Addictive Behaviors 39 (2014) 1297–1303

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Addictive Behaviors

Do different types of social identity moderate the association between perceived descriptive norms and drinking among college students?

Dipali Venkataraman Rinker *, Clayton Neighbors

University of Houston, Department of Psychology, 126 Heyne Bldg, Houston, TX 77204-5022, USA

HIGHLIGHTS

- Perceived norms are associated with drinking among college students.
- Social identity moderates the association between perceived norms and drinking.
- Different types of social identity affect this relationship differentially.
- Social norm interventions may incorporate different types of social identity.

ARTICLE INFO

Available online 20 March 2014

Keywords:
College
Drinking
Perceived descriptive norms
Social identity

ABSTRACT

Perceived descriptive norms are one of the strongest predictors of college drinking. Social Identity Theory posits that much of our identity is based on groups with which we affiliate. Prior research suggests that there is an association between perceived descriptive norms and drinking among those who identify more strongly with the normative referent group. However, no studies to date have examined how different facets of social identity affect the relationship between perceived descriptive norms and drinking. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the interaction between perceived descriptive norms and social identity on drinking varied as a function of different dimensions of social identity among college students. Participants were 1095 college students from a large, public, southern university who completed an online survey about drinking behaviors and related attitudes. Drinks per week was examined as a function of norms, the Importance, Commitment, Deference, and Superiority subscales of the Measure of Identification with Groups, as well as the two-way interactions between each dimension of social identity and norms. Results indicated that norms were associated with drinking, but that this relationship varied as a function of identity dimension. The association between norms and drinking was stronger among those who viewed the university's student body as part of their own identity and were more committed to their fellow students, but weaker among those who reported greater deference to student leaders. This research suggests the importance of examining multiple dimensions of social identity in considering social influences on drinking.

Published by Elsevier Ltd.

1. Introduction

1.1. College drinking

College drinking continues to be prevalent and problematic. The 2011 *Monitoring the Future* report (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2012) indicates that 64% of full-time college students reported drinking in the previous 30 days. Additionally, the report indicates that approximately 14% of full-time college students reported having 10 or more drinks in a row at least once in the prior 2 weeks, and approximately 5% reported 15 or more drinks in a row at least once. Heavy drinking among college students has been associated with a number of problems, including morbidity and mortality (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009), the development of an alcohol use disorders (Knight et al., 2002), academic problems (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000), legal problems (Hingson, Heeren, Zakocs, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2002; Wechsler et al., 2002), risky sexual behavior and sexual assault (Goldstein, Barnett, Pedlow, & Murphy, 2007; Hingson et al., 2009), drinking and driving (Hingson et al., 2009), and unintentional, non-traffic injuries and physical assaults (Hingson et al., 2009).

Research suggests that social norms are among the strongest influences on college drinking (Neighbors, Lee, Lewis, Fossos, & Larimer,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 713 743 4297; fax: +1 713 743 8588.
E-mail addresses: dvrinker@uh.edu (D.V. Rinker), cneighbors@uh.edu (C. Neighbors).

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.03.018
0306-4603/Published by Elsevier Ltd.

2007). Foremost among these factors are perceptions that drinking is prevalent among one's peers, also known as perceived descriptive norms. The more students believe that others students drink, the more they themselves drink, and the association between perceptions and behavior appears to be bidirectional (Neighbors, Dillard, Lewis, Bergstrom, & Neil, 2006).

1.2. Perceived descriptive norms

Descriptive norms refer to the degree to which one engages in a particular behavior, and perceived descriptive norms refer to the perception of how others' engage in a particular behavior (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). With regard to alcohol consumption, descriptive norms refer to how much or how frequently one drinks, and perceived descriptive norms refer to the perception of how much or how frequently others drink. Research suggests that college students tend to overestimate how much and how frequently other college students drink, which is associated with their own heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Larimer, Turner, Mallett, & Geisner, 2004; Lewis & Neighbors, 2004). Interventions to reduce overestimations of drinking norms among heavy-drinking college students include providing accurate information contrasting their perceptions of drinking norms and actual drinking norms with their own drinking behavior (Carey, Scott-Sheldon, Carey, & DeMartini, 2007; Larimer & Cronce, 2007; Walters & Neighbors, 2005). Reductions in perceived descriptive drinking norms have been shown to mediate the efficacy of these interventions, leading to reductions in heavy drinking (Borsari & Carey, 2000; LaBrie, Hummer, Neighbors, & Pedersen, 2008; Neighbors, Larimer, & Lewis, 2004; Wood, Capone, Laforge, Erickson, & Brand, 2007).

Research suggests that the degree of overestimation varies by the specificity of the normative referent group. Perceived descriptive norms for more specific referent groups, based on gender, being a student at that particular university, ethnicity, and fraternity/sorority status have been found to be associated with heavy drinking and alcohol-related problems (Larimer et al., 2009, 2011; Lewis & Neighbors, 2004, 2007; Lewis, Neighbors, Oster-Aaland, Kirkeby, & Larimer, 2007; Neighbors et al., 2010). In all of these studies, the authors concluded that there was a strong association between norms and drinking, but this relationship was made stronger the more specific the referent group was (e.g., reporting the drinking behaviors of students who were the same race/ethnicity as the student, as opposed to reporting the drinking behaviors of the general college population). These results suggest that the degree to which one identifies with the referent group has differential effects on the association between perceived drinking norms and drinking behaviors. Furthermore, previous research suggests that proximal (e.g., close friends) referents are better predictors of students drinking then distal referents (Baer, Stacy, & Larimer, 1991; Larimer et al., 2011). This research suggests that students may not identify as closely with “typical student” norms.

1.3. Social identify theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) suggests that much of our identity is based on groups with which we affiliate. Our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are thus influenced by groups that are important to us. Moreover, individuals see themselves and other group members as having a common identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). An overarching assumption of SIT which has been empirically supported is that the behavioral influence that a group has on an individual depends on how much the individual identifies with that group (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002).

Social identity has been measured in many different ways with regard to alcohol use. Rimal and Real (2005) first found support for the moderating effect of social identification with university peers on the association between perceived descriptive norms and drinking intentions. Specifically, the greater the degree to which they felt that they were similar to other university students and the greater the degree to which they looked up to these peers, the stronger the association between norms and behavioral intentions. Reed, Lange, Ketchie, and Clapp (2007) also found support for social identity as a moderator of normative influences on drinking across three referent groups of college students. The authors measured social identity with four items assessing the degree to which they identified with the referent group, how similar they felt they were to the group, how strong a bond they had with those group members, and how much being a part of the group was a part of their own self-identity. Again, results suggested that the stronger the identification with the referent group, the stronger the association between norms and drinking. Neighbors et al. (2010) also found support for self-identification as a moderator of the association between perceived descriptive norms and drinking. In this study, identification was assessed simply as an overlap between one's own identity and that of the group using a series of overlapping circles modified from the Inclusion of In-group in the Self measure (Tropp & Wright, 2001). Similarly, the more one identified with the group, the stronger the association between norms and drinking.

In conclusion, we can clearly see that the there is a significant association between norms and drinking, and that this association is stronger the more one identifies with the normative referent group. However, social identity is a complex and multidimensional construct and may perform differently depending on which facet of group identification is considered. It may be that some facets augment the relationship between perceived descriptive norms and drinking, whereas others may diminish it or have no impact at all. Gaining a clearer understanding of the influence of social identity with normative referents has clear implications for the improvement of feedback interventions to reduce problematic drinking among college students.

Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, and Eidelson (2008) conducted a comprehensive theoretical review which indicated four specific types of identification with groups. These included Importance, Commitment, Superiority, and Deference. Importance refers to how much one views a group as part of their identity. This dimension is most similar to the dimension assessed by the overlap in identity between oneself and group as assessed by the IIS. Commitment refers to a strong affiliation, commitment, and desire to contribute or help the group. Superiority refers to favorable comparisons with other groups, and viewing one's own group as better, smarter, and more moral. Deference refers to idealization and submission to group leaders. The authors created a scale to measure these constructs and conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the scale in a sample of 102 college students (Roccas et al., 2008). They concluded that the four-factor model provided the best fit, relative to one-factor and two-factor model.

Although previous research has made it clear that the influence of perceived norms on drinking vary based on the specificity of the group and one's identification with it, it is not clear whether all dimensions of identity have the same impact on this relationship.

1.4. Current research

The present research was designed to extend previous work showing that social identity augments the association between perceived norms and drinking. We were specifically interested in seeing whether this association differed according to which aspect of group identification was considered. Based on SIT and previous findings that suggest that identification with specific referent groups is associated with perceived norms and drinking among college students, we expected that the association between perceived descriptive norms and drinking would be stronger among those who generally identified more with the group. We were also interested in whether this moderation effect would differ across identity dimensions.

دریافت فوری ← متن کامل مقاله

ISIArticles
مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات