Modeling Relationship between Alcohol Policy Perception and Alcohol Consumption in '01 Harvard College Alcohol Survey (CAS)

Youngsoo Baek, Michael Christensen, and Yufeng Jiang

Objective

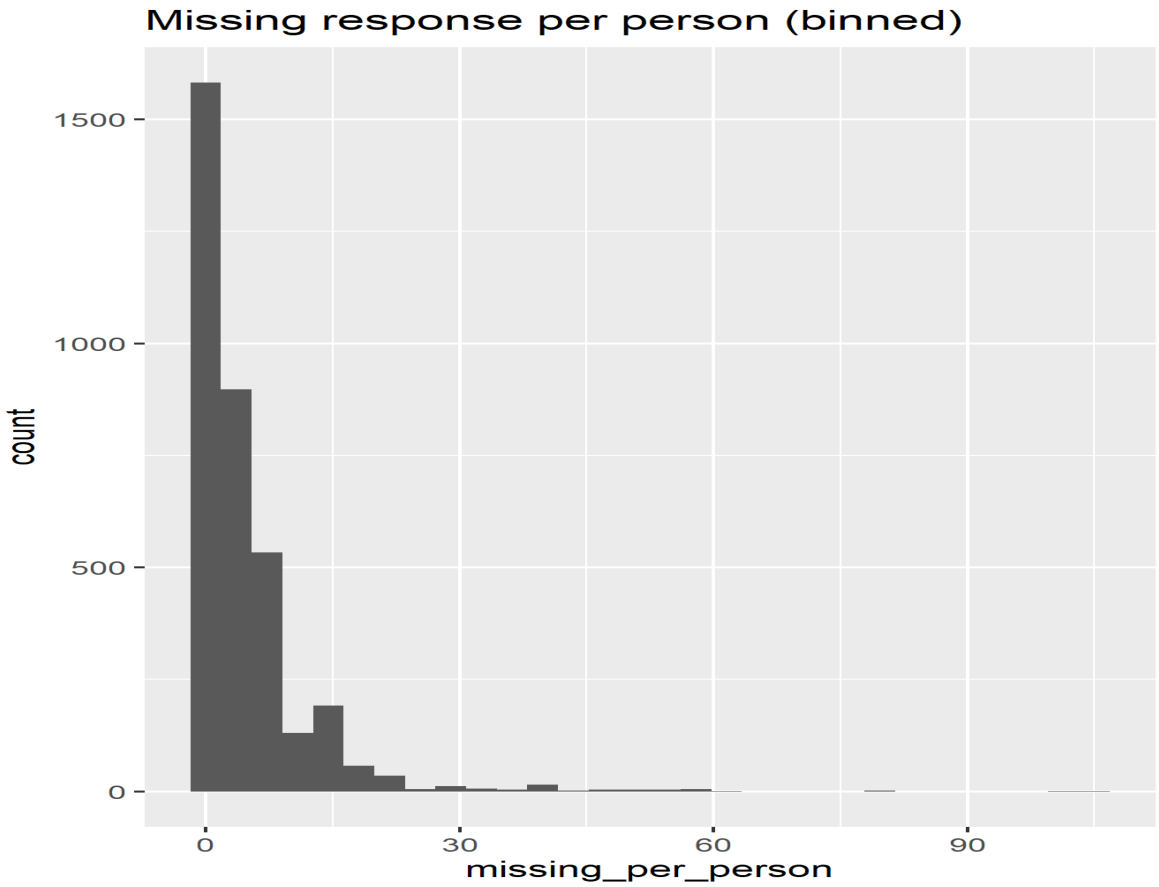
- Data: 2001 Harvard College Alcohol Study (CAS)
- 10904 participants (unknown response rate)
- Investigate the correlation structure between **subjective beliefs about campus alcohol policy** and **objective measures of alcohol consumption**
- *Section B* for subjective questions, *Section C* for objective questions
- Standard survey modeling techniques: factor analysis, structural equations model, item response theory

Data Processing

- Consistent ordering of responses
- More stringent alcohol policy beliefs (1) -> Less stringent
- Less alcohol consumption (1) -> More consumption
- Aggressive pruning of the variables before modeling
- Unreliable responses classified based on
- Response to A7: A (alone) is not allowed with other responses (family/partner/roommate)
- Response in Section C: participants who chose 1 in C10 and answered C11–C15, etc.
- `WEIGHT01` used as sampling weights (intended for cross-sectinoal studies)

Missing Reponses

- Missing response rate adjusted for questions that only target certain demographic subgroups



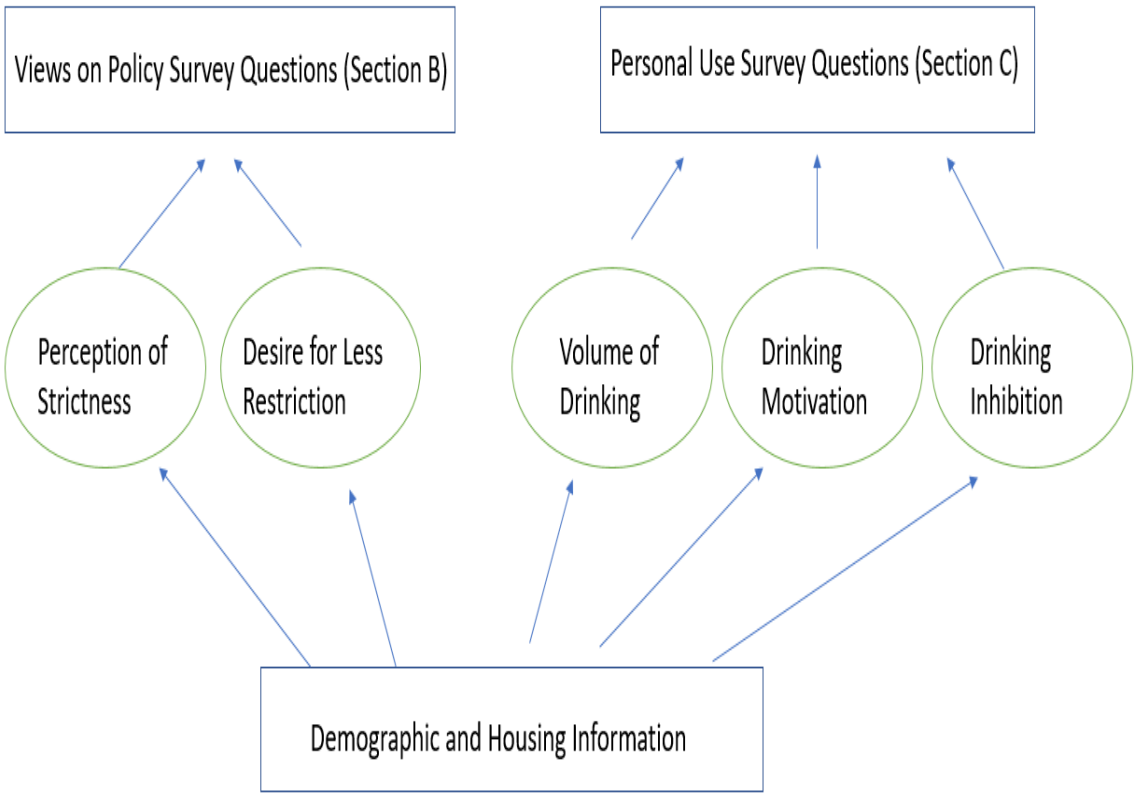
- After adjustment missing rate quite low - around or below 10 percent

Selection of variables

- B1, B3, B5, B19, B21
- C1, C2, C7, C10, C11, C12, C13, C17, C20, C22

What A Structural Model Looks Like

. . . Graphic plot here (believe will be better to include it soon to give



the big picture). . .

Structural Equations Modeling (SEM)

- Survey responses X_i can be grouped together as repeated measurements of a lower-dimensional, latent *factors*: alcohol beliefs, alcohol consumption attitude, ...
- Factor analysis identifies the loadings Λ of latent variable η_i.

$$X_i = \Lambda\eta_i + \epsilon_i,\ \eta_i \sim N(0, I),\ \epsilon_i \sim N(0, I)$$

- Structural Equations Models extend factor analysis by specifying within-question correlations and regressing η_i on predictors.
  - All of our model predictors are directly observed rather than "manifested" by questions: age, gender, ...

That is,

$$\eta_i = B\eta_i + \Gamma Z_i + \epsilon_{\eta,i}, \epsilon_{\eta,i} \sim N(0, I)$$

, where Z_i are demographic predictors

- Causal interpretation is **not** necessary (though often made!).

Modeling Challenges

- The model is clearly misspecified: Gaussian error assumption is made on ordered response
  - Asymptotic standard errors of factor loading estimators are valid for nonnormal factor analyses (Anderson and Amemiya, 1988)
  - In practice can cause lower goodness-of-fit
- Complete case analysis due to excessive computation in maximizing the full likelihood

Main Results

We define two factors corresponding to Section B of the survey, which we characterize as:

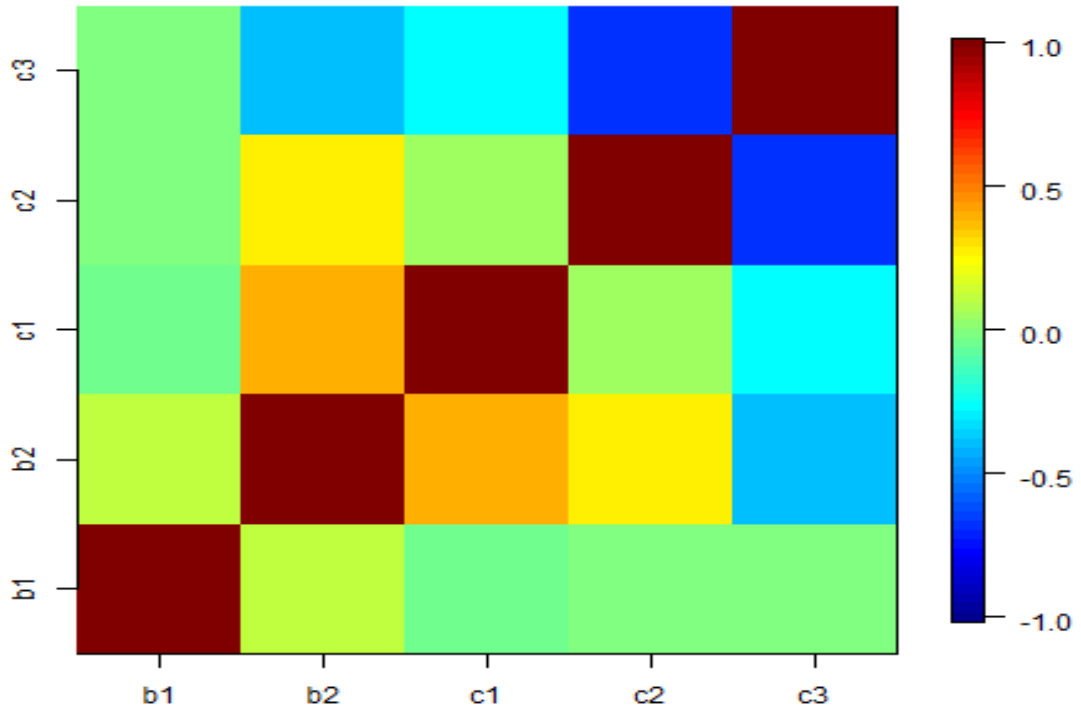
B1: Perception of strictness in school's alcohol policy, and B2: Desire for less restrictive alcohol policies

We also define three factors corresponding to Section C of the survcy, which we characterize as:

C1: Volume of Drinking C2: Motivation for Drinking C3: Inhibition towards Drinking

Main Results

Correlation between latent factors:

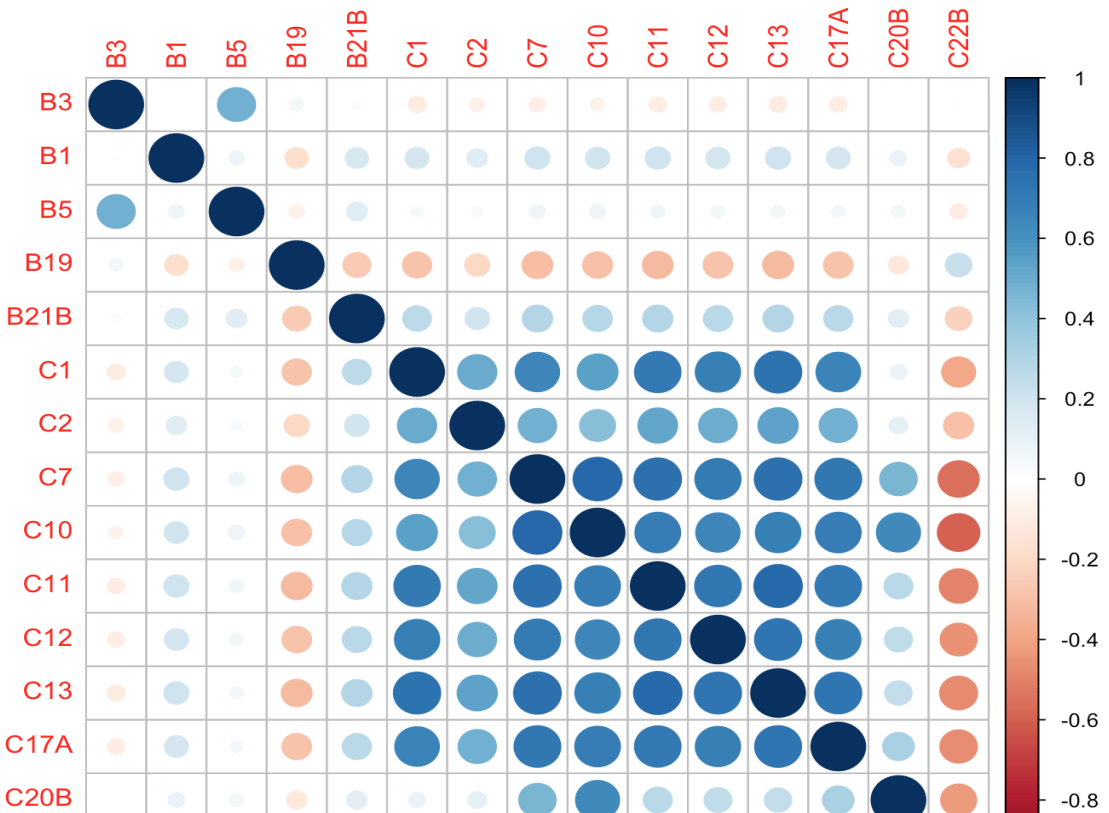


Model Diagnostics

- Various statistics to evaluate model fit in practice (and suggested threshold indicating good fit): CFI ($> .95$), RMSEA ($< .08$), SRMR ($< .06$) (See Hu and Bentler, 1999)
- Goodness of fit statistics for our model:
  CFI: 0.866, RMSEA: 0.041, SRMR: 0.027

Interpretation and Conclusion

B5 and B3: current policy is linent, and students want even more linient policy; B19: minimal drinking age, Better knowledge of drinking, less alcohol use, more against drinking (C22); B3 and C's: stronger enforcement of policy does correlate with less consumption; B1, B5 and C's: however wanting more linient policy correlate with more consumption



Interpretation and Conclusion

- ...
- Limitations
- Alternative approaches to account for ordered response
- Theory-driven priors may improve fit of more complex models
- Need information to correct for estimate biases

Reference

- "Asymptotic Chi-Square Tests for a Large Class of Factor Analysis Models," Anderson, T. W. and Amemiya, Y. *The Annals of Statistics*, 16(2), 1988.
- "Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives," Hu, L.-T. and Bentler, P. M. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1999.