

The Motives for and Barriers that Prevent Regular Physical Activity

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

BMHN5003 - The Psychology of Exercise and Physical Activity

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The results for motives and barriers

The participant has positive feelings for the physical activity. His thoughts are recorded as that it is beneficial for the mental and physical health and it helps to improve confidence, self-esteem and general health of the participant which these are motives for exercise. The major barrier was losing motivation because of the pandemic which led the participant to stop exercising. The lack of time to exercise because of a busy working schedule is another barrier and for that reason, the participant used to do high-intensity type workouts which made him feel like he was about to die. After he lost his motivation to train, the high-intensity level of the exercise might be a barrier for him to start back to training because it was not easy for him to do. For the health benefits of physical activity and exercise he believes that there are many benefits that can be obtained and some benefits are experienced by the participant when he was exercising regularly. In the interview the participant claimed that he experienced both psychological and physical benefits from regular physical activity such as he felt stronger, more fit and more focused on his daily tasks which are motives for him to exercise. The sports that he has an interest in are football and boxing. The participant did not try boxing before but played a bit of football when he was younger. There isn't any interest in him participating in boxing but he would start playing football again if he had more time. The participant had more interest in group work rather than working as an individual and for this reason he stated that he likes football more than boxing. He has friends and close family members who are interested in sports and he mentioned that he met most of his friends in the gym or when he used to play football. This is another motive for exercise that benefited the participant socially. Applications for home workouts helped the

participant during pandemic lockdown which is a motive for exercise. The physical education course in middle school was a motive for the participant to start playing football and it helped him to learn about physical activities at an early age. The participant bought some workout equipment to train at home during the pandemic lockdown which was a motive for him to exercise but it was hard for him to adjust to training at home because he couldn't achieve the same intensity that he used to achieve and this barrier caused him to lose his motivation and to stop training. After the rules eased for the pandemic he still couldn't get his motivation back to start training again. Group outdoor training is a motive to exercise for the participant because he feels more comfortable training with a group. The pandemic lockdown resulted in significant barriers for him to exercise such as limited training kit at home, government restrictions such as closing gyms and not being able to train with a group outside.

The results in light of previous researches

The participant stated that increased self-esteem and confidence were results of exercising. Studies showed that exercising may deliver positive mental health effects (Brown et al, 2013, pp.195-206, Dishman et al, 2006, pp.396). Evolving writings advise that physical activity can enhance psychological health and help with mental diseases such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, self-concept, anger and stress (Penedo et al, 2005, pp.189-193, Hassmen et al, 2000, pp.17-25). The Covid-19 pandemic lockdown resulted in so many barriers to exercise for the participant such as loss of motivation, limited equipment to exercise, gyms closing and not being able to exercise with a group of people. By looking at a research that was done in 2021 during the pandemic it

showed that this difficult situation resulted in reduction in physical activity levels and increased the sedentary time for the people living in other countries around the world (Cheval et al, 2021, pp.699-704). The activity itself is physical but it is compelling that mental factors such as motivation may have a strong connection to the exercise behavior (Dishman et al, 1980, pp.115-132). The lack of time and motivation were the two major barriers for the participant during the pandemic which a research stated these problems as the most common barriers to exercise (Manaf et al, 2013, pp.581-586). Because of the lack of time the participant was doing high-intensity type of training. High-intensity training is starting to become more popular as a time-saving and effective method while improving aerobic fitness at the same time (Hazell et al, 2010, pp.153-160). This effective training method is a great way to achieve decent training volume in a short amount of time but it is not easy to do so high-intensity exercise might result in more negative outcomes than low and moderate-intensity exercise (Hall et al, 2002, pp.47-66, Kilpatrick et al, 2007, pp.1417, Parfitt et al, 2006, pp.39-53) and resulted in increased negative feelings during and after the high-intensity exercise (Jung et al, 2014, Oliveira et al, 2013) for this reason high-intensity training can become a barrier for people who lost the motivation to exercise. The participant stated that he enjoys group work more than working as an individual. Higher exercise adherence is achieved better by group exercise programs rather than individualized programs (Dishman et al, 2007). People who work together at a task under the right conditions has resulted in greater motivation levels compared to working as an individual (Baron et al, 2003, Karau et al, 1993, pp.681) and the weak member of the group showed higher motivation when working together with an effective colleague (Kerr et al, 2011,

pp.43-55). The sports helped the participant to make friends and socialize. In one study parents were asked about their children's experiences and life skills that their children learnt in P.E and sports. Most common answers were teamwork, meeting people and making friends. This means that socialization is another great motive to exercise (Weiss et al, 2013, pp.214-244).

Relation to current behavior change theory

There are many behavior change theories in psychology such as social cognitive theory, self-efficacy theory, theory of planned behavior, self-determination theory, etc. One of the useful theoretical perspectives for explaining several motivational problems in physical activity areas is self-determination theory (SDT). SDT explains the quality of motivation managing behavior and the procedures that assist motivational growth (Deci et al, 2004) that explains why individuals start, maintain and end their connection with physical activities (Hagger et al, 2007). The participant believes that exercising is very beneficial for mental and physical health so this is a type of social-cognitive theory (SCT). The participant thinks exercising will make him healthier which is a motive for him to exercise to be healthier. The high-intensity type of workouts used to be followed by the participant because of his lack of time to exercise and for this reason his self-efficacy expectancy was high for workouts with high-intensity but after the Covid-19 pandemic he wasn't able to access to the gym like he used to and that is why he couldn't achieved the expected intensity. His self-satisfaction from home workouts were not efficient which caused a negative outcome for him to lose motivation and quit exercising. Self-efficacy is suggested to anticipate the starting behavior, and people do not tend to start a task freely which they do not feel able to carry out successfully. The same study proposed that self-efficacy expectations mediate between previous experiences and subsequent performance (Bandura, 1997, pp.191.215). The exercise stage of the participant was the action stage. Individuals who participated in regular

exercise at the standard level for less than six months are fit into the action stage. Motivation in behavior change is at an adequate level at this stage and the observed positive outcomes of exercising are greater than the observed sacrifices but this is the most difficult state to maintain (Buckworth et al, 2013). The benefits of physical activity are known and some of them are mentioned by the participant but still he is in lack of motivation to start exercising again. The participant is in a preparation state where he has intention to start exercising within 30 days but he is at a behavior change stage where he is not engaging in the targeted behavior but wants to start exercising again. At first his self-efficacy was high for the high-intensity type of physical activity but after he stopped exercising now it shows that his self-efficacy has decreased. After the Covid-19 pandemic rules were eased and the gyms were available to access again he still didn't start to exercise. The participant mentioned that he used some fitness applications to exercise at home but he could not sustain using it because of not achieving the expected outcome from the physical activity. He had very good self-determination before. He was exercising to stay healthy and fit but the low exercise-intensity led him to think that there was no purpose in exercising which led to decrease of motivation and in a behavior to stop exercising.

Approaches to elicit behavior change

According to the studies exercise behavior may be influenced by three basic psychological needs which are autonomy, competence and relatedness in patients who have cancer (Milne et al, 2008, pp.158-166, Peddle et al, 2008, pp.9-17, Wilson et al, 2006, pp.567-578, Milne et al, 2008, pp.23-38). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has a direct and positive impact on basic motivation, which links to the mental urge to take part in a behavior for its own benefit and mostly associated with the feelings of satisfaction, happiness and personal achievement. A person is more likely to maintain a behavior change when the environment that aids these three basic needs is achieved (Ryan et al, 2000, pp.68). For this reason motivation is a main idea and applying strategies that motivate the individuals may result to exercise behavior change in cancer patients (Loprinzi et al, 2012, pp.2511-2521, Milne et al, 2008, pp.158-166,

Peddle et al, 2008, pp.9-17, Wilson et al, 2006, pp.567-578). Self-efficacy is another mental tool that is useful for effective performance directly and indirectly through its influence on aims. Setting brief and exciting targets, and observing performance opposed to these targets can provide an excellence on which to match up to development. (Zimmerman et al, 1992, pp.663-676, Zimmerman et al, 1994, pp.845-862). The participant stated that someone who would start exercising with him would be helpful for him to gain his motivation back. For local people sport, leisure and physical activity is a major part of the social life in communities where families and local groups can meet and form social bonds (Atkinson, 1991, Thompson et al, 2000, pp.725-743, Beneforti et al, 2002, Grimley, 1996, pp.6-9). Accordingly, in the social-ecological model, social bonds need particular attention when creating interventions, as they are essential for influencing and enhancing participation to exercise (Nelson et al, 2010, pp.498-509). For the participant, having someone to exercise with will help him to create a social bond with his gym partner and this will result in a positive effect on his motivation. Even if he does not enjoy going to the gym at first, having a gym partner will give him an intrinsic motivation to go to the gym and exercise. External regulation is a type of intrinsic motivation which means you do something to please an external request or gain an externally forced benefit which might cause him to go to the gym to please his gym partner rather than doing it for himself.

Ideas for future research in this area

Most of the research for this area is mostly about how variation of theories makes people behave in a certain type of way. This area needs more research about how people who exercise can overcome the barriers and how to find their own motives to exercise. Basically to make more observations about athletes who recovered from injuries or did not lose any motivation in times where they could not exercise like they

used to. The key to maintaining a strong mindset for people who exercise or participate in a certain type of physical activity needs to be researched.

Appendix

Interview Schedule

Motivation and Barriers to Exercise and Physical Activity.

Name : Demir Eser

Participant # : Yes

Age: 21

Occupation: Computer Engineer

Contact Address or Phone Number: +905338382709

Interview Date : 31.12.2021

Start Time : 15:42 Finish Time : 15:52

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. As part of this study I am talking to individuals about their experiences of exercise and physical activity.

The interview contains several parts that will discuss your experiences of exercise and physical activity. The results from this study will be used as part of a piece of coursework for a psychology module within my degree programme. Please remember that all the information you provide is completely anonymous and your name will

not be linked to your responses. When writing up this work I may select quotes from this interview to illustrate important points, but your identity will be protected. In order to ensure a complete and accurate account of your responses, a voice recorder will be used.

As a participant you have certain distinct rights:

This interview is about your experiences of participating in exercise and physical activity, and as such if you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions, then you are free to decline to answer or ask for the interview to be stopped. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experiences of exercise and physical activity, and as such, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions within the interview. I hope therefore, that you will respond in a clear and straightforward way. If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering or if something is not clear, please let me know. If you do not want to enter into discussion about a particular topic any further, just say “no comment” and we can move on. If you have questions, please feel free to ask them at any point. Important: During the interview I will be asking about your experiences of exercise and physical activity which may go back many years. I will also be asking about your motivation and barriers to exercise since that time. Please feel free to take your time when recalling any aspect of these experiences; and do not hesitate to include anything that you believe to be important. This may include things such as relationships, family or work. If you are unable to recall an event, please let me know rather than guess.

-Before we progress on to the interview do you have any questions?

No

-Thank you once again for your participation.

The purposes of this interview are firstly to establish what physical activity you are currently doing (if any) and how you feel about exercise. I would also like to discuss your experiences of exercise and physical activity and to cover the following topics:

Current exercise levels and attitude to exercise and physical activity

Barriers to exercise

Motivation to exercise

The impact of Covid 19 on the above

To assist memory recall for each of the sections of the interview, this guide has been sent to you in advance, so that you can think about the questions and make any notes that you feel are relevant / important to the interview.

The interview

-How do you feel about exercise or physical activity?

I think exercise is very beneficial for my mental and physical health. It helps me to improve my confidence, self-esteem, and I feel a lot healthier when I regularly exercise.

-Do you currently engage in any regular exercise?

No, I used to exercise before but now I stopped.

-What was the reason that caused you to stop exercising? Is this linked to Covid-19 in any way?

Yes, it was actually Covid-19 that caused me to lose my motivation to exercise. It has been very hard for me to stay active and continue my exercise routine with gyms closing and restricting government guidelines.

-Do you have any limits to exercise or physical activity?

To be honest I have a very busy working schedule so even when I used to exercise regularly I was only able to have a quick workout session then continue with my daily life.

-How many minutes per week would you estimate you spent doing moderate to vigorous physical activity?

As I said I didn't have that much time to exercise I would roughly spend 40 to 60 minutes a day for 4-5 times a week and because I had a short amount of time to exercise my workouts were usually a high-intensity type of workouts which would make me feel like I was about to die.

-Are you aware of the recommended guidelines for physical activity? For example how many hours of physical activity you should be doing in a week.

Errm not really, I would estimate a minimum of 30 to 40 mins of physical activity a day.

-Yes you guessed it right. The recommended guidelines are about 150 to 300 mins of moderate-intensity a week.

-Do you believe there are any health benefits to be obtained from physical activity?

Yes, I believe that there are lots of health benefits that can be obtained from physical activity.

-Have you found any benefits to being physically active?

Yes, even when I was exercising regularly I could see the difference in my physical and mental health. I was feeling a lot stronger, fitter and more focused on my daily tasks.

-Are there any sports you enjoy watching on TV or in person?

I really enjoy watching boxing and football when I have free time.

-Have you ever played those sports yourself?

I have never tried boxing before but I played a little bit of football when I was younger.

-Would you be interested in taking up those sports if the opportunity was available?

I don't think I would try boxing. I just like watching it but if I had more free time I would like to start playing football again.

-In general, for example at work or college, do you tend to prefer working individually or as part of a group?

I would say I prefer group work more than working as an individual.

-Oh so is that why you enjoy football more than boxing? Because as you know football is a team sport while boxing is an individual one.

Yes, that is one of the reasons why I prefer football.

-Do you have any friends or close family members who are currently engaging in regular physical activity?

Yes and I even met most of my friends from when I used to go to the gym and play football.

-We can say that participating in sports benefited you socially, right?

Yeah of course.

-Would you consider using an app that encourages you to engage in physical activity at specified points in the day?

Yes, I actually have used some apps while in lockdown for my home workouts.

-Would you say that they helped you in any way?

I don't know, at first I thought it was helpful but then it was a bit repetitive so I lost my motivation.

-When you were at school, did you do any physical education?

Yes, we had a P.E course from middle to high school which covered a mixture of sports. Like tennis, football, running, badminton, and basketball. But it wasn't that high level we were just playing for fun.

-How did you feel about it? Were you enjoying the course?

Yes, I mostly enjoyed football which is how I actually got into playing it.

-What was your experience like?

It was a good experience for me to start playing the sport when I was young with the help of my teachers.

-Do you currently have any workout equipment in your home, such as a stationary bike or free weights? If you do have any, did you buy them after the pandemic started?
Yes, actually I bought a pair of adjustable dumbbells and a yoga mat to workout from home while in lockdown.

-Was it hard to adjust to doing workouts from home and what kinds of workouts were you doing during the lockdown?

Yes, I tried to do some bodyweight exercises with the dumbbells but after a week or so I couldn't achieve the same intensity as I used to while I was in the gym.

-Yes it was hard for all of us, we all had to go through the same situation.

Are you currently a member of any leisure center or private gym?

Not currently but I used to be a member of a private gym.

-So after the pandemic guidelines started to ease, did you join any gym or sports facility?

No, after I stopped exercising during the pandemic I couldn't find the motivation to start again.

-Do you enjoy exercise outdoors or indoors?

I enjoy both training indoors and outdoors but if I'm training outdoors I prefer it to be with a group.

-Why is this?

I don't usually like working outside by myself because I feel more comfortable when I'm training with a group of people.

-As far as you know, does your employer offer any fitness-related benefits, such as reduced-price gym memberships?

No, not really, I'm a computer programmer and there aren't any offers like that in my company.

-Based on the previous answers, what do you think prevents you from doing more exercise?

I think Covid-19 and the regulations have had a huge negative impact on my physical activity levels. I couldn't find the motivation to train from home with my limited kit and it was hard for me to adjust to the restrictions such as gyms closing, not being able to train with groups outside.

-What do you think will improve your physical health?

Definitely starting to a gym facility again and working out regularly will help me to improve my physical health.,

-How do you think you will get your motivation back?

I think I just need to push myself mentally to start again and maybe If I have someone to join with me that might help with my dedication.

-How do you feel the interview went?

It went very well and I felt very comfortable during the whole interview.

-Did you feel that you were able to tell all that you wanted to?

Yes I did.

-Were you unhappy with any of the questions that I asked?

No, the questions were very appropriate.

-Did you think that I led or influenced your answers in any way?

No, there wasn't any influence of yours.

-Thank you.

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