

## The Interaction between Sensation Seeking and Negative Affect Lability on Alcohol Involvement

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Sensation seeking has been inconsistently associated with increased alcohol involvement, suggesting that there might be moderating factors. Considering that sensation seeking has been associated with negative affect and affect lability, negative affect lability might moderate the sensation seeking-alcohol involvement association. We hypothesized that negative affect lability would enhance the effect of sensation seeking on alcohol involvement. Using a large sample of college undergraduate students ( $n = 734$ ), the current study tested whether negative affect lability moderated the effect of sensation seeking on levels of (1) hazardous alcohol use and (2) alcohol related problems. The sample was 74.6% female and 72.7% Caucasian, and had a mean age of 22.22 ( $SD = 6.31$ ). Affect lability was measured as anxiety and depression lability, and as anger lability. The hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and interactions were probed using simple slope analyses. Negative affect lability moderated the effect of sensation seeking on hazardous alcohol use and alcohol related problems. Sensation seeking predicted greater levels of hazardous alcohol use among participants with low levels of ADL ( $b = 1.19, p < .001$ ), but this effect weakened at high levels of ADL ( $b = 0.11, p = .66$ ). Similarly, the effect of sensation seeking on alcohol related problems was strongest for participants with low levels of AL ( $b = 1.10, p < .001$ ), but weaker for participants with high levels of AL ( $b = -.17, p = .58$ ). These findings are inconsistent with our hypothesis, and suggest that concurrent negative affect lability actually diminishes the effect of sensation seeking on hazardous alcohol use and alcohol related problems. These findings highlight the importance of considering negative affect lability among sensation seekers with problematic alcohol use.

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