step 3 revealed higher private CSE associated with non-significant increased drinking for Whites ($e^\beta = 1.03$, $p = 0.24$), while it associated with significantly decreased drinking for Koreans ($e^\beta = 0.67$, $p = .003$) and marginally significant decreased drinking for Chinese/Taiwanese ($e^\beta = 0.91$, $p = 0.11$) (Fig. 1, right). There were significant interactions between the Korean-White contrast and public CSE and between the Chinese/Taiwanese-White contrast and public CSE (Fig. 1, left). The relationship between public CSE and drinking among Whites was not significant ($e^\beta = 1.02$, $p = 0.37$), the simple slope for Koreans was positive ($e^\beta = 1.95$, $p = .001$), and the