



Race as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Rejection Concern and Drinks Per Week

Samantha Mathew, Ramsha Momin, Jennifer A. Mathew, Kevin Moore, and Mai-Ly N. Steers
University of Houston



Present Research

Aim: This cross-sectional study examined how race moderates the relationship between rejection concern and drinks per week.

Introduction

The literature has consistently demonstrated that an individual's race predicts the number of drinks per week, Caucasians tend to consume more alcohol than Asians⁵.

- ❑ Race differences in drinking¹ have been demonstrated among Caucasians and Asians, which can be attributed to cultural and physiological differences. In Asian culture, drinking is allowed but excessive alcohol consumption is not endorsed. Additionally, the ALDH2*2 allele is prevalent in Asians and seldom found in Caucasians. This allele codes for an enzyme with a faster ethanol oxidation rate, increasing the unpleasant effects associated with alcohol like flushing and high blood acetaldehyde concentration. Individuals who express the ALDH2*2 allele have a lower occurrence of binge drinking possible due to the unpleasant effects associated with this allele². Conversely, Caucasians typically consume more alcohol than Asians because it is more culturally accepted.
- ❑ Moreover, the literature has established that individuals who are higher in rejection concern tend to drink more⁶. Individuals higher in rejection concern may drink more often because they use drinking as a way to mitigate feelings associated with feeling rejected by others⁴.
- ❑ Although race and rejection concern have been researched in the context of drinking, to our knowledge there is no research that explores the interaction between race and rejection concern in predicting drinking.
- ❑ H1: We hypothesized that Caucasian students may consume more drinks than Asians.
- ❑ H2: We predicted that higher rejection concern would predict a greater number of drinks because drinking is commonly seen as a way in dealing with negative affect associated with rejection concern⁷.
- ❑ H3: We expected an interaction between Caucasians and rejection concern, such that Caucasians who are higher in rejection concern would consume more drinks relative to Asians who are also higher in rejection concern.

Methods

Participants

- ❑ This was a one time, online cross-sectional cultural study. We specifically focused on a Caucasian and Asian sample.
- ❑ In order to participate, respondents had to be 18 years of age or older.
- ❑ Participants were recruited primarily in psychology classes, and they were given course credit for their participation.
- ❑ Respondents (N=307; 74.43% female) were students enrolled at a large southern university.
- ❑ Mean age of the participants was 22.93 (SD = 5.9). The sample was 62.5% Caucasian, and 37.5% Asian.

Measures

- ❑ **Race.** Participants were asked to self report their race. White/Caucasian and Asian were dummy coded such that White/Caucasian = 0 and Asian = 1.
- ❑ **Rejection Concern.** We used the Rejection Concern subscale of the Rejection Sensitivity Scale⁸ to assess the degree to which participants were concerned about others rejecting them. Items from the rejection concern subscale included questions such as: “You approach a close friend to talk after doing or saying something that seriously upset him/her. Please indicate the extent to which you are,” 1 = “Very Unconcerned”, 6 = “Very Concerned” on a six-point Likert scale. The alpha coefficient was .82 for rejection concern.
- ❑ **Drinks per week.** The Daily Drinking Questionnaire (Collins et al., 1985) focused on the number of alcoholic beverages the participants drink per week. The items used for the daily drinking questionnaire includes questions such as: “Consider a typical week during the **last three months**. How much alcohol, on average (measured in number of drinks), do **you** drink on each day of a typical week?” from Monday through Sunday. The drinks per day were summed to represent drinks per week.



Results

Table 1. Zero-order Correlations between the main variables.

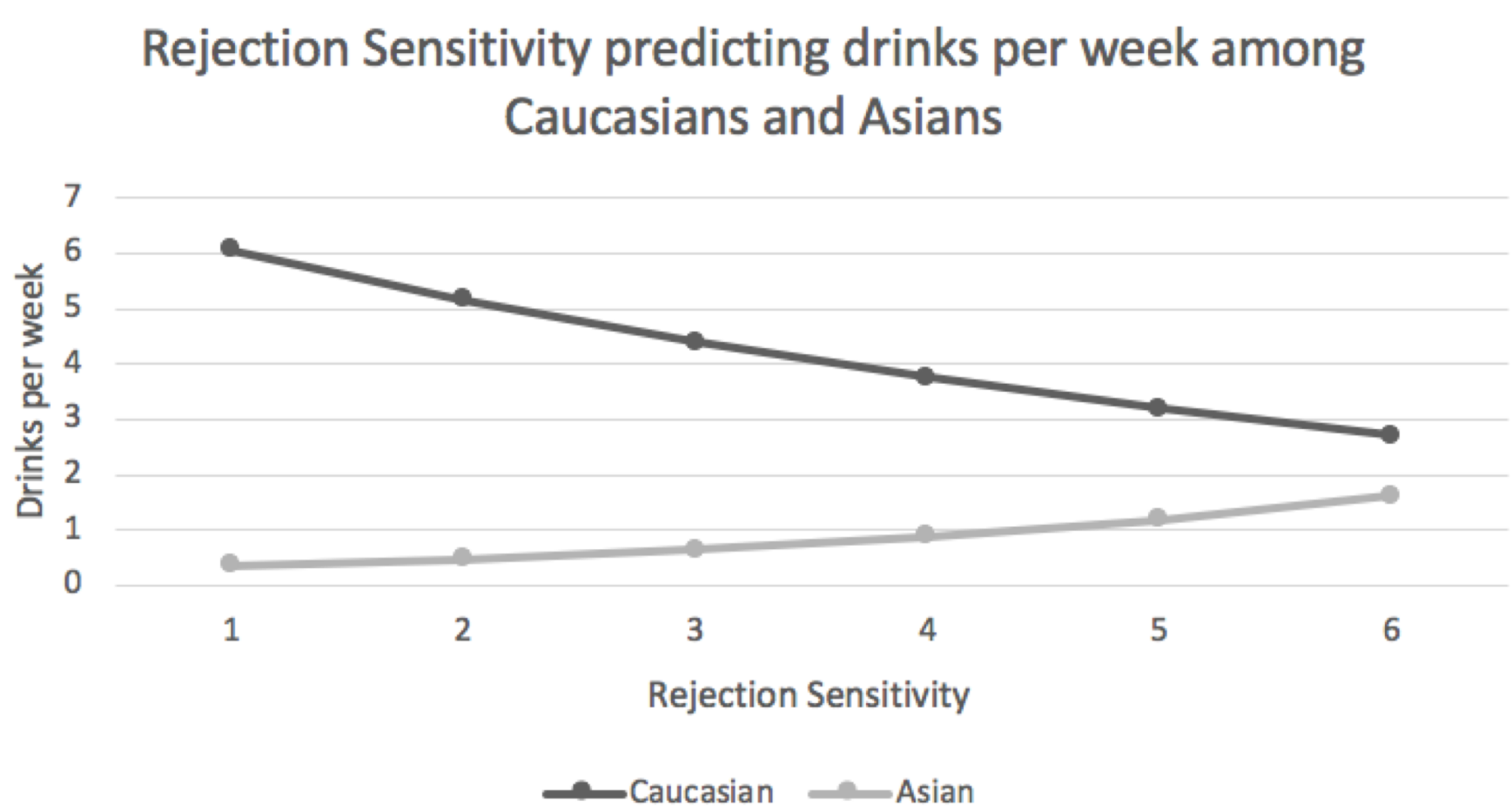
	1.	2.	3.
1. Drinks per week	-	-0.118*	-0.257***
2. Rejection Concern	-	-	0.204**
3. Race	-	-	-
Mean	2.843	3.964	0.377
Standard Deviation	5.524	1.013	0.486

Note: N=307, P<.10 †, p<.05*, p<.01**, p<.001***

Table 2.

	b	b SE	p
Step 1			
Rejection Concern	-0.016	0.105	0.876
Asian	-1.333***	0.259	<.0001
Step 2			
Rejection Concern*Asian	0.4805*	0.422	0.035

Note: N=307, P<.10 †, p<.05*, p<.01**, p<.001***



Analytic Strategy

- ❑ Due to the fact that the distribution of the dependent variable of drinks per week was positively skewed, we analyzed the data utilizing hierarchical, negative binomial regression.
- ❑ In Step 1, rejection concern and race were entered in as predictor variables of drinks per week. We did not find a significant main effect for rejection concern; however, there was a significant effect for race such that Caucasians tended to drink more drinks per week than Asians.
- ❑ In Step 2, the interaction between rejection concern and race was also significantly and positively associated with drinks per week.

Discussion

- ❑ As expected, results revealed that Caucasians consume more alcoholic drinks per week (H1). This may be due to the fact that drinking tends to be more culturally accepted and even encouraged among Caucasians as compared to Asians⁵.
- ❑ Contrary to expectations, results revealed that higher rejection concern did not significantly predict drinking (H2). Rejection concern may not have been significantly related to drinking because participants, as a whole, may have sought other outlets for alleviating their negative affect than drinking.
- ❑ Finally, in line with our expectations, there was a significant interaction between race and rejection concern (H3). Caucasians who were higher in rejection concern appeared to drink less than Caucasians who were lower in rejection concern. Conversely, Asians tended to drink small amounts of alcohol, regardless of levels of rejection concern.
- ❑ The implications of these findings are that race and individual differences such as rejection concern can affect drinking differentially. It may be that Asians drink about the same regardless of rejection concern. This may be due to their collectivistic orientation which actively promotes harmony among group members to avoid rejection. On the other hand, for Caucasians, drinking in college tends to occur more at social gatherings. Thus, Caucasians who feel more rejection concern may not be participating in events involving drinking and consequently drink less.

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