Self-Construal, Impulsiveness, and Beer Consumption

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We propose that there is a systematic impact of consumers’ activated self-construal (interdependent vs. independent, individualism vs. collectivism) on their impulsive consumption tendencies. We tested this hypothesis in two experiments that primed self-construal (studies 1 and 2) and two studies that used secondary data to link self-construal and beer consumption across countries (study 3) and within U.S. states (study 4). Results show that people with an independent self-construal exhibit a stronger tendency toward beer consumption than those with an interdependent self-construal, and this effect is moderated by peer presence in expected ways. Mediation analyses show that the effect of self-construal on beer consumption operates through state impulsiveness and not risk attitudes or affect.

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ABSTRACT
We propose and test the proposition that there is a systematic impact of cultural orientation (individualism vs. collectivism) and consumers’ self-construal (interdependent vs. independent) on impulsive consumption tendencies. We confirmed this hypothesis using a cross-country comparison of beer consumption data for countries varying on individualism versus collectivism (study 1), a cross-state comparison of problem alcohol consumption within the U.S. varying on individualism versus collectivism (study 2), and by priming self-construal (studies 3 and 4). Convergent results show that individualism is positively correlated with beer consumption across countries, with problem alcohol consumption within the U.S., and that consumers tend to have more positive attitudes toward immediate beer consumption when they receive an independent self-construal prime than when they do not. Conversely, consumers tend to have less positive attitudes toward immediate beer consumption when they receive an interdependent prime than when they do not. In addition, results indicated that peer presence moderates this effect (the self-construal effect is greater in peer presence than in the non-peer presence conditions) and that this effect holds for preference for vice products in general as well as beer consumption. Mediation analyses show that the effect of self-construal operates through state consumption impulsivity.

References