

Relationship-Specific Alcohol Expectancies and Gender Moderate the Effects of Relationship Drinking Contexts on Daily Relationship Functioning

ASH LEVITT, PH.D.,^{a,*} JAYE L. DERRICK, PH.D.,^a AND MARIA TESTA, PH.D.^a

^aResearch Institute on Addictions, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, New York

ABSTRACT. Objective: Research shows that drinking with one's partner in romantic relationships is associated with positive relationship functioning (e.g., increased intimacy), whereas drinking apart from one's partner is associated with negative relationship functioning (e.g., increased negative behaviors/events). Relationship-specific alcohol expectancies (RSAE) may moderate these associations and illuminate for whom these processes are more positive or negative. The current study tested RSAE as a moderator of the time-lagged daily associations between relationship drinking contexts and next-day relationship functioning in a sample of mostly adult, married, moderate-drinking couples. **Method:** Both members of 118 couples completed daily diary reports of drinking episodes and positive and negative relationship functioning for up to 56 days. Multilevel models predicted next-day relationship functioning from time-lagged relationship drinking contexts and between-person differences in RSAE and gender. **Results:** The results

replicate previous research showing decreased negative and increased positive relationship functioning following drinking with (vs. apart from) one's partner. RSAE interacted with gender to moderate the association between drinking-with-partner and next-day positive relationship functioning. Men high in social expectancies and women high in intimacy expectancies reported significantly greater next-day positive relationship functioning following drinking-with-partner. In addition, both men and women high in intimacy expectancies reported significantly greater next-day negative relationship functioning following drinking-apart-from-partner. No effects were found for other RSAE domains. **Conclusions:** These results support and extend prior research showing that women's relationship drinking is associated with intimacy enhancement, whereas among men it is associated with social effects. The current study has implications for future research and theory on relationship-motivated drinking processes. (*J. Stud. Alcohol Drugs*, 75, 269–278, 2014)

PARTNERS DRINKING ALCOHOL TOGETHER is a ubiquitous part of many romantic relationships. Research indicates that certain relationship drinking contexts, particularly drinking with one's partner (vs. drinking apart), appear to be adaptive mechanisms for relationship functioning in that they are associated with greater intimacy and relationship satisfaction and fewer relationship problems (Homish and Leonard, 2005; Levitt and Cooper, 2010). A growing literature shows that couple members hold relationship-specific alcohol expectancies (RSAE) that reflect beliefs about the likelihood of alcohol's effects on distinct relationship domains (e.g., increased intimacy) that are associated with relationship drinking behaviors (Derrick et al., 2010; Leonard and Mudar, 2004; Levitt and Leonard, 2013). This research supports motivational theories of alcohol use (e.g., Cooper et al., in press; Cox and Klinger, 1988) including a relationship motivation model (Leonard and Mudar, 2004), which posits that alcohol use in romantic relationships is motivated by relationship-specific factors and is associated

with relationship-specific consequences. Using these theoretical frameworks, the current study tests the hypothesis that individual differences in RSAE will moderate the associations between relationship drinking contexts and relationship functioning using daily diary reports over 56 days from a community sample of romantic couples.

Relationship drinking contexts and relationship functioning

Alcohol use can have both negative (e.g., increased relationship problems) and positive (e.g., increased intimacy) effects on relationship functioning (see Marshal, 2003; Roberts and Linney, 2000, for reviews). However, it is still unclear when and for whom effects will be negative versus positive. Drinking effects are more negative when couple members drink relatively heavier compared with lighter amounts (Fisher et al., 2005; Levitt and Cooper, 2010) and when partners drink dissimilar compared with similar amounts (Homish and Leonard, 2007; Levitt and Cooper, 2010; Mudar et al., 2001). Beyond effects of quantity consumed, the drinking context appears to be especially important for relationship functioning. Specifically, drinking with one's partner appears to be an adaptive mechanism for relationship functioning, whereas drinking apart appears to be maladaptive.

Levitt and Cooper (2010) recently showed in a daily diary study of mostly dating couples that drinking with one's partner (vs. apart) predicted decreases in next-day relationship problems and increases in next-day intimacy for both

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*Correspondence may be sent to Ash Levitt at the Research Institute on Addictions, University at Buffalo, SUNY, 1021 Main Street, Buffalo, NY, 14203, or via email at: alevitt@ria.buffalo.edu.

men and women. These findings mirrored those of a longitudinal study of married couples in which Homish and Leonard (2005) showed that relationship satisfaction at the time of marriage and at each of the first two anniversaries was positively associated with frequency of drinking with one's partner (compared with frequency of drinking apart) for both husbands and wives. In addition, some relationship-promotive effects of drinking with one's partner may be stronger for women than men. Levitt and Cooper (2010) found that women did not experience decreases in next-day intimacy as a function of increased alcohol consumption following days on which they drank with their partner. Similarly, Homish and Leonard (2005) found that wives who drank with their partner experienced fewer declines in marital satisfaction over the first 2 years of marriage compared with nondrinking wives. Taken together, this research suggests that individuals who drink with their partner experience better subsequent relationship functioning than those who drink apart from their partner. These associations may be explained in part by individual differences in beliefs about the likelihood of alcohol's effects on the relationship.

Relationship-specific alcohol expectancies

In theory, alcohol expectancies reflect beliefs about the likelihood of alcohol's effects (e.g., feeling good, becoming more social), which are associated with alcohol use in a wide range of contexts (see Goldman et al., 1987, 1999, 2006, for reviews). Other research suggests that domain-specific alcohol expectancies (e.g., sexual effects, Dermen and Cooper, 1994a, 1994b; tension-reduction effects, Read and Curtin, 2007) are more strongly associated with drinking in those domains than are general expectancies. Within the domain of romantic relationships, recent research suggests that there are distinct sets of RSAE. For example, Levitt and Leonard (2013) showed that RSAE both predicted and was predicted by relationship drinking contexts over the first 9 years of marriage. Specifically, intimacy/openness (i.e., enhanced intimacy effects when drinking with partner) and social pleasure/fun (i.e., enhanced sociability effects when drinking with partner) expectancies, respectively, were reciprocally associated with greater frequency of drinking with one's partner when both partners were drinking, which appeared to be adaptive for relationships. In contrast, power/assertiveness expectancies were reciprocally associated with drinking apart from one's partner, which appeared to be a maladaptive process. Sexual-enhancement expectancies were not associated with drinking contexts. Gender differences, consistent with previous research (e.g., Levitt and Cooper, 2010), indicated that the reciprocal associations between intimacy/openness expectancies and drinking-with-partner were stronger among wives than among husbands.

These results support previous research demonstrating gender differences in effects of RSAE, particularly for women. In a longitudinal study of married couples, Leonard and Mudar (2004) found that husbands' influence on wives' drinking over the first year of marriage was greater among wives who had stronger positive expectancies (i.e., a composite of intimacy/openness, social pleasure/fun, and sexual-enhancement expectancies). In addition, in a cross-sectional examination of married couples, Derrick et al. (2010) showed that wives in couples in which both members drank heavily reported stronger intimacy expectancies compared with heavy drinking husbands and couples of other drinking types. Finally, in a study of women only, Kelly et al. (2002) found that women who were problem drinkers and/or in a distressed relationship reported greater expectancies for increased intimacy and relationship efficacy effects compared with women who were not problem drinkers or in distressed relationships. In sum, these results suggest that both men and women drink with their partner in part because of RSAE, and that expectations of increased intimacy when drinking with one's partner in particular appear to be stronger among women.

Current study

Taken together, research on the associations between relationship drinking contexts and relationship functioning is consistent with research on RSAE. The current study extends previous research by hypothesizing that RSAE moderate the daily associations between relationship drinking contexts and relationship functioning. Specifically, based on previous research and theory, we hypothesized that drinking with (vs. apart from) one's partner on a given day would predict decreases in next-day negative relationship functioning and increases in next-day positive relationship functioning (i.e., replicate Levitt and Cooper's [2010] findings). In addition, we hypothesized that these adaptive effects would be stronger among individuals who held high positive RSAE (e.g., beliefs that drinking with partner leads to enhanced intimacy effects) and among women. In contrast, based on findings by Levitt and Leonard (2013), we hypothesized that maladaptive effects of drinking apart from one's partner on greater subsequent negative relationship functioning would be stronger among those high in power expectancies for both men and women. The current study tested these hypotheses in a daily diary study of romantic couples sampled from the community over 56 days. To our knowledge, the current study is the first to examine these moderated associations in a daily diary study of romantic couples.

Method

Before participating, all potential participants provided informed consent on all study procedures in accordance with institutional review board approval.

Participants

Married and cohabiting couples ($N = 120$) between ages 21 and 45 years were recruited using a combination of targeted household sampling in the Buffalo, NY, metropolitan area ($n = 77$), or newspaper ($n = 16$) or Facebook advertisements ($n = 27$) seeking couples who drink alcohol. Couples were recruited as part of a larger alcohol administration study, and both members were required to be moderate drinkers (i.e., consume four or more drinks on an occasion at least once per month and consume alcohol at least once per week on average) and have no history of alcohol dependence or treatment for psychopathology to be included in the diary portion of the study (see Testa and Derrick, 2013, for other eligibility and methodological details). Two couples were removed because of missing or extreme outlying data (see Testa and Derrick, 2013, for details), thus reducing the N for present analyses to 118 couples. Demographic characteristics of the current sample are provided in the top portion of Table 1. Participants were mostly adult, White, employed, and in married, long-term relationships, with about two thirds of the sample having children living in the home.

Procedures

Couples completed daily diary reports of drinking episodes and relationship functioning for 56 days. Each day, participants separately called an interactive voice response system and completed computer-guided interviews via the phone keypad. Each interview took about 5 minutes to complete. Participants were instructed to call the interactive voice response system each day at approximately the same time to provide a report for the previous day. Most (97%) calls occurred between 6 A.M. and 11 P.M. Participants were also instructed to make reports independently and not to discuss or share reported information with their partner. Each partner was compensated \$1 for each report, \$10 for each complete week, and a \$30 bonus for 8 complete weeks. A missed daily report could be made up via the interactive voice response system; however, two or more missed days were assessed by a research assistant via telephone. There was excellent compliance with 87.9% of reports being completed on time by men and 87.2% by women. Including make-up reports, participants completed almost all possible daily reports (men: 99.7%; women: 99.9%).

Measures

Descriptive statistics for key study variables are shown in the bottom portion of Table 1.

Daily perceived relationship functioning. For positive relationship functioning, each day participants answered two items created for the current study assessing how loving they

TABLE 1. Descriptive statistics on study variables

Variable	Men <i>M (SD)</i>	Women <i>M (SD)</i>
Descriptive variables		
Age, in years	33.92 (6.78)	32.72 (6.92)
Race, proportion White	0.92 (0.27)	0.97 (0.18)
Employment,		
proportion employed	0.92 (0.28)	0.77 (0.42)
Children living in home,		
proportion with	0.63 (0.49)	–
Relationship status,		
proportion married	0.75 (0.43)	–
Cohabiting/marriage		
duration, years	6.30 (5.10)	–
Key study variables		
Daily positive relationship		
functioning	4.00 (0.94)	4.16 (0.94)
Daily negative relationship		
functioning	1.30 (0.61)	1.28 (0.61)
Drink-with-partner,		
proportion yes	0.75 (0.43)	0.77 (0.42)
Average quantity	3.92 (3.03)	2.79 (2.43)
Intimacy/openness RSAE	3.63 (0.88)	3.82 (1.19)
Social pleasure/fun RSAE	4.51 (0.87)	4.67 (1.00)
Sexual enhancement RSAE	4.25 (0.97)	4.34 (1.24)
Power/assertiveness RSAE	3.36 (0.92)	3.50 (1.18)

Notes: Relationship functioning, drink-with-partner, and average quantity variables are time-varying and reflect average values collapsed across all days. All other variables are time-invariant. Dashes indicate that the measure reflects the couple's value and is therefore the same between men and women. RSAE = relationship-specific alcohol expectancies.

felt toward their partner and how well they got along with their partner that day, respectively (average α 's across all days = .75 for men, and .79 for women; average r across all days between partners = .41, $p < .01$). For negative relationship functioning, each day participants answered two items created for the current study assessing how angry or irritated they felt toward their partner and how much they and their partner argued or disagreed that day, respectively (average α 's across all days = .64 for men, and .66 for women; average r across all days between men and women = .35, $p < .01$). These items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *very much*.

Alcohol consumption. Each day, participants were asked whether they had consumed alcohol during a drinking episode the previous day. If so, participants reported the time the drinking episode started and the number of standard drinks (i.e., 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. glass of wine, 1.5 oz. shot of distilled spirits straight or mixed) they consumed during that episode. On some days, participants reported that two separate drinking episodes occurred. Secondary episode reports constituted only a small number (7%) of all drinking episodes reported during the study. Only reports of the first drinking episode on a given day were used in the current analyses. The quantity consumed was included as a control variable so that any effects found for drinking contexts on relationship functioning would reflect contextual effects and not effects of heavy consumption.

Drinking context. Participants also reported who was present with them during the drinking episode (i.e., partner, same- or opposite-gender friends, relatives, alone), and were allowed to choose all that applied. Preliminary analyses showed no differences between drinking-with-partner only and drinking-with-partner with others predicting either positive or negative relationship functioning. Thus, a single dichotomous variable was created reflecting drinking-with-partner (both with and without others; coded 1) versus drinking-apart-from-partner (both with others and alone; coded 0).

Relationship-specific alcohol expectancies. The 21-item Relationship-Specific Alcohol Expectancy Questionnaire (RSAEQ; Leonard and Mudar, 2004) was used to assess four domains of relationship-specific alcohol expectancies (three positive domains: intimacy/openness [6 items], social/fun [5 items], sexual enhancement [5 items]; and one negative domain: power/assertiveness [5 items]). Participants were instructed to respond about drinking “in your partner’s presence.” All items used the stem, “How likely is it that alcohol will affect you so that you . . .” Example items are: “. . . feel closer to your partner?” (intimacy/openness); “. . . become talkative and happy with your partner?” (social/fun); “. . . become a better lover with your partner?” (sexual enhancement); and “. . . express your wishes and desires even if they conflict with what your partner wants?” (power/assertiveness). Items were scored on a 6-point scale with 1 = *very unlikely* and 6 = *very likely*. Composites of these domains were reliable in the current sample (α 's = .76–.86 for husbands and .90–.94 for wives). Additional details on the development of the subscales in this measure are reported elsewhere (Levitt and Leonard, 2013).

Data analyses. Multilevel time-lagged analyses were conducted using the Mixed procedure in SPSS (Version 20.0; IBM Corp., Armonk, NY). Repeated measures (Level 1) were nested within persons (Level 2) and matched by couple using a person-period pairwise data set (Kashy and Donnellan, 2012; see also Laurenceau and Bolger, 2005). This method allows for missing data at Level 1.

An iterative procedure was used to test all models. First, to test whether the previous findings of relationship drinking contexts (Levitt and Cooper, 2010) replicated, models testing main effects of relationship drinking contexts on next-day positive and negative relationship functioning, respectively, were run controlling for prior reports of the outcome (i.e., same-day relationship functioning), same-day alcohol consumption, and gender. Second, to test whether RSAE and gender moderated these associations, three-way Drink-With-Partner \times RSAE \times Gender interactions (including all lower-order two-way interactions and main effects) were added. Main and interaction effects for all four expectancies domains were estimated simultaneously. Nonsignificant higher-order interaction term blocks were trimmed from models to increase model stability (Raudenbush and Bryk,

2002). Post hoc simple slopes tests were conducted to probe significant interaction effects by rerunning models with predictor variables of interest recentered at low (15th) and high (85th) percentile values, which roughly correspond to 1 *SD*. Variables were entered into models grand-mean centered except for gender (entered uncentered) and prior controls of the outcome (entered person-mean centered). All terms were entered as fixed effects except for random intercept and error terms. Finally, analyses were limited to drinking days only to ensure that reports of drinking apart from the partner (coded 0) reflected contextual effects only as opposed to days in which no alcohol was consumed. The final models for each outcome are shown in Table 2.

Special consideration was given to the inclusion of actor versus partner reports in models tested (i.e., Actor-Partner Interdependence Model; Kashy and Donnellan, 2012; Kenny et al., 2006). Although both actor and partner reports of drinking contexts were available and are significantly correlated ($r = .71, p < .01$), we used only actor reports of drinking contexts based on the following rationale. Prior research shows no effects for partners' reports of drinking contexts (Levitt and Cooper, 2010; Levitt and Leonard, 2013). In addition, partners do not always agree on reports of drinking with each other. Thus, only the actor's perception of whether he or she was drinking with their partner (vs. the partner's report) should influence his or her perceptions of relationship functioning considering that these perceptions, as currently measured, are inherently within-person psychological phenomena.

Similarly, only actor effects of RSAE were expected based on the wording used in the RSAEQ. That is, participants were asked about the likelihood “. . . alcohol will affect you so that you [effect] . . .” not the expectation of alcohol's effects on the partner (i.e., a cross-partner effect). Thus, as measured, these expectancies also reflect within-person psychological phenomena. However, partners' expectancies might also be intuitively or overtly communicated to actors while drinking together and consequently influence actors' perceptions of relationship functioning. Therefore, we conducted a series of preliminary analyses testing whether there were main or interaction effects of partners' reports of RSAE. Models were run simultaneously testing main effects of both actor and partner RSAE, Actor \times Partner RSAE, Actor Drinking Context \times Partner RSAE, and Partner RSAE \times Partner Gender interactions, controlling for both actor and partner alcohol consumption, predicting actor relationship outcomes. As expected, no main or interaction effects of partner RSAE, or any main effects of partner consumption, were found. Thus, consistent with recommended practice (Kenny et al. 2006), and in the interest of model parsimony and stability (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002), final models reported below tested for actor effects only.

Finally, following procedures recommended by Kashy and Donnellan (2012; see also Kenny et al., 2006), preliminary

analyses were conducted to determine whether data for men and women were empirically distinguishable by gender. The results indicated that men and women were distinguishable (i.e., differed in the means, variances, and covariances) in the models predicting both positive, $\chi^2(11) = 54.944, p < .001$, and negative, $\chi^2(11) = 40.230, p < .001$, relationship functioning.

Results

Daily alcohol reports

During the 56-day daily reporting period, men reported 23.0 drinking days ($SD = 13.4$) and consumed 4.06 drinks per drinking day ($SD = 3.25$) on average. Women reported 19.7 drinking days ($SD = 10.7$) and consumed 2.87 drinks per drinking day ($SD = 2.14$) on average. Within couples, 49.3% of days involved no drinking by either partner, 25.7% involved both partners drinking, 15.5% involved only the man drinking, and 9.5% involved only the woman drinking.

Do previously found effects of relationship drinking contexts on next-day relationship functioning replicate?

We first examined whether main effects of drinking-with-partner on next-day relationship functioning found previously by Levitt and Cooper (2010) in a sample of mostly emerging adult (i.e., ages 18–25; Arnett, 2004), dat-

ing couples replicated in the current sample of young adult, married and cohabiting couples. Our results replicated Levitt and Cooper’s findings showing that, among actors, drinking-with-partner on a given day predicted decreases in next-day negative relationship functioning ($b = -0.048, SE = 0.024, p = .049$) and increases in next-day positive relationship functioning ($b = 0.077, SE = 0.028, p = .006$), controlling for amount consumed, gender, and the prior day’s report of relationship functioning. These results also corroborate longitudinal effects found by Homish and Leonard (2005).

Do relationship-specific alcohol expectancies and gender moderate the associations between relationship drinking contexts and relationship functioning?

We next tested the hypotheses that RSAE and gender would moderate the associations between relationship drinking contexts and next-day relationship functioning (Table 2).

Negative relationship functioning. As shown in the left-hand columns of Table 2 (“Next-day negative relationship functioning”), no gender differences were found in the model predicting negative relationship functioning. However, intimacy expectancies significantly moderated drinking-with-partner to predict next-day negative relationship functioning. As shown in Figure 1, and as hypothesized, follow-up tests revealed that drinking-with-partner decreased next-day negative relationship functioning only among individuals with high intimacy expectancies ($b = -0.137, SE = 0.048, p$

TABLE 2. Tests of prior relationship drinking contexts and relationship-specific alcohol expectancies (RSAE) and gender moderation predicting next-day relationship functioning

Predictors	Next-day negative relationship functioning				Next-day positive relationship functioning			
	<i>b</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	(<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Intercept	1.319	(0.029)	.000	5.672	4.086	(0.067)	.000	9.249
L-prior outcome control	0.184	(0.017)	.000	0.372	0.193	(0.016)	.000	0.400
Gender	0.055	(0.034)	.110	0.303	-0.173	(0.071)	.015	0.320
L-actor quantity	-0.003	(0.004)	.444	0.028	0.009	(0.004)	.056	0.073
L-DWP	-0.052	(0.023)	.026	0.084	0.091	(0.039)	.020	0.112
Actor intimacy RSAE	0.108	(0.042)	.010	0.216	-0.219	(0.088)	.013	0.353
Actor social RSAE	-0.044	(0.047)	.352	0.071	0.315	(0.099)	.002	0.407
Actor sex RSAE	0.032	(0.034)	.352	0.082	-0.056	(0.070)	.420	0.113
Actor power RSAE	-0.017	(0.037)	.655	0.034	-0.070	(0.081)	.390	0.116
L-DWP × Intimacy RSAE	-0.078	(0.038)	.044	0.071	0.098	(0.059)	.098	0.081
L-DWP × Social RSAE	-0.015	(0.044)	.728	0.012	-0.103	(0.073)	.158	0.068
L-DWP × Sex RSAE	-0.027	(0.031)	.383	0.031	0.010	(0.048)	.840	0.010
L-DWP × Power RSAE	0.062	(0.034)	.068	0.063	0.011	(0.056)	.845	0.010
L-DWP × Gender	–	–	–	–	-0.007	(0.053)	.901	0.005
Intimacy RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	0.239	(0.140)	.090	0.194
Social RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	-0.285	(0.156)	.070	0.209
Sex RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	0.025	(0.115)	.825	0.028
Power RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	0.086	(0.116)	.461	0.084
L-DWP × Intimacy RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	-0.213	(0.099)	.031	0.074
L-DWP × Social RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	0.264	(0.107)	.014	0.083
L-DWP × Sex RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	-0.060	(0.077)	.438	0.026
L-DWP × Power RSAE × Gender	–	–	–	–	-0.061	(0.082)	.454	0.025

Notes: Coefficients are unstandardized. L = lagged prior-day report. Gender coded male = 1; female = 0. DWP = drink-with-partner (coded drunk-with-partner = 1; drunk-apart-from-partner = 0). Dashes indicate the term was dropped from the model because of nonsignificance.

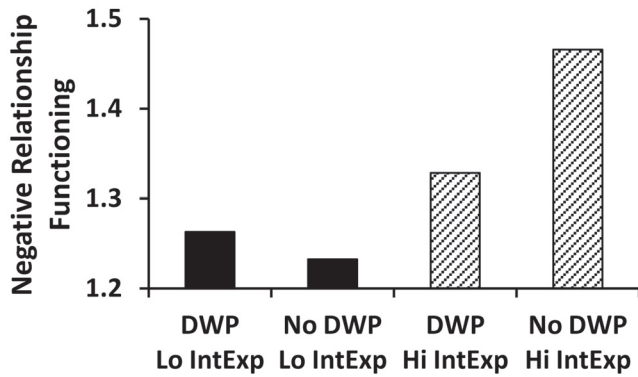


FIGURE 1. Current-day drinking-with-partner (DWP) versus Drinking-Apart-From-Partner (NoDWP) × Relationship-Specific Intimacy/Openness Expectancies (IntExp) interaction predicting next-day negative relationship functioning. Post hoc simple slopes tests for low (Lo) and high (Hi) values of expectancies reflect variables recentered at the 15th and 85th percentiles of their distribution, respectively.

= .005) and not among those low in intimacy expectancies ($b = 0.031, SE = 0.047, p = .512$). However, contrary to expectation, the lowest levels of next-day negative relationship functioning were not found for individuals high in intimacy expectancies who drank with their partner the previous day. Also contrary to expectation, power/assertiveness expectancies did not moderate the effects of drinking apart from one's partner to predict next-day negative relationship functioning. No significant effects were found for social pleasure/fun or sexual-enhancement expectancies domains either.

Positive relationship functioning. As shown in the right-hand columns of Table 2 ("Next-day positive relationship functioning"), both RSAE and gender moderated the effect of drinking-with-partner on next-day positive relationship functioning. Specifically, a significant Drinking-With-Partner × Intimacy/Openness Expectancies × Gender interaction was found (Figure 2). As shown in the left panel of Figure

2, follow-up tests revealed that men with low intimacy expectancies experienced greater next-day positive relationship functioning following drinking-with-partner ($b = 0.206, SE = 0.091, p = .024$), but contrary to expectation, men high in intimacy expectancies did not ($b = -0.042, SE = 0.095, p = .657$). As shown in the right panel of Figure 2, a significantly different pattern of effects was found for women. Despite an unexpected average negative effect of intimacy expectancies, women with high intimacy expectancies, as hypothesized, reported significantly greater positive relationship functioning following days in which they drank with their partner ($b = 0.200, SE = 0.076, p = .009$), whereas women low in intimacy expectancies did not ($b = -0.013, SE = 0.074, p = .862$).

In addition, a Drinking-With-Partner × Social Pleasure/Fun Expectancies × Gender interaction was found (Figure 3). As shown in the left panel of Figure 3, and consistent with expectation, follow-up tests revealed that men high in social expectancies reported significantly greater next-day positive relationship functioning following drinking-with-partner ($b = 0.248, SE = 0.093, p = .008$), whereas men low in social expectancies did not ($b = -0.043, SE = 0.066, p = .516$). Again, a significantly different pattern of effects was found for women (see right panel of Figure 3). Unexpectedly, no effect of drinking-with-partner was found among women high in social expectancies ($b = -0.013, SE = 0.081, p = .875$), whereas drinking-with-partner predicted greater next-day positive relationship functioning for women low in social expectancies ($b = 0.172, SE = 0.072, p = .017$). No effects were found related to sexual enhancement or power/assertiveness expectancies.

Taken together, effects of drinking-with-partner on positive relationship functioning were in line with our expectation for at least one couple member on average in each interaction. The direction of RSAE moderation, however, was not always as expected. One potential explanation for these

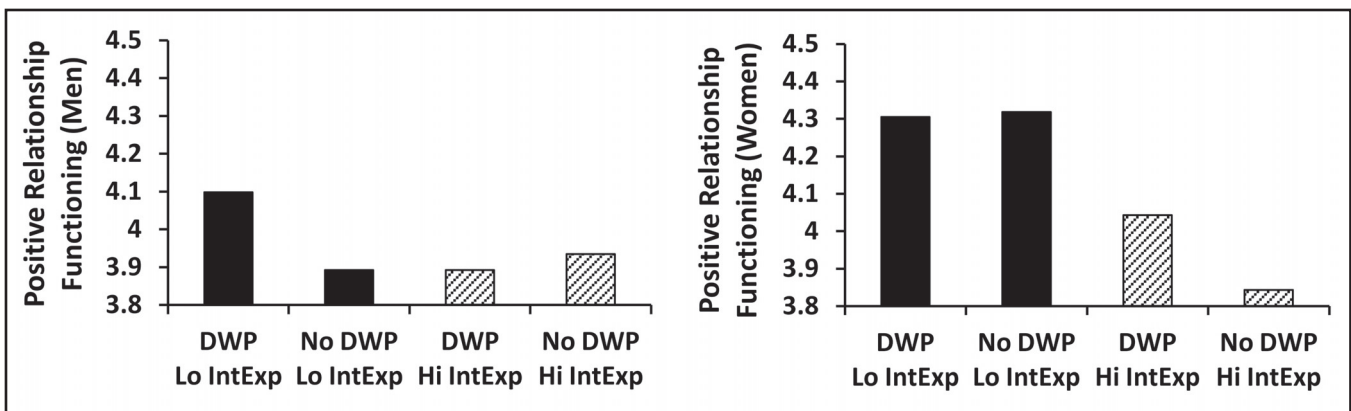


FIGURE 2. Current-day drinking-with-partner (DWP) versus Drinking-Apart-From-Partner (NoDWP) × Relationship-Specific Intimacy/Openness Expectancies (IntExp) × Gender interaction predicting next-day positive relationship functioning. Left panel shows effects for men; right panel shows effects for women. Post hoc simple slopes tests for low (Lo) and high (Hi) values of expectancies reflect variables recentered at the 15th and 85th percentiles of their distribution, respectively.

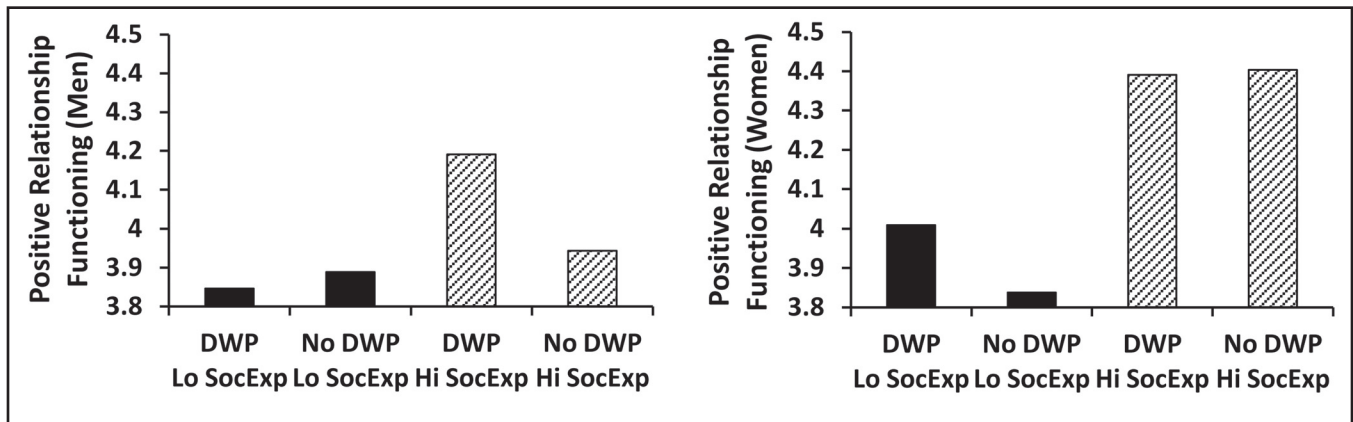


FIGURE 3. Current-day drinking-with-partner (DWP) versus Drinking-Apart-From-Partner (NoDWP) \times Relationship-Specific Social Pleasure/Fun Expectancies (SocExp) \times Gender interaction predicting next-day positive relationship functioning. Left panel shows effects for men; right panel shows effects for women. Post hoc simple slopes tests for low (Lo) and high (Hi) values of expectancies reflect variables recentered at the 15th and 85th percentiles of their distribution, respectively.

effects may be that individual differences in RSAE between men and women come to exist in relationships as a function of average between-person levels of relationship satisfaction (compared with daily within-person variation). For example, it may be that women high in intimacy expectancies (Figure 2, right panel) hold those expectancies because of generally less satisfying relationships (e.g., Kelly et al., 2002), which is reflected at the daily level as lower average positive relationship functioning. To test this notion, supplementary models were run predicting average between-person differences in intimacy and social expectancies, respectively, from average between-person differences in overall relationship satisfaction (measured by the 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale; Spanier, 1976) and gender. Results revealed a significant Actor Relationship Satisfaction \times Gender interaction predicting intimacy (but not social) expectancies. Women in less satisfied relationships, on average, reported significantly higher intimacy expectancies compared with those in more satisfied relationships ($b = -0.018$, $SE = 0.006$, $p = .005$), whereas this effect was not found for men ($b = -0.001$, $SE = 0.006$, $p = .913$). These results are consistent with the results of Kelly et al. (2002) showing that women in distressed relationships report greater intimacy expectancies, and they provide some additional explanation for the effects shown for women in Figure 2. Finally, models for positive relationship functioning (Table 2) were re-estimated controlling for average between-person levels of relationship satisfaction in addition to within-person levels of prior-day relationship functioning. Results did not show any differences in effects compared with those reported in Table 2.

Discussion

The results of the current study support and extend previous research. As with previous research on RSAE (Levitt

and Leonard, 2013), we found the strongest and most consistent pattern of effects for intimacy/openness and social pleasure/fun expectancies compared with sexual-enhancement and power expectancies. Specifically, intimacy RSAE moderated the effects of drinking-with-partner on next-day negative relationship functioning. In addition, intimacy and social expectancies, respectively, interacted with gender to predict next-day positive relationship functioning. Although the moderation effects found were mixed with regard to expectation, supplementary analyses offer plausible explanation. Furthermore, the results as a whole are consistent with previous research, particularly concerning gender differences. It is also important to note that the current analyses controlled for the number of drinks consumed during drinking episodes and both average within-person levels of prior-day relationship satisfaction and average between-person levels of relationship satisfaction. Thus, the current results reflect contextual effects of drinking-with-partner as a function of individual differences in RSAE and gender and are not attributable to quantity or prior relationship functioning.

No gender differences were found in the model predicting negative relationship functioning. However, our results suggest that individuals who expect intimacy-enhancing effects of drinking with their partner report lower levels of negative relationship functioning the day after drinking with (vs. apart from) their partner (Figure 1). Alternatively, it may also be that those who expect intimacy-enhancing effects of drinking with their partner experience worse next-day relationship functioning following drinking in contexts that cannot provide these expected effects (i.e., apart from one's partner). This finding extends previous research by demonstrating one factor (i.e., intimacy expectancies) that may partially explain why drinking apart has adverse effects on subsequent relationship functioning. Future research should

examine how drinking apart may be differently perceived by couple members compared with drinking together.

In contrast, a more complex pattern of effects was found predicting positive relationship functioning. Although the expected positive effect of drinking-with-partner was found for at least one couple member within each interaction, the direction of RSAE moderation was not always as expected (e.g., Figure 2, right panel). Results from supplemental analyses suggested that women differentially come to believe that alcohol will have intimacy-enhancing effects on their relationship when in less satisfying relationships. Assuming that women drink in relationships to achieve these expected effects, these results suggest that women drink for relationship-enhancement processes (i.e., to improve poor relationship functioning), particularly as they apply to expected intimacy effects (Figure 2, right panel) rather than social. This interpretation is consistent with previous research demonstrating that women's relationship drinking is more closely associated with intimacy processes than men's (e.g., Levitt and Cooper, 2010; Levitt and Leonard, 2013; see also Roberts and Linney, 2000; Wilsnack et al., 1997, for reviews). In contrast, it appears that men may drink for social enhancement processes (Figure 3, left panel) rather than intimacy. Although women's positive relationship functioning also appeared to benefit if they held high social expectancies, their reports did not depend on the drinking context as did men's (Figure 3, right panel). Future research is needed to formally test these interpretations and to examine other possibilities such as whether quantity consumed during drinking occasions acts as a moderator. Moreover, given previous research on concordant versus discrepant relationship drinking (Homish and Leonard, 2007; Levitt and Cooper, 2010), future research should also examine differences in RSAE as they correspond to concordant/discrepant drinking patterns. Couple members may hold different sets of expectancies as both a function and predictor of their average drinking patterns.

Although effects for intimacy and social expectancies were as generally expected, we did not find any effects for sexual-enhancement or power/assertiveness expectancies. The lack of effects for sexual-enhancement expectancies is consistent with previous research showing that sexual-enhancement expectancies do not predict relationship drinking contexts longitudinally (Levitt and Leonard, 2013) and that having sex or the quality of sex does not account for positive effects of drinking-with-partner (Levitt and Cooper, 2010). One interpretation may be that drinking-with-partner situations (e.g., bars, parties) are public in nature. Experiencing intimacy and social effects in such situations is socially acceptable, whereas realizing expected sexual effects in such situations would generally be unacceptable and reserved for private situations. The lack of effects for power/assertiveness expectancies, particularly as they pertain to drinking-apart-from-partner (Levitt and Leonard, 2013) and maladaptive

relationship functioning (see Roberts, 2006; Simpson and Tran, 2006, for reviews) was unexpected. The moderating effect of power expectancies was approaching significance predicting negative relationship functioning (Table 2), however, suggesting that the current data might have been underpowered to test for between-person differences in power expectancies.

The current study has implications for a relationship-motivation model of alcohol use. Theoretically, the effects of alcohol expectancies on drinking behavior are mediated through drinking motives (Cooper et al., in press; Cox and Klinger, 1988). The current study adds to a growing literature (e.g., Leonard and Mudar, 2004; Levitt and Cooper, 2010; Levitt and Leonard, 2013) suggesting that individuals in romantic relationships hold beliefs about relationship-specific effects of drinking with their partner. In theory, individuals should in turn be motivated to drink to achieve these effects. Future research is needed to directly assess relationship-specific drinking motives as corresponding mediators between RSAE and relationship drinking behaviors to inform our understanding of relationship-motivated alcohol use.

Despite its strengths, the current study is not without limitations. Although the RSAEQ measure includes a number of important expectancy domains, it does not assess individuals' expectancies of alcohol's effects on their partner (i.e., cross-partner effects), when drinking apart, or other potential relationship-expectancy domains (e.g., tension-reduction effects). Moreover, it does not assess how much couple members value expected relationship effects (cf., Fromme et al., 1993). The expectancies currently assessed are generally positive, rather than negative. Even power/assertiveness expectancies, which are theoretically maladaptive, may be viewed as positive by the individuals who hold them. A revised version of the RSAEQ in future research should take these factors into account to more completely assess relationship-specific alcohol expectancies. Future research should also use a more detailed measure of the drinking context, which can be further validated by using naturalistic observation methodologies. Despite sufficient variation in both the age of couples and how much alcohol they consumed on daily drinking occasions on average, the current study is also limited in its generalizability to couples beyond the current sample. Although the current results are consistent with other studies of younger, mostly dating couples (e.g., Levitt and Cooper, 2010), future research should test whether the current findings are generalizable to other populations of couples, including both younger and older couples, as well as couples that may drink at clinically problematic levels. Finally, some of the current study's effects (Table 2) would be considered small effects (Cohen, 1988), which could be viewed as a limitation. However, small effects can additively become large effects over time (Abelson, 1985). Particularly when interpreted in their relative context

(Cohen, 1988, 1994), the current daily effects may become large and quite meaningful over the course of a relationship. Future research should examine whether daily effects correspond to aggregate trends over time in relationships by using a combined daily diary and longitudinal methodology.

In conclusion, the current study was the first to demonstrate that RSAE moderate the effects of relationship drinking contexts on subsequent daily relationship functioning. In addition, the current study provided further evidence that relationship drinking processes involving intimacy may be more important for women compared with men and suggests that men and women may be motivated to drink in different relationship processes. Thus, the current study builds on previous research and theory in support of a relationship-motivation model of alcohol use.

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