

Drinking Motives in Cross-National Perspective Drinking Motives in Cross-National Perspective

Summary

Current state of research: In adolescence and young adulthood, risky drinking is more common than in any other period in life; yet it carries a significant risk of adverse health consequences. The concept of “motives” has been shown to be of particularly relevance in generating scientific evidence on why young people drink. Unfortunately, current knowledge and evidence is almost exclusively based on Western industrialized countries. Due to known differences in drinking cultures across Europe, soundly conducted cross-cultural studies are urgently needed to acquire a more complete picture about the structure and predictive power of drinking motives across different cultures.

Methods: A sample of 48,906 adolescents from 13 European countries and regions will be used. With the exception of Hungary, all the countries and regions participated in 2009/2010 in the Health Behaviour in School- Aged Children (HBSC) survey. As analytic techniques, multi-group confirmatory factor analysis, mixed model analysis of variance and structural equation modeling will be used.

Objectives and rationale: The first aim of the proposed study is demonstrate the psychometric quality of the Drinking Motive Questionnaire Revised Short Form (DMQ-R SF: Kuntsche & Kuntsche, 2009) in the different parts of Europe (hypotheses 1.1 to 1.8). This is important because it is a crucial requirement for future cross-national drinking motive research and also necessary to successfully test the hypotheses 2.1 to 2.3 and 3.1 to 3.4. The second aim is to test how drinking motives are linked to outcomes that are not per se alcohol-related. We will empirically test whether specific drinking motives (e.g., social motives) are linked with positive outcomes of adolescent development (e.g., life-satisfaction, physical activity, social connectedness; hypotheses 2.1 to 2.3). The third aim is to test to what degree drinking motives mediate the links (a) between age at first drinking and later drinking frequency and (b) between age at first drunkenness and later drunkenness frequency. Providing scientific evidence on this issue is important because it will help to clarify whether prevention efforts should focus on delaying the age at first drink/first drunkenness or on specific motives to engage in (risky) drinking.

Expected value: The proposed study provides a unique opportunity for cross-cultural motive research: (1) Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern Europe is represented at least by two countries, (2) the sample sizes in each European region are sufficiently large (i.e., $n > 5,000$), (3) an identical survey methodology (except Hungary) and the same validated survey instruments were used, and (4) the translation/back translation procedure maximized language equivalence. With this unique level of survey comparability and high data quality, the proposed study will overcome some of the limitations of previous cross-cultural motive research (cf. Kuntsche et al., 2008b).

Dissemination strategies: Three articles will be published in international peer-reviewed journals. Selected findings will also be presented at international scientific conferences. Press releases will ensure the widespread dissemination of the research findings among the general public.