Acculturative stress (AS), or stress from the process of acculturating into a new culture, may be a correlate of maladaptive outcomes, such as psychological distress and substance use (Berry, 1979; Campos et al., 2001). Substance misuse and alcohol-related risky behaviors are highly prevalent in Hispanic college students (NABHE, 2007; Woldi, 2003). Alcohol use may be conceptualized as an ineffective coping skill in response to chronic AS (Lee et al., 2013).

Associating with substance-using peers is a risk factor for drinking initiation and problematic alcohol behaviors (Cataldi, Salazar-Orozco, & Fisz, 2008). Extant literature lacks examination of relations between AS, peer norms (e.g., injunctive and descriptive), and problematic alcohol use in Hispanic college students (Kim, Hogg, & Salvisberg, 2014). Injunctive norms (IN) perceive approval of peers regarding drinking behaviors. Descriptive norms (DN) are perceived peer drinking behaviors. It remains unclear if the association between peer norms and problematic alcohol use is moderated by AS.

More specifically, need examination on whether differences exist between American-based acculturative stress (ABAS)—AS from pressure to adjust to American culture, and Hispanic-based AS (HBAS)—AS in predicting problematic alcohol use. Further, nuanced understanding of how ABAS and HBAS may differentially interact with peer norms and alcohol use is needed.

Current Study

Aims:
1. To corroborate previous findings of predictive relation between peer norms and problematic alcohol use
2. To explore relations between AS and problematic alcohol use
3. To explore moderating effects of ABAS and HBAS on relation between peer norms and problematic alcohol use

Participants

172 non-alcohol abstaining Hispanic college students
69.1% female, 30.9% male
Age: M = 20.34, SD = 3.57
Participants completed a battery of self-report measures via an online survey.

Background

- Acculturative stress (AS), or stress from the process of acculturating into a new culture, may be a correlate of maladaptive outcomes, such as psychological distress and substance use (Berry, 1979; Campos et al., 2001).
- Substance misuse and alcohol-related risky behaviors are highly prevalent in Hispanic college students (NABHE, 2007; Woldi, 2003).
- Alcohol use may be conceptualized as an ineffective coping skill in response to chronic AS (Lee et al., 2013).

Results

Analyses conducted in SAS® 9.3 (SAS Institute, Cary NC). Predictive relation between predictors (i.e., AS and peer norm variables) and outcome (i.e., AUDIT) conducted after mean centering predictors. Tested the following interactions: HBAS*IN, HBAS*DN, ABAS*IN, ABAS*DN. No other interactions were significant.

Conclusions

- Results suggest further examination of how HBAS and ABAS differentially predict risky alcohol use and interact with other alcohol risk factors in Hispanic young adults is needed.
- There is potential clinical utility of psychoeducation on AS, especially HBAS, in protecting against problematic alcohol use.
- Results may not be representative of Hispanic college students across the United States. Future studies may aim for larger sample size using multi-method data collection to strengthen validity.

Selected References


Correspondence regarding this work should be addressed to Molin Shi at molin.shi@ttu.edu, and Andrew K. Littlefield, Ph.D. at andrew.littlefield@ttu.edu.