

Autonomy support and autonomous functioning in relation to drinking and drinking motivation among university students

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Introduction

- Health related behaviors and especially risky behaviors such as substance use among university students and its determinants have long been an important topic of research carried out mostly across western universities (e.g. Ham & Hope, 2003)
- Many international projects have begun to collect data in order to get insight into this area of research and **provide background for data-based intervention programs** for various age groups including university student population focusing on **various psychological concepts** (e.g. social norms, social skills, self-esteem).

Background

- Problematic alcohol use has been identified as a serious problem among university students has been linked to numerous negative consequences affecting **not only health** (short or longterm) **but also** academic performance, **personal growth, well-being** (e.g. Palfai, 2002; Cox & Klinger, 2002).
- „**Alma alcohol Mater**“ (qualitative study conducted in Slovakia) has shown that students see their drinking as related to the environment (controlling aspect) and self–determination (being in charge of one´s life) (Bačíková et al, 2012)
- **Control versus autonomy** – (relevant for this population)

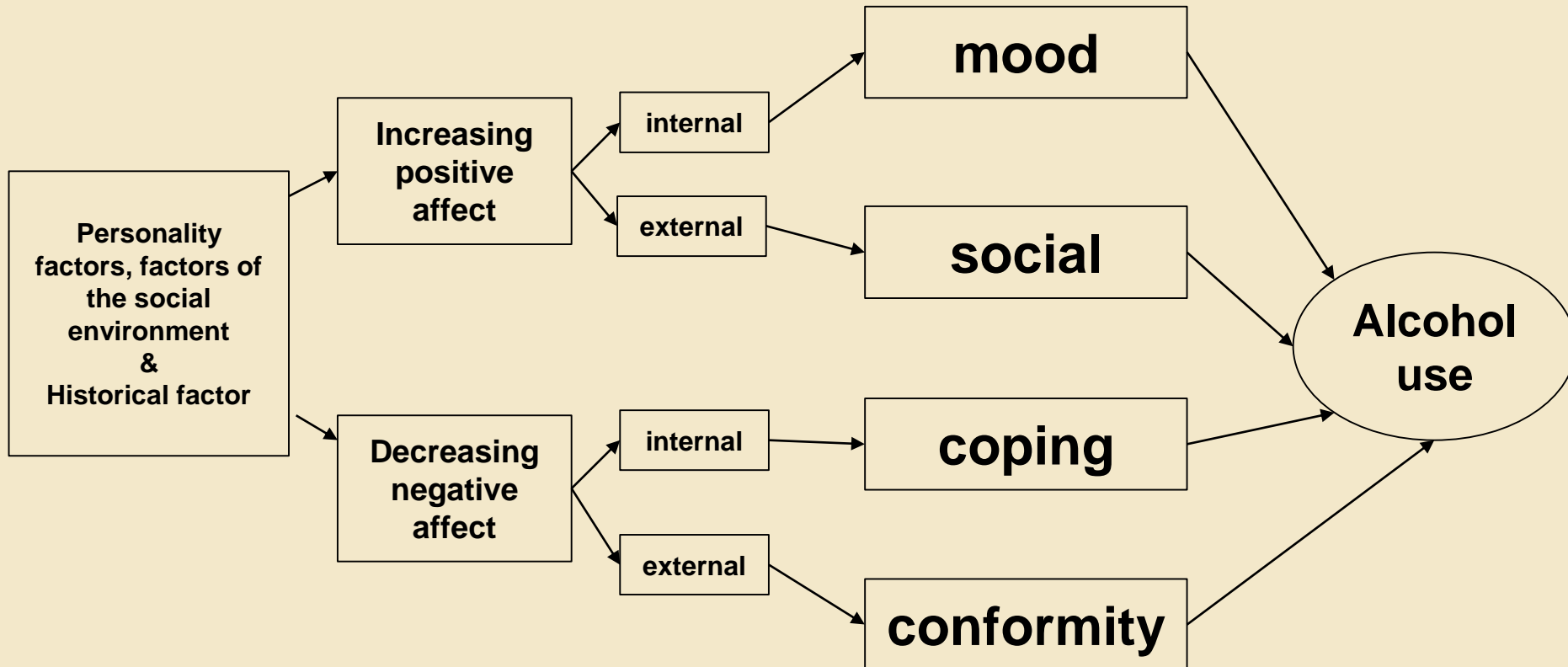
Self-determination

- Self-determination theory is a theory of human motivation with roots in the humanistic tradition (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Central to the theory is the **distinction between self-determined or *autonomous* and non-self-determined or *controlled* forms of functioning.**
- Autonomous functioning can be also conceptualized and measured at the level of **individual differences**. This way it addresses the **extent to which people tend to typically function in a self-determined way**. It is thus considered a relatively enduring aspect of people's personalities (Sheldon, 1996).

Role of autonomy in health related behavior

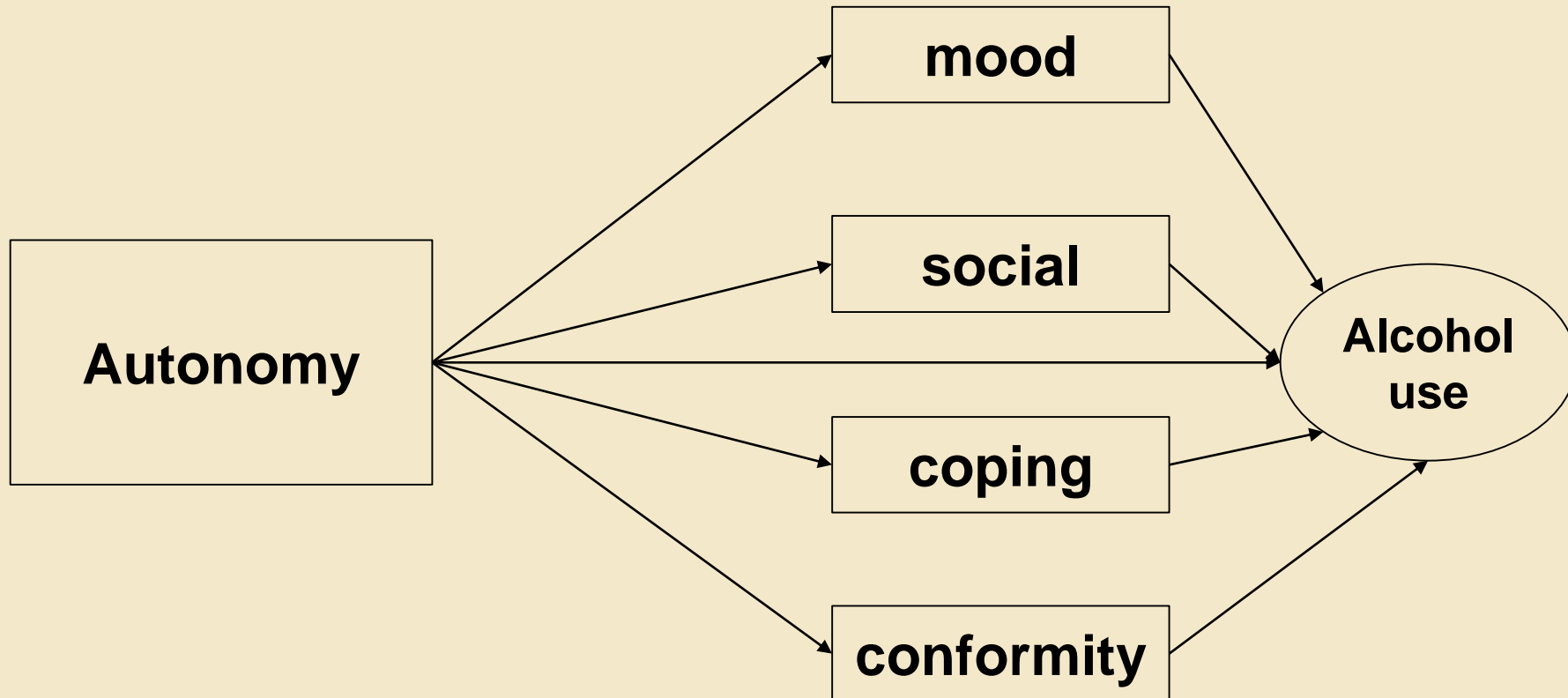
- Self-determination (autonomy) in relation to alcohol use on samples of university students and employees has been recently addressed within the SDT subtheories of Causality orientations (Hagger et al, 2012; Chawla et al, 2009; Wong et al, 2013) and intrinsic motivation (Shamloo & Cox, 2010).
- These studies have found that autonomous functioning was negatively related to alcohol use and other risk behaviors.
- Furthermore, some authors have also provided evidence for mediation (Wong et al, 2013).

Four motivations of alcohol use



(Cox & Klinger, 2002, simplified)

Four motivations of alcohol use



(Cox & Klinger, 2002, simplified)

Research aims

- Explore whether autonomy is related to different motivations to alcohol use.
- Explore whether autonomy is related to alcohol use.
- Explore motivations to alcohol use as possible mediators.

Operationalization for autonomy

Index of Autonomous Functioning

- Self-congruence/Authorship : „I strongly identify with the things that I do“ (Chrobach ´s $\alpha=0.80$)
- Interest taking: „I often reflect on why I react the way I do“ (Chrobach ´s $\alpha= 0.81$)
- Susceptibility to control „I do things in order to avoid feeling bad about myself“(Chrobach ´s $\alpha= 0.60$)

(Weinstein, Przybylski & Ryan, 2012)

Operationalization of autonomy

Parental support of autonomy

- Autonomous thinking „My parents push me to think independently“ (*Chrobach* 's $\alpha=0.70$)
- Autonomous decision making „My parents allow me to choose my own direction in life“ (*Chrobach* 's $\alpha=0.87$)
- Physical separation (controlling behavior) „Family members feel pressure to spend most of their free time together“ (*Chrobach* 's $\alpha=0.76$)

(Silk et al, 2003; Grolnick et al , 1997, Bloom, 1985)

Measures of alcohol use

- Alcohol use was assessed by the **AUDIT (The Alcohol Use Identification Test)** consisting of 10 items which is a standardized screening method for detection of problematic drinking ($\alpha=0.80$). (Barbor et al. 2001)
- Motivation of alcohol use was measured by the **DMQ-R (Drinking Motivation Questionnaire-Revised version)** (Kuntsche, Kuntsche 2009). This measure consists of 20 items and identifies four types of motivation of alcohol use: **enhancement, social motivation, conformity and coping** ($\alpha=0.70-0.90$).

Sample

- A cross-sectional correlational design was used.
- Available data from the Student Life Cohort study in Europe (collected in 2014)
- University students from three universities in Eastern Slovakia participated in the study (n = 719; mean age = 21.25, SD = 1.99; 59% women)
- Data collection: conducted via self-report questionnaires
- Analysis: Linear regressions (controlling for gender and age)

Overview of the measured variables

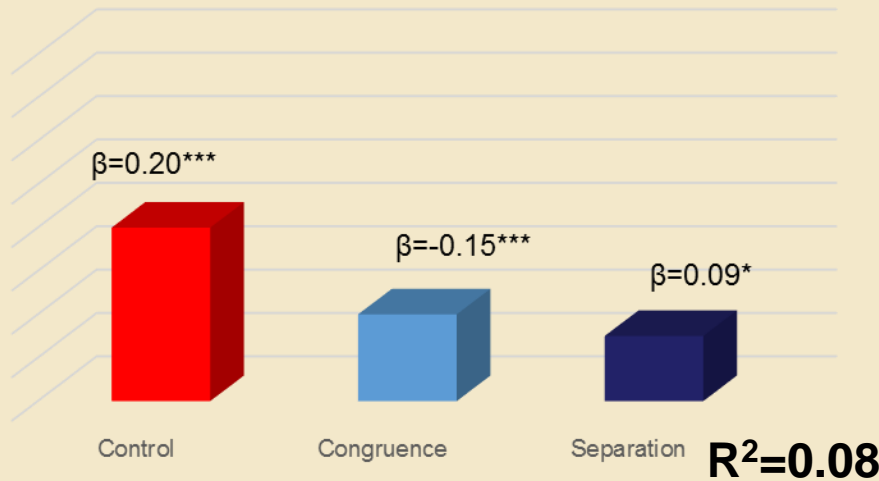
	Men		Women		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<i>Alcohol use</i>	8.74	6.17	6.33	5.22	0.001
<i>Social motivation</i>	14.02	5.49	13.24	5.50	NS
<i>Enhancement</i>	10.27	4.75	9.60	4.57	NS
<i>Coping</i>	9.61	4.39	10.02	4.85	NS
<i>Conformity</i>	8.51	4.04	7.87	3.86	0.05

Overview of the measured variables

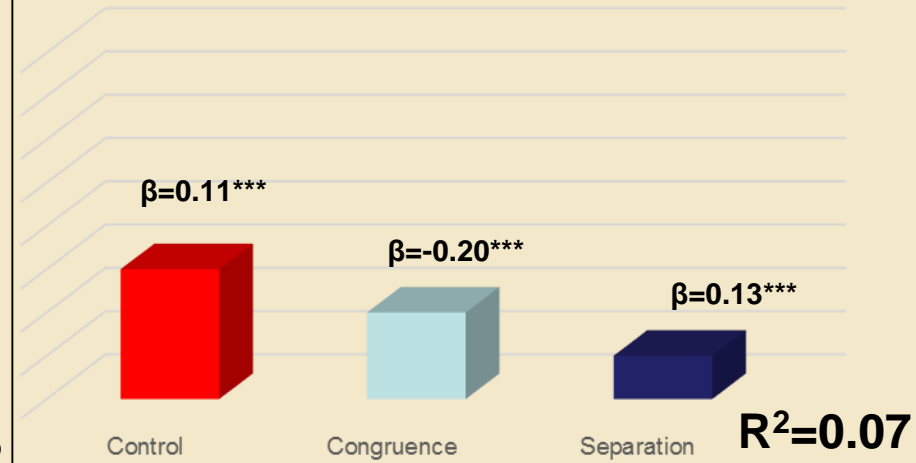
	Men		Women		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
<i>Self-congruence</i>	19.75	3.40	19.34	3.22	NS
<i>Interest-taking</i>	18.71	3.97	18.72	3.78	NS
<i>Susceptibility to control</i>	16.54	3.35	15.92	3.33	0.05
<i>Support of Autonomous thinking</i>	29.03	6.54	27.54	6.44	0.05
<i>Support of Autonomous decision making</i>	27.00	5.94	27.25	6.44	NS
<i>Physical Separation (controlling behavior)</i>	18.04	6.06	16.67	6.25	0.01

Autonomy and motivation of alcohol use

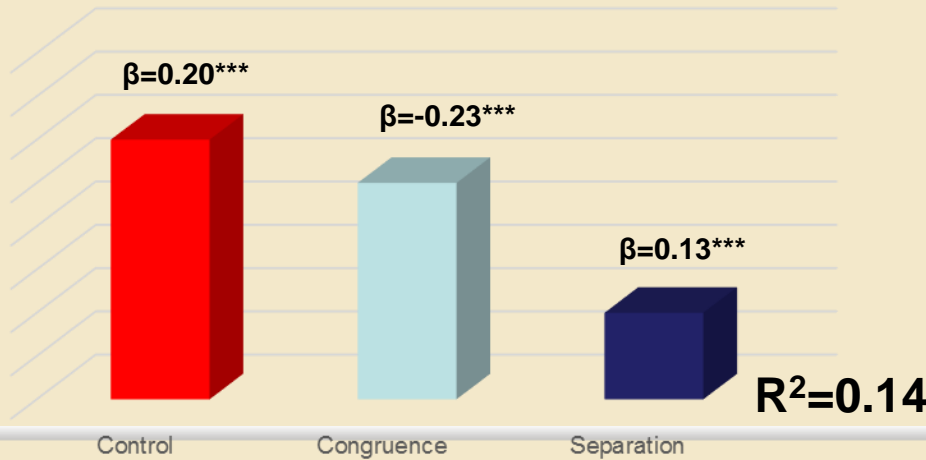
Social motivation



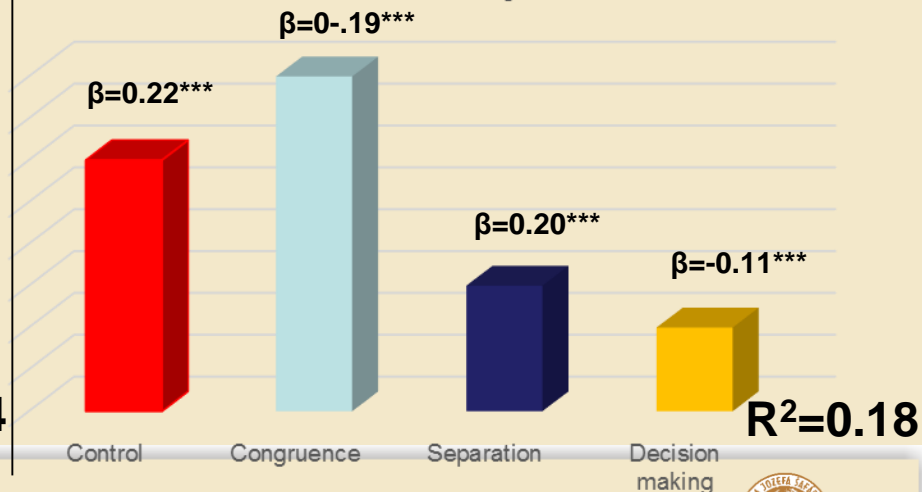
Mood enancement



Coping

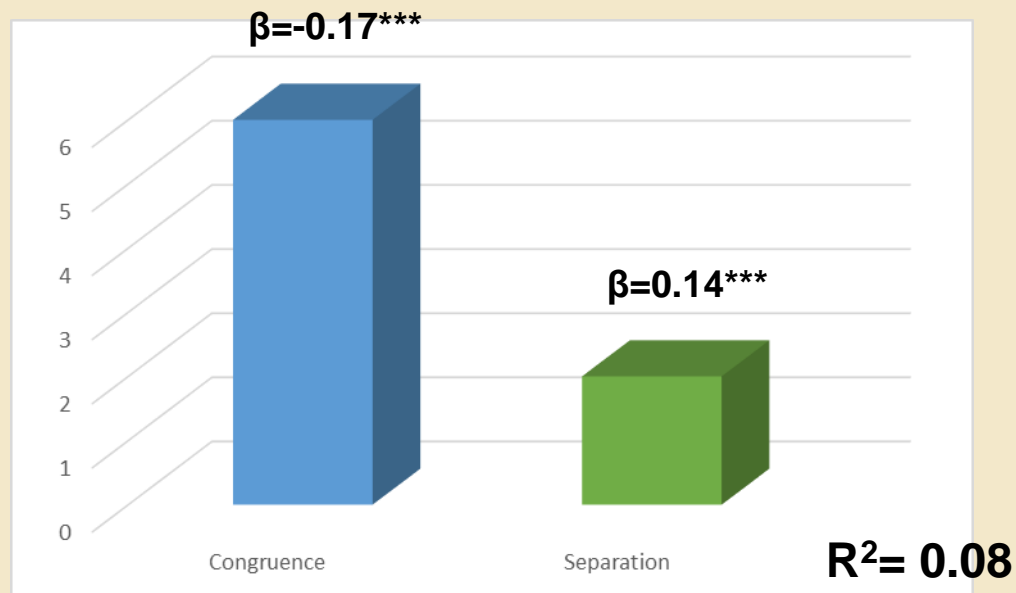


Conformity

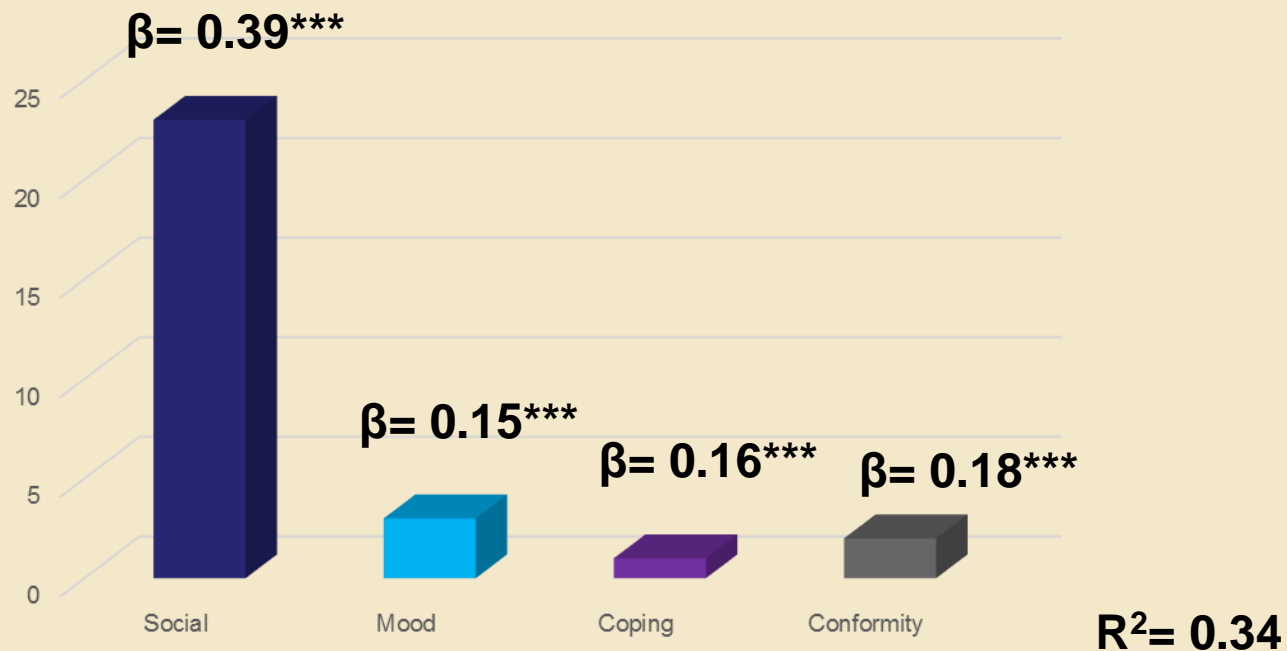


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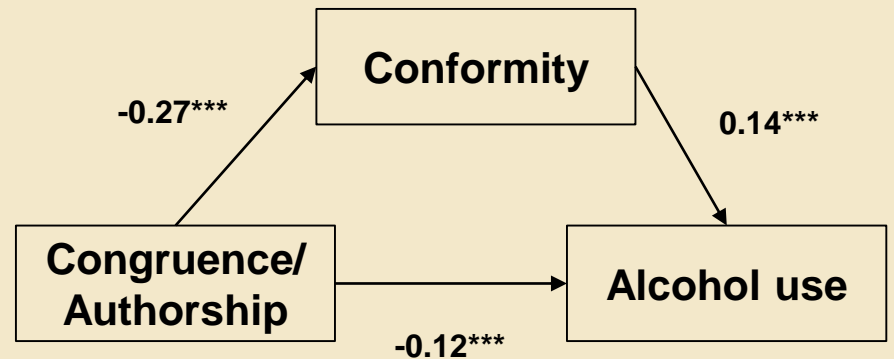
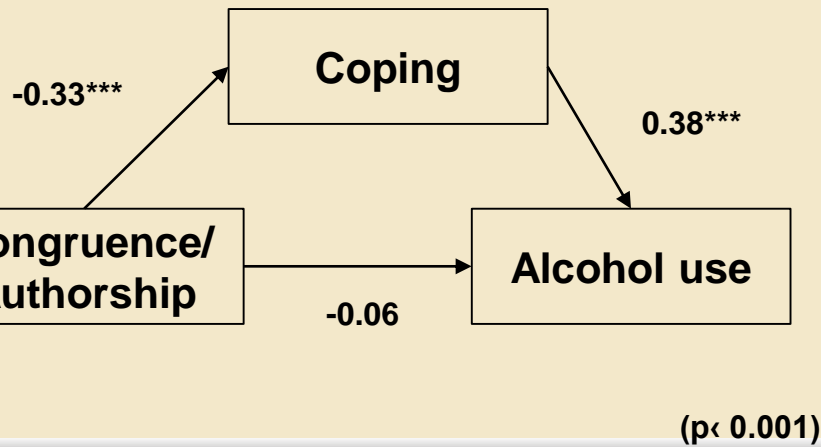
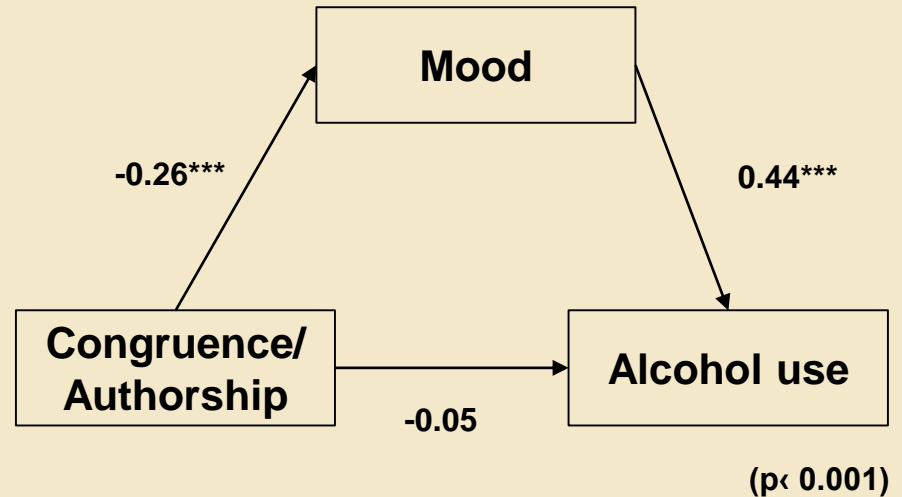
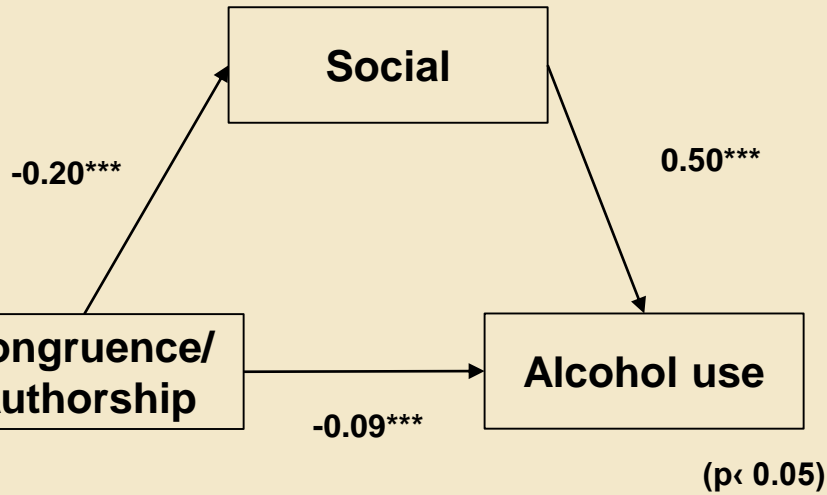
Autonomy in relation to alcohol use



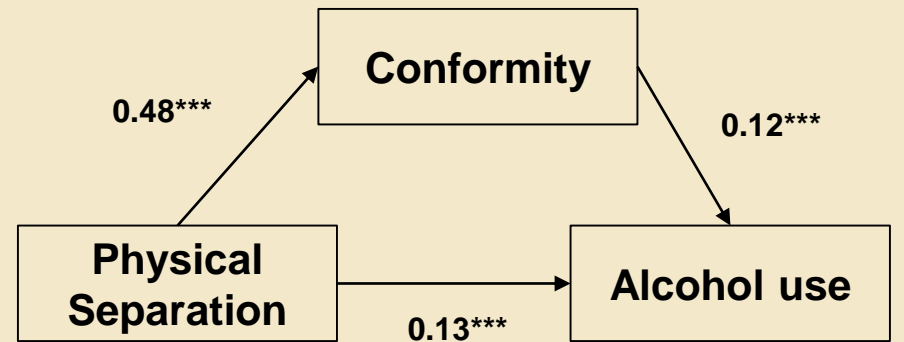
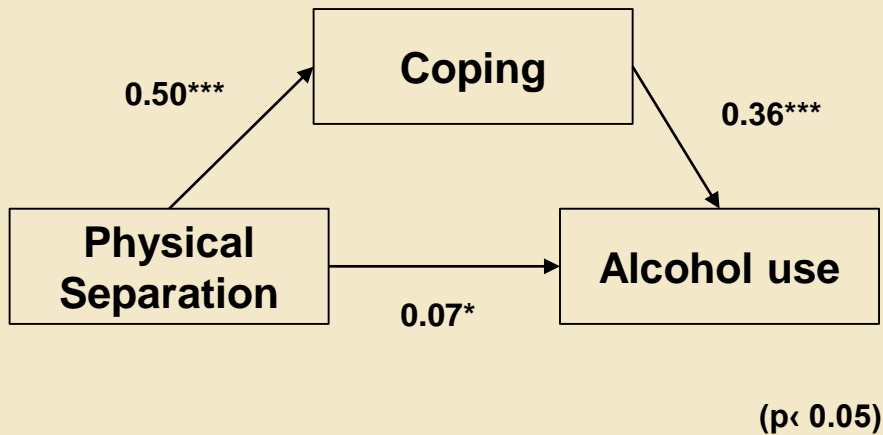
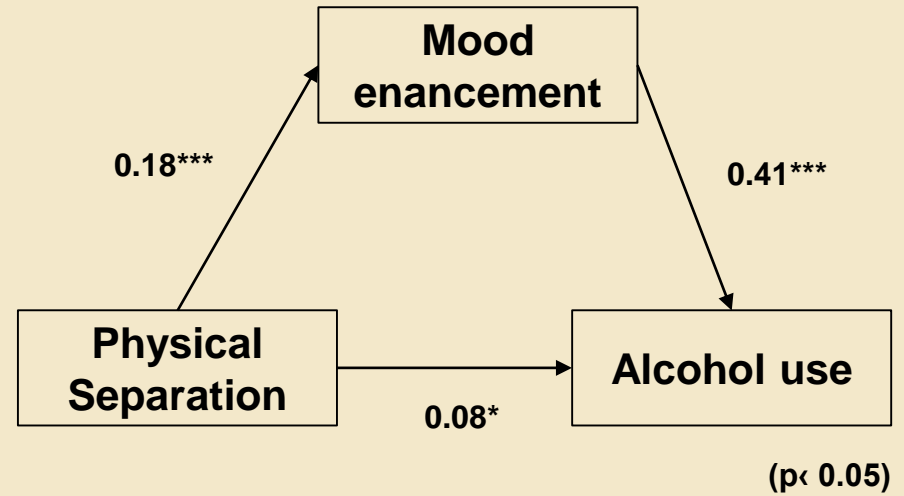
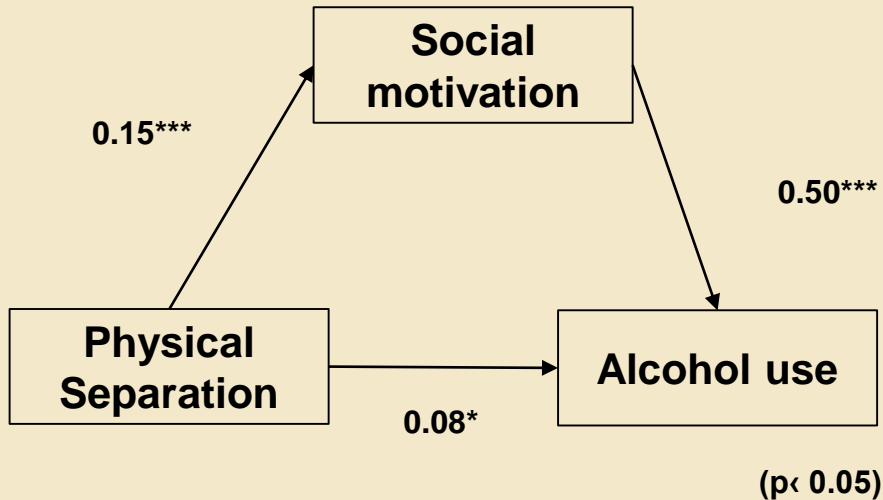
Motivation to alcohol use in relation to alcohol use



Mediation analysis



Mediation analysis



Summary of the findings

- Negative association was found between self-congruence and alcohol use among university students.
- Positive association was found between autonomy support (physical separation) and alcohol use of university students.
- These effects were found to be partially mediated by explored motivations of alcohol use.
- Social motives to alcohol use were found to be the strongest determinants of alcohol use

Summary

Limitations

- The measures of autonomy assessing individual differences may not be sensitive and specific enough to show an effect in specific behavioral regulation in drinking.
- Crosssectional design
- Alcohol use was self-reported
- Unavailable data regarding positive and negative affect

Literature

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Thank you for attention!



APVV-0253-11, APVV-15-0662

VEGA 1/0713/15

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Múdrost' minulosti - poznatky prítomnosti - vzdelanie budúcnosti.

