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Examining Differences Between Asian Americans and Whites for Gambling and Drinking

Kanisha Wilson

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Wilso767@unlv.nevada.edu

Gloria Wong-Padoongpatt

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, gloria.wong@unlv.edu

Wilson To

Taylor Lott

Naweed Yusufzai

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Kanisha Wilson, Gloria Wong-Padoongpatt, Wilson To, Taylor Lott, Naweed Yusufzai, Trevor Neeley, Todeh Toomians, Chase Shropshire, and Nolan Zane

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Kanisha Wilson, Gloria Wong-Padoongpatt, Wilson To, Taylor Lott, Naweed Yusufzai, Trevor Neeley, Todeh Toomians, Chase Shropshire, Nolan Zane
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Abstract

Limited research have examined the ethnic differences in gambling and drinking among emerging adults, therefore; little is known about what is placing Asian American at-risk for involvement with these behaviors. The purpose of this study was to examine ethnic differences in risk factors between Asian Americans and White Americans for gambling and drinking at the two levels of involvement: abstinence and problems. The main objective 1) if there are ethnic differences among emerging adults in gambling and drinking involvement, 2) why these differences exist, and 3) which impulsivity and psychological distress variables are specific to each of these ethnic groups. The sample consisted of college students. A total of 823 participants, 414 (50.3%) females and 409 (49.7%) males, with an age range of 18-36 from the psychology subject pool of a large West Coast university were selected for this study. The sample was composed of 464 (56.4%) Asian Americans and 359 (43.6%) White Americans. White Americans were found to abstain less and develop more problems associated with drinking. No ethnic differences were found for gambling abstinence. Asian Americans were developing more problems gambling compared to White Americans. Ethnic differences were also found through risk-factors at each level of involvement with Asian Americans being highly correlated to psychological distress risk-factors and White Americans impulsivity factors. Of these risk factors, depression and belief in good luck (BiGL) mediated for problem gambling and social anxiety mediated for drinking abstinence. Overall, results indicated an increase need for more culturally sensitive and comprehensive based treatment and prevention programs.

Introduction

- Addictive behaviors are a growing mental health concern in the United States.
- Research findings have indicated significant ethnic differences exist in addictive behaviors. Investigation of the etiology of addictive behaviors between ethnic groups provides relevant clinical data for improving the effectiveness of treatment programs.
- Research findings have indicated a significant disparity in the likelihood of developing different addictive behaviors when comparing Asian and White Americans (Lesieur, 1989).
- Statistically, Asian Americans have been largely targeted by gambling marketing schemes and are comparably less likely to seek services after developing gambling problems.
- The presence of mental health problems is associated with problem drinking.
- White Americans have demonstrated higher rates of problem drinking than those of other ethnic groups (Lo et al., 2014).
- Ethnic differences exist between Asian and White Americans in levels of stress, stress management, and use of social and mental health resources.
- Pathological gambling has been found to have common risk factors with alcohol dependence (Luczak, 2016). High rates of comorbidity have been found between pathological gambling and alcohol use disorder (AUD) in nationally represented samples.
- Limited research has examined ethnic differences in gambling and drinking in emerging adults.
- Two levels of involvement are critical when examining addictive behaviors:
 - Abstinence (e.g. have gambled vs. have not gambled)
 - Problems with the behavior (whether or not the individual has problems)
- Knowledge of what is placing Asian Americans at-risk for problems when involved in gambling is sparse due to the limited research available on the state of Asian American addictions and mental health.
- Acculturation has been linked to alcohol and gambling behavior, indicating the importance cultural variables have on the development of these addictive behaviors.
- The objective of this study was to test the following:
 - If there are ethnic differences for abstinence and development of problems with gambling and drinking.
 - Which risk factors account for differences in abstinence and problems involving gambling and drinking.
 - Which risk factors are specific to the ethnic groups at the two levels of involvement.

Methods

A total of 823 participants, 414 (50.3%) females and 409 (49.7%) males, with an age range of 18-36 ($M = 19.62$, $SD = 1.96$) from the psychology subject pool of a large West Coast university were selected for this study. The sample was composed of 464 (56.4%) Asian Americans and 359 (43.6%) White Americans.

Procedure
Participants were recruited from a large West Coast university from the psychology subject pool website. These respondents are provided with research participation credit upon informed consent. Respondents were brought into a lab setting to complete an online survey that was conducted in English and took around 90 minutes to complete.

Measures
Gambling Abstinence. Represented by life time variable based on whether the individual has ever gambled. (0=have not gambled vs. 1=have gambled).
Drinking Abstinence. Represented by life time variable based on whether the individual has ever drank. (0=have not drank vs. 1=have drank).
Problem Gambling. The South Oaks Gambling Screen –Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA; Lesieur & Blume, 1987) consisted of 20-items (yes or no scale). This variable was dichotomized and assessed only those that had engaged in gambling. Individuals who scored 0-2 were categorized as no problems and those that scored 3-12 were categorized as having problems with gambling (0= no problems vs. 1= with problems). Problem Drinking. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT; Babor, 2002) consisted of 10-items (0-4 scale). Individuals who scored 07 were categorized as no or minimal problems and individuals who scored 8 or more indicated hazardous or harmful alcohol use.

Demographics
Acculturation. The GEQ-American (Tsai et al., 2000) used to assess orientation to American culture.

Risk Factors
Aspects of Impulsivity. Measured by UPPS Impulsivity Scale (Whiteside & Lynam, 2001)

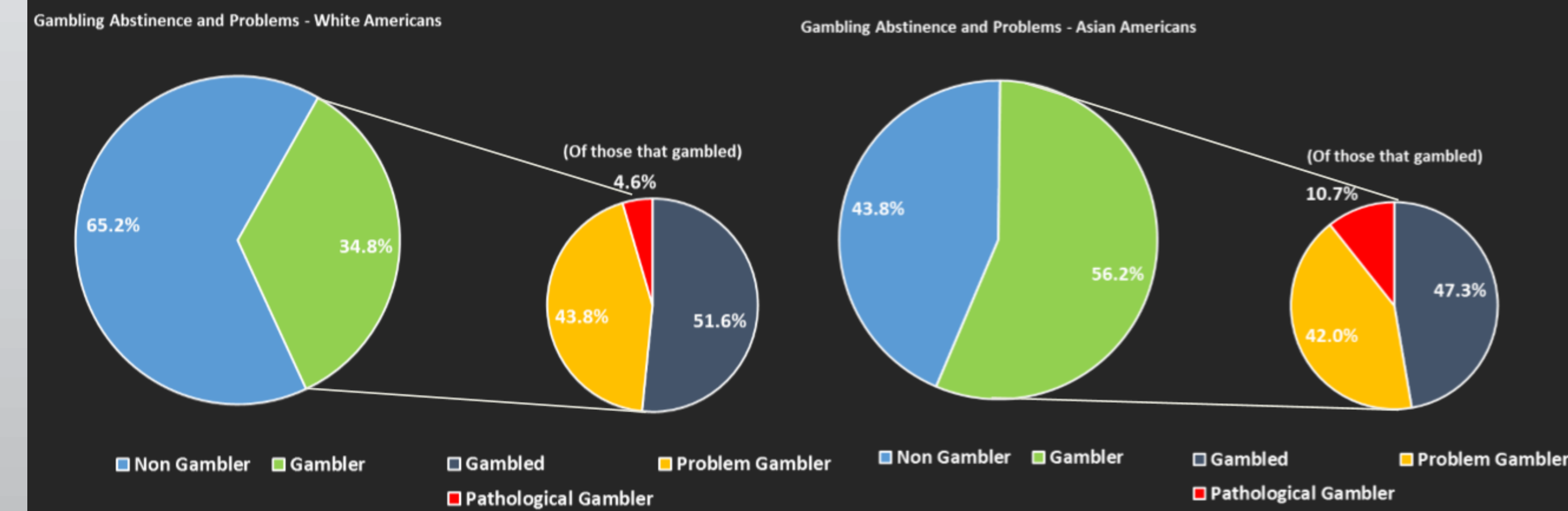
- Impulsive Coping refers to an impulsive coping style focused on engagement in impulsive behaviors in the face of negative affect.
- Premeditation refers to the ability to reflect on the consequences of an action before engaging in the act
- Perseverance refers to the ability to stay focused on a task that may be perceived as mundane or boring
- Sensation Seeking refers to both the tendency to enjoy activities that are exciting and the openness to trying new experiences that may be dangerous defined as impulsive coping.

Methods

- Personality Risk Factors Risk-Taking. Jackson Personality Inventory Risk-Taking Subscale (1976) was used to assess risk-taking behavior.
- Belief in Good Luck scale (Darke & Freedman, 1997). The 12-items scale yes or no was used to assessed the degree of participants' belief in good luck and how their attributions of everyday situations to outcomes of luck relate to gambling behavior.
- Psychological Distress Risk Factors Depression. Measured by Mood and Anxiety Questionnaire (MASQ) (Clark & Watson, 1991).
- Anxiety. Measured by Mood and Anxiety Symptom Questionnaire (MASQ) (Clark & Watson, 1991).
- Social Anxiety. Measured as a combination of Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) and Social Phobia Scale (SPS) (Brown, 1997; Mattick & Clarke, 1998). The SIAS was used to measure fears of general social interaction, whereas the SPS was used to assess fears of being scrutinized during daily activities.

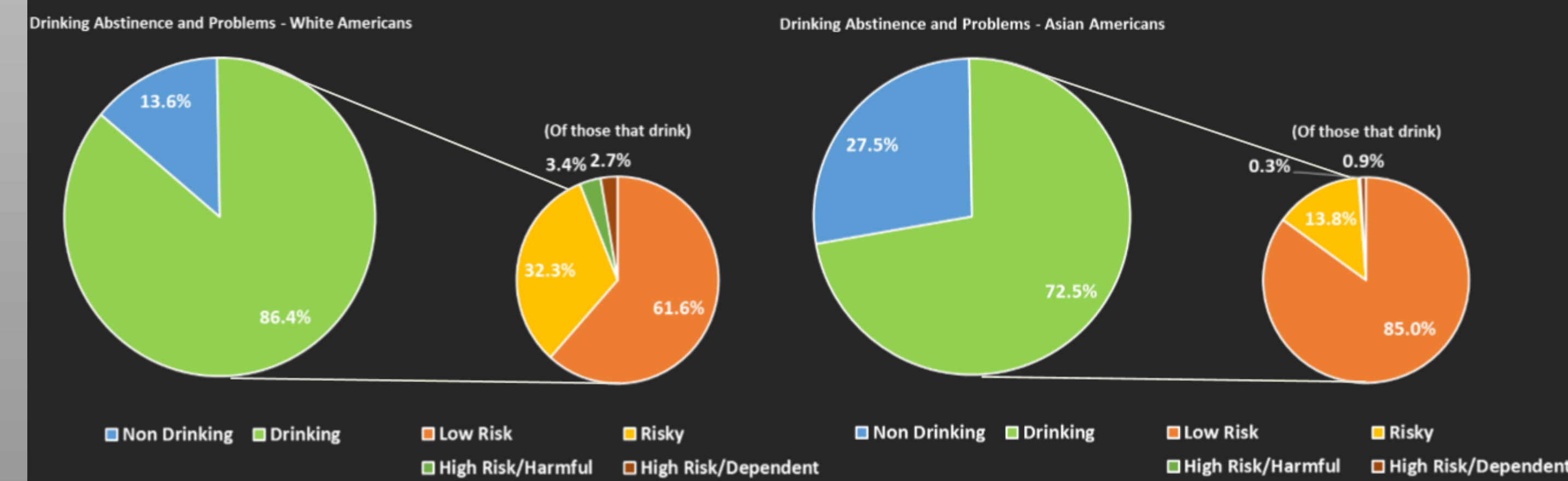
Results

Finding 1a: Examining two levels of gambling involvement among Asian Americans and White Americans: Abstinence and Problems
No ethnic differences for gambling abstinence. $\beta = .023$, $OR = 1.02$, $p = .89$.



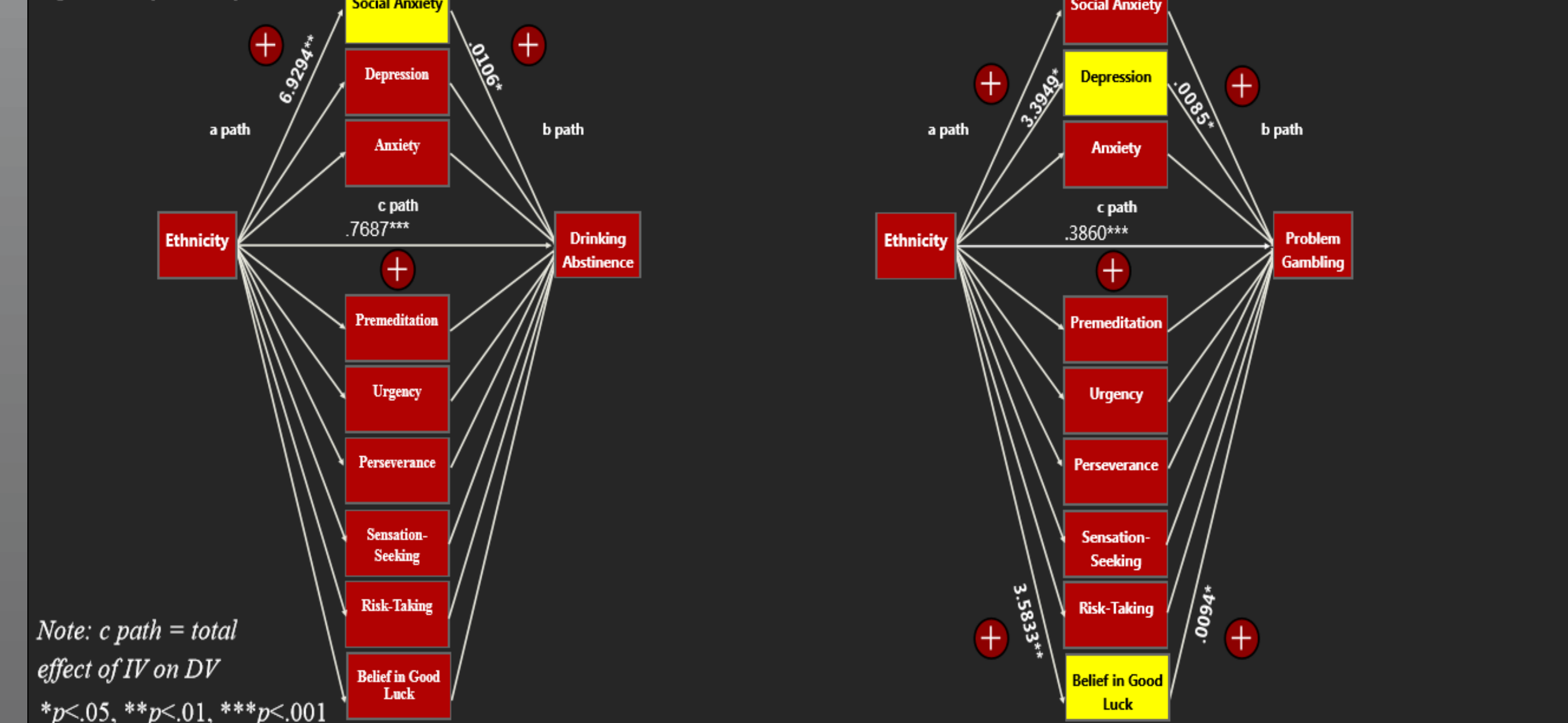
Note: Ethnicity: White American = 0, Asian American = 1

Finding 1b: Examining two levels of drinking involvement among Asian Americans and White Americans: Abstinence and Problems
Asian Americans were more likely to abstain from drinking compared to White Americans, $\beta = -.77$, $OR = .46$, $p = .0001$.
Asian Americans were less likely to have problems with drinking compared to White Americans, $B = -.27$, $\beta = -.22$, $p = .0001$.
Asian Americans were more likely to have problems with gambling compared to White Americans, $B = .39$, $\beta = .21$, $p = .0001$



Finding 2: Multiple mediation model of risk factors associated with drinking and gambling involvement.

- Social anxiety mediated the ethnicity effect on drinking abstinence ($\beta = .07$, $SE = .04$, 95% $CI = -.1800, -.0012$).
- Depression ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .02$, CI 95% .0028, .0845) and Belief in Luck ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .02$, CI 95% = .0052, .0854) mediated the ethnic effect on problem gambling.



Note: c path = total effect of IV on DV
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Results

Table 1: Regression analysis for abstinence and problems in drinking and gambling across ethnic groups.

Control Variables	Gambling								Drinking							
	White Americans n = 359				Asian Americans n = 464				White Americans n = 359				Asian Americans n = 464			
	Abstinence		Problems		Abstinence		Problems		Abstinence		Problems		Abstinence		Problems	
BMI	-0.065	1.067	0.006	-0.029	-0.004	1.004	0.036*	-1.133	-0.004	1.004	0.008	-0.039	0.049	.952	0.014	-0.094
Gender	-1.364***	3.914	0.187	-1.10	-1.29***	3.633	0.105	-0.03	-0.444	.641	0.28**	-1.192	-0.337	1.473	0.091	-0.094
Acculturation	-0.003	1.003	0.002	-0.047	-0.009	1.009	-0.001	0.29	-0.000	1.000	0.002	-0.055	-0.024***	1.024	0.003	-0.118
Age	-0.221	1.248	0.072*	-1.158	-0.074	1.077	0.042	-0.04	-0.353*	1.423	-0.01	0.27	-0.236	1.332	-0.004	0.016
Psychological Distress Risk Factors																
Depression	-0.007	1.007	-0.002	0.34	0.004	.996	0.017**	-1.238	-0.017	1.017	-0.002	0.30	-0.008	1.008	-8.27E-05	0.002
Anxiety	-0.011	1.011	0.009	0.74	0.022	.978	0.009	-0.71	0.026	.975	0.001	-0.006	0.035*	.966	0.008*	-0.126
Social Anxiety	0.008	.992	0.005	-1.125	-0.001	1.001	0.000	-0.08	0.014	.986	-0.002	.051	0.003	.993	0.000	0.008
Personality Risk Factors																
Belief in Good Luck	-0.002	.998	0.008	-1.00	-0.035*	1.036	0.01	-0.85	-0.006	1.006	0.002	-0.25	-0.01	1.010	0.000	0.006
Risk-Taking	-0.111**	1.117	0.072***	.397	-0.064**	1.066	0.011	-0.46	-0.127	1.135	0.027*	-1.64	-0.12**	1.127	-0.003	0.027
Aspects of Impulsivity																
Urgency	-0.059**	1.060	0.018	-1.48	-0.004	1.004	0.005	-0.38	-0.057	1.058	0.021*	.191	-0.028	1.028	0.004	0.058
Premeditation	0.028	.975	0.012	-0.86	0.024	.976	-0.006	0.33	0.048	.953	-0.007	.054	0.028	.972	-0.012*	-1.133
Perseverance	0.029	.972	0.000	.003	0.039	.961	0.019	-0.95	0.012	.988	-0.022*	1.50	0.057	.945	-0.007	.070
Sensation-Seeking	-0.039	1.040	-0.02*	.189	-0.011	1.011	0.013	-0.99	-0.059*	1.061	0.004	-0.44	-0.028	1.029	0.000	.005

Note: B = unstandardized coefficient; OR = odds ratio; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

- The three major findings of this study:
Ethnic differences exist among emerging adults in regards to drinking and gambling at two different levels: 1) abstinence and 2) problems.
- Findings suggest Asian Americans are more likely to develop gambling problems than White Americans. This confirmed past research indicating Asian Americans increased susceptibility in developing gambling problems (Lesieur, 1989).
 - Results supported our original hypothesis stating that White Americans abstain from drinking less than Asian Americans.
 - Results have indicated that psychological distress variables were highest in correlation to Asian Americans
 - Risk factors related to impulsivity were found to be more associated with White Americans at each level of involvement.
 - Asian Americans were more likely to have psychological risk factors such as, depression, anxiety, and social anxiety. Previous research found a common reason for Asian Americans to develop psychological distress is due to family strain. (Sangalang & Gee, 2012).
 - White Americans were more likely to develop problems with gambling and drinking due to impulsivity risk factors. Impulsivity has shown to be an addictive behavior predictor for White Americans (i.e. Cyders & Smith, 2008; Vieno, 2015); the results of the current study support this finding.

Mediators

- Depression was found to be a significant mediator for Asian Americans with problems gambling. Emerging adults with depression have been found to be less likely to abstain from drinking and gambling (Martin, Usdan, Cremeens & Vail-Smith, 2013). Significantly higher rates of depression were found to be correlated to more problem gambling among Asian Americans. This suggests a need for an assessment of depression by clinicians when assessing and treating gambling disorders.
- Belief in Good Luck (BiGL) is a value rooted in Asian American culture. According to past research, within the Asian American community, luck is seen as an external factor. Those with this view of luck tend to engage more in addictive behavior and have problems than those without the same belief (Darke & Freeman, 1997). This finding shows that gambling disorders for Asian Americans is not facilitated through impulsivity factors.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Ethnic differences exist within addiction illustrating a reason for more culturally sensitive and comprehensive prevention and treatment.

LIMITATIONS/ FUTURE DIRECTION

- The sample consisted primarily of emerging adults at a west-coast university. Past research has shown that location and age have an effect on different Asian American subgroups' addictive behaviors. (Kim, Kim, & Nochajski, 2010)
- Cultural differences were not considered for sub-groups within the Asian American community. Different Asian Americans sub-groups have different cultural beliefs and norms, therefore these should be considered for future research regarding addictive behaviors among Asian Americans.
- Gambling is considered an impulse control disorder by the DSM 5. This study did not reveal impulsivity as a risk factor for Asian Americans, therefore future research needs to investigate cultural differences in treatment programs as well as examining problem gambling as a substance abuse disorder.

Acknowledgements

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