

Reciprocity of relationships in college freshmen's alcohol consumption: Analysis of an emerging social network

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Background

Although the relationship of college freshmen's social network to their alcohol consumption has been established, the role of friendship reciprocity in this process is still under investigation. Specifically, frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption might serve different purposes.

Method

Participants & Procedure

Fifty-seven psychology freshmen provided weekly indications of frequency and quantity of alcohol consumption during their first semester (16 weeks). In addition, they indicated their gender and in a short form the Big 5 personality traits.

Measures

Alcohol consumption for the last week was assessed via a quantity and frequency approach.

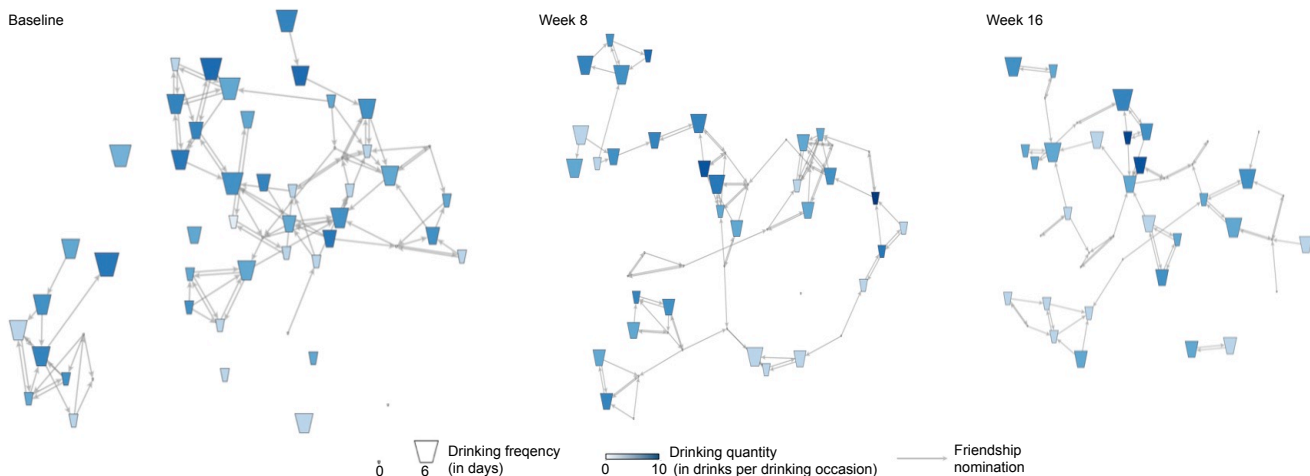
Friendship. All participants were given a list of names of all other participants and asked to nominate the three people they liked most that week. Furthermore, these individual's friends were coded as reciprocating, if they also nominated that individual, and as non-reciprocating, if they did not nominate that individual.

Friend's alcohol consumption. An average of drinking frequency and quantity was computed for reciprocating and non-reciprocating friends. All empty cells were recoded to the mean level of friends' behavior.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS 22 multilevel regression modeling with REML was used to predict both frequency and quantity of drinking. The models differentiated between changes within an individual (group-mean centered) as well as between-person effects (grand-mean centered). Random time and intercept effects and autocorrelation are not displayed.

Results



	Drinking frequency (in days)					Drinking quantity (in # of drinks per occasion)								
	Estimate (SE)	t	p	95% CI		PRV	Estimate (SE)	t	p	95% CI				
				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper	PRV			
Intercept	1.36	.11	12.638	<.001	1.14	1.58	1.85	.18	10.489	<.001	1.50	2.21		
Level 2 (between-person)														
Outdegree	-0.03	.61	-0.053	.958	-1.25	1.19	0.33	.99	0.340	.736	-1.65	2.32		
Indegree	-0.06	.10	-0.618	.539	-0.27	0.14	-0.06	.17	-0.375	.709	-0.41	0.28		
Reciprocating friends' behavior	0.11	.19	0.586	.560	-0.27	0.50	n.d.	-0.02	.18	-0.135	.893	-0.38	0.33	n.d.
Non-reciprocating friends' behavior	0.11	.16	0.693	.492	-0.21	0.43	n.d.	0.40	.21	1.876	.067	-0.03	0.83	0.027
Level 1 (within-person)														
Time (in weeks)	-0.05	.01	-5.850	.000	-0.07	-0.03	-0.03	.01	-2.924	.005	-0.05	-0.01		
Outdegree	-0.19	.09	-2.114	.040	-0.36	-0.01	-0.22	.15	-1.465	.150	-0.52	0.08		
Indegree	0.06	.03	2.013	.049	0.00	0.12	0.04	.05	0.838	.406	-0.06	0.15		
Reciprocating friends' behavior	0.15	.04	3.504	.001	0.07	0.23	0.017	0.11	.04	2.482	.016	0.02	0.19	0.004
Non-reciprocating friends' behavior	-0.01	.04	-0.366	.716	-0.10	0.07	n.d.	0.10	.04	2.558	.013	0.02	0.17	0.016

Analyses yielded following results:

- Participants adjusted their weekly drinking frequency to reciprocating friends only
- Participants adjusted their weekly drinking quantity to both reciprocating and non-reciprocating friends

Conclusion

Reciprocity of friendship is important for similarity to peers' drinking frequency, but not to their drinking quantity. Therefore, freshmen might spend time with peers who reciprocate friendship, but adapt the quantity of drinks consumed to become closer to people they find interesting.