Daily Habits and Overall Health

Makaili Shoultz
Mentor: Professor Kimdy Le
Indiana University Purdue University- Columbus

Introduction

Self-regulation is an important skill for successful goal attainment in many domains (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994).

There is some evidence that activities can deplete self-regulation, and it can be built up over time (Baumeister, Galliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006). For example, a study done by Oaten and Cheng (2006) found that engaging in exercise had a long-term strengthening effect on self-regulatory behaviors. So over time one can build up their self-regulation skills by engaging in self-regulatory behaviors.

Self- efficacy plays a role in short-term exercise adherence. This later develops into a self-regulatory behavior shown in previous studies (Oaten & Cheng, 2006). Conroy, Elvasky, Doersken, & Maher (2013) suggest that self-efficacy leads to greater physical activity engagement. It was also found that doing extensive amounts of self-regulating behaviors would result in a depletion of physical exercise in college students. This suggests that engaging in physical exercise requires to use self-regulation skills and supports the strength model of self-regulation.

The present study will examine how daily exercise is associated with self-regulation. I hypothesized that:

1.) individuals who engage in exercise would demonstrate higher self- regulation skills.

2.) Controlling for personality, age, gender, marital status, and children will not influence the initial association.

3.) There is a positive association between impulse control and self-regulation.

Methods

-73 participants (41 female)
-Average age was M = 37.80, SD = 13.51 (range: 19-60)
-Individuals were asked a series of questions via an online survey.
-Questionnaires used:

- Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Carey, Neal, and Collins, 2004)
    - The self-regulation questionnaire used consisted of 20 questions and breaks down into two sub-categories: impulse control and goal setting.
- Mini-IPIP Scales: Big Five Factors of Personality (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006)
    - The Big Five personality traits used were extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and intelligence. This portion consisted of 20 questions.
- IPIP scale: Impulse Control
    - This portion consisted of 11 questions.
- Age, marital status, gender, and number of children were also surveyed.
- 6 questions were asked regarding exercise.

Results

	1	2	3	4
1. Impulse Control 1	.88	.42*		
1. Impulse Control 2	.42*	.78		
1. Goal setting	.22	.66*	.87	
1. Exercise	.30*/ .31	.19	.24* / .25	.87
Mean (SD)	3.65(.66)	3.64(.51)	3.84(.56)	1.87(.72)
*statistically significant at p < .05. second values are controlling for demographic variables				

Discussion

There was mixed evidence for my predictions. Individuals who exercised were more likely to use goal setting and were higher on one measure of impulse control, but not the other. Consistent with my predictions, controlling for demographics did not influence the initial associations. Finally, impulse control and self-regulation were positively related. A larger pool of participants may have resulted in different data.

Implications/Limitations

Since this study was an online survey one could argue that rather the perception of self-regulation is being observed. An experimental study may better depict the self-regulation construct. Given the cross-sectional design, inferences about causation cannot be made until better designs are employed.

Why is the study of self-regulation important one might ask? As previously stated self-regulation is essential to successful goal pursuit. We use this skill on a daily basis in most of the grueling tasks we do not find enjoyable. Being able to strengthen this skill in not only adults but children could lead to a decrease in our growing numbers of obesity and other problems that require self-regulation. It could further provide information to ensure effectiveness of physical education programs, rehabilitation classes, and fitness centers.