



The relationship between motivational structure, sense of control, intrinsic motivation and university students' alcohol consumption

Zohreh Sepehri Shamloo^a, W. Miles Cox^{b,*}

^a Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

^b Bangor University, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Motivation and emotion
Motivational structure
Sense of control
Intrinsic motivation
Alcohol use
University students

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine how sense of control and intrinsic motivation are related to university students' motivational structure and alcohol consumption. Participants were 94 university students who completed the Personal Concerns Inventory, Shapiro Control Inventory, Helplessness Questionnaire, Intrinsic–Extrinsic Aspirations Scale, and Alcohol Use Questionnaire. Results showed that sense of control and intrinsic motivation were positively correlated with adaptive motivation and negatively correlated with alcohol consumption. Mediation analyses indicated that adaptive motivation fully mediated the relationship between sense of control/intrinsic motivation and alcohol consumption.

© 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Human beings can decide how and when to pursue particular goals or to give up their pursuits. Various theorists (e.g., Klinger, 1977; Klinger & Cox, 2004a; Lee, Sheldon, & Turban, 2003) assert that goal striving is a salient aspect of humans' lives, and that goals pursuits help determine people's meaning of life. To address the dynamics underlying people's goal strivings, Cox and Klinger (2002) introduced the construct *motivational structure*. It refers to the combination of factors (e.g., knowing what do to, commitment, emotional expectations) that influence person's goal strivings. Motivational structure varies from one person to another, but it is the more-or-less stable way in which each person pursues his or her goals. Motivational structure, however, is not entirely rigid because people's current concerns and their goals for resolving them and their success with or failure at goal pursuits can change the way in which the person strives for their goals.

To measure motivational structure, Klinger et al. developed the Motivational Structure Questionnaire (MSQ; Klinger, Cox, & Blount, 1995) and the Personal Concerns Inventory (PCI; Cox & Klinger, 2004a). With the MSQ and PCI, Klinger and Cox (2004b) have identified two motivational patterns, which they call adaptive motivation and maladaptive motivation. Several studies (e.g., Cox & Klinger, 2002; Fardari & Cox, 2008) have found that compared to people with an adaptive motivational structure, people with an maladaptive motivational structure have (a) fewer positive incentives, (b) less hope for achieving their goals, (c) less anticipated happiness from achieving goals and less anticipated sorrow from not achieving them, (d) longer expected distances from goal attainments, (e) less feeling of commit-

ment to goals, and (f) less perceived personal control over achieving goals.

The motivational model of alcohol use (Cox & Klinger, 1988, 1990, 2004a,b) brings together factors (e.g., heredity, personality, current positive and negative affect) that contribute to people's motivation to drink alcohol. According to the model, when individuals are unable to achieve emotional satisfaction through other goal pursuits, they are more likely to regulate their affect by drinking alcohol. They might drink, for instance, to feel more optimistic or less anxious and depressed (Hussong, Hicks, Levy, & Curran, 2001). In this way, alcohol consumption might be a maladaptive attempt to restore desirable emotional states. In fact, there is evidence that motivational problems are associated with excessive drinking (Beckman, 1980; Cox & Klinger, 2004a; Deaton, 1975). The more maladaptive people's motivational structure is, the greater will be their risk of drinking excessively, and the lower their chances of reducing their consumption (Cox, Blount, Bair, & Hosier, 2000; Cox & Klinger, 2002, 2004a).

The present study was designed to identify motivational factors that help determine whether motivational structure is adaptive or maladaptive and how these factors contribute to people's motivation to drink alcohol. As Cox and Klinger's motivational model suggests, it is reasonable to expect that sense of control would be related to motivational structure. Sense of control is a person's belief that he or she has control over desired outcomes; people strive to enhance their control over their personal lives (Shapiro, 1994). Seligman (1975, 1994) showed that having a sense of control is adaptive, especially in difficult situations. It helps a person to maintain the motivation to overcome problems that might arise. Feeling a lack of control is related to maladaptive goal pursuits (Shapiro & Astin, 1998).

If a person believes that he or she does not have control over events that happen, learned helplessness might result (Seligman,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: m.cox@bangor.ac.uk (W.M. Cox).

1975). According to Stipek (1988), helplessness is in conflict with humans' vital drive to control their environment. There is evidence (e.g., Gernigon, Thill, & Fleurance, 1999; Skinner, 1995) that feeling helpless has negative consequences in three domains: cognitive, emotional, and motivational. Cognitively, a helpless individual believes that outcomes are out of his or her control; motivationally, the person's level of activity and effort decreases, and gradually he or she gives up; and emotionally, increasing feelings of sadness, anxiety, and hostility erode the person's emotional well-being. Feelings of not being in control of one's surroundings damage the person's self-efficacy and perceived ability to learn in similar situations (Ramirez, Maldonado, & Martos, 1992). Learned helplessness has many adverse effects. Learned helplessness has been reported to be associated with psychological disorders, especially with depression (e.g., Gundogdu & Aydin, 1994; Peterson & Seligman, 1984), stress (e.g., Geer, Davison & Gatchel, 1970; Maier, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2000), anxiety (e.g., Gotlib, 1984; Waschbusch, Sellers, LeBlanc, & Kelle, 2003), poor social skills, feelings of incompetence, and poor problem-solving strategies (Steinberg & Gano-Overway, 2003); all of these result in individuals' feeling that they are struggling for no reason (Dweck, Davidson, Nelsin, & Enna, 1978). According to Cook (1993), all of these negative feelings may reduce the individual's happiness and satisfaction with life.

On the other hand, there is evidence that people with intrinsic motivation are immune to feelings of despair, sense of failure, and helplessness. Intrinsic motivation refers to people's natural tendency to pursue their own interests and to exercise their capabilities and, in doing so, to seek out and overcome challenges (Reeve, 2002). Intrinsically motivated people are interested in learning and achieving; this, in turn, tends to be associated with creativity, cognitive flexibility, positive emotions, and self-esteem (e.g., Elliot, Falser, McGregor, Campbell, Sedikides & Harackiewicz, 2000; Kasser, 2002; Milkulincer, 1994). Intrinsically motivated people view their personal choice as important when they decide whether to pursue a goal; they experience their goal-seeking activities as meaningful; and they enjoy performing their tasks, regardless of whether or not they succeed in reaching their goals and regardless of feedback from the environment (Ames, 1992). They see their mistakes or failures as valuable experiences and opportunities to learn (Kong & Hau, 1996; Simons, Dewitte, & Lens, 2000).

Relationships among motivational orientation (i.e., intrinsic/extrinsic motivation), sense of control, and motivational structure have not previously been systematically investigated. However, there is compelling evidence that maladaptive motivation is associated with drinking behavior, and that extrinsic motivation and a low sense of control are associated with negative affect, which likely contributes to people's decisions to drink alcohol. Accordingly, in the present study, relationships among these motivational variables were assessed, with an aim of understanding how these relationships are related to university students' alcohol consumption.

It was hypothesized that (a) sense of control and intrinsic motivation would be positively correlated with adaptive motivation but negatively correlated with alcohol consumption; (b) helplessness would be negatively correlated with adaptive motivation but positively correlated with alcohol consumption; and (c) that adaptive motivation would mediate both the relationship between sense of control and alcohol consumption and the relationship between motivational orientation (i.e., intrinsic motivation) and alcohol consumption. The hypotheses were derived from the motivational model of alcohol use (Cox & Klinger, 1988, 1990, 2004b).

2. Method

Participants. On the basis of a power analysis, a sample size of 94 was deemed adequate. Accordingly, 94 (male = 43.6%, mean age = 20.41 years, $SD = 2.62$; females = 56.4%, mean age = 20.07 years,

$SD = 1.65$) psychology undergraduate student drinkers were recruited from the School of Psychology Student Participant Panel at Bangor University. Participants received course and print credits for their participation. Dependent drinkers were not eligible to participate—a criterion that was announced in the recruitment announcement; no participant drank more than 27 units of alcohol per week. Data collection was discontinued when 94 participants meeting the inclusion criteria had been recruited. In analyses related to alcohol consumption, four participants were excluded because they indicated that they did not drink alcohol. Nondrinkers were excluded because personality differences between drinkers and nondrinkers have been reported (e.g., King, Bernardy, & Hauner, 2003).

2.1. Instruments

Personal Concerns Inventory. An abridged version of the Personal Concerns Inventory (PCI) was used to assess participants' motivational structure. Participants were not asked to describe their concerns but to rate only their most important goals in each area of life (see Cox & Klinger, 2004b). The life areas included (a) Home and Household Matters, (b) Relationships, (c) Love, (d) Intimacy and Sexual Matters, (d) Self-changes, (e) Employment and Finances, (f) Leisure and Recreation, (g) Health, and (h) Education. After participants had decided whether or not they had a current concern in a particular life area, they were asked to rate their goal for resolving each concern on 11 dimensions: (a) Appetitive Action (to get, obtain, or accomplish); (b) Aversive Action (to get rid of, prevent, or avoid); (c) Perceived Control; (d) Knowledge (about how to achieve the goal); (e) Chances of Success (if I do my best); (f) Chances of Success if Not Try (if I do nothing); (g) Joy (expected from achieving the goal); (h) Conflict (expected unhappiness from achieving the goal); (i) Sorrow (from failure to achieve the goal); (j) Commitment (to achieving the goal); and (k) Goal Distance (i.e., how long it would take to reach the goal). Each scale ranged from "0" to "10." The ratings across a respondent's goals are summarized into motivational indices, from which that respondent's motivational profile can be drawn (Cox & Klinger, 2004b). The PCI is both valid and reliable (see Klinger & Cox, 2004b).

Shapiro Control Inventory. The Shapiro Control Inventory (SCI; Shapiro, 1994) measures perceived sense of control. It includes 187 items that are scored on ten control scales (overall, positive, negative, domain-specific, positive assertive, positive yielding, negative assertive, negative yielding, desire for control, and locus of control). We calculated scores for the sense of control subscales, and in Table 4 we report bivariate correlations between them and the other variables. However, for the inferential analyses, we avoided the complexities of using multiple indices of sense of control by selecting Overall Sense of Control scale as a simple, reliable indicator of sense of control. The SCI is both valid and reliable (Shapiro, 1994).

Intrinsic–extrinsic motivation. Motivational orientation (i.e., intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation) was measured with the Aspiration index. Aspirations refer to people's life goals, which can be either intrinsic aspirations (e.g., meaningful relationships, personal growth, community contributions) or extrinsic aspirations (e.g., wealth, fame, image). Research has shown that having strong extrinsic aspirations is negatively associated with mental-health indicators, whereas having intrinsic aspirations is positively associated with mental-health indicators (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996) and with a sense of well-being (Ryan et al., 1999). The Aspirations index (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996) was used to measure intrinsic–extrinsic life goals. It comprises three categories of extrinsic aspirations (i.e., wealth, fame, and image) and three categories of intrinsic aspiration (i.e., meaningful relationships, personal growth, and community contributions). Respondents are asked to rate each aspiration on the following dimensions: (a) the importance of each aspiration to themselves, (b) their beliefs about the likelihood of attaining each aspiration, and (c) the degree to which they have already attained each one.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/899989>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/899989>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)