

Physical activity and behavioural regulation for taking part in exercise.

Introduction.

This generation's students are a population that are experiencing big lifestyle changes; they often have to cope with working in their free time, unpredictable schedules and increased academic pressure. Considering the advantages of regular exercise for mental as well as physical health, it could lead to a decline in levels of physical activity. It is widely known in sport and exercise psychology that encouragement, especially in the youth, is an important variable that decides whether or not people start and keep participating in regular physical activity. The self-determination theory (SDT), that provides an in-depth description of how different kinds of motivation may affect exercise behaviour, is one of the most dominating theories used for looking into this (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In this theory, there is a process of behavioural management. Amotivation, which highlights a lack of impulse or care for exercise, is another extreme. Multiple kinds of extrinsic motivation are found as someone moves along the progression of the theory. The stage to where each person has incorporated the motivations of exercising differ. An example being, regulation involves internal restrictions such as guilt or avoiding embarrassment, whereas external regulation shows involvement motivated by reason or demands from others. As motivation gets more independent, joint regulation shows a correlation between exercise and somebody's personality, while identified regulation shows someone's respect for the advantages of physical activity. Intrinsic motivation, which is driven by pleasure, accomplishment, or interests are at the most self made end of the spectrum (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Those who are more active usually score better on independent acts of motivation, as stated by numerous studies. For example, those who are more likely to retain long-term engagement, feel accomplished and show signs of better psychological well-being when they exercise, because of personal values for good results (identified regulation) or love doing the activity (intrinsic regulation) (Teixeira et al., 2012). Another argument being, people who start to rely on introjected or external regulation often report increased dropout rates, worse attendance, and more negative feelings towards exercise (Gillison et al., 2006).

Multiple demographic groupings show different motivational patterns. Due to time restrictions, academic stress, and conflicting social commitments, many university students report very low intrinsic drive, regardless of research stating that autonomous motivation is a strong predictor of levels of physical activity (Kwan et al., 2013). Likewise, other poorly active groups, an example being students with low activity levels, are also likely to score higher on controlled questionnaires for regulation and amotivation (Mullan et al., 1997).

Therefore, this study deeply investigates the association between behavioural regulation and physical activity levels stated by 'The University of Wales Trinity Saint David' students in spirit of these traditional connections between motivation and behaviour. This study particularly focuses on the students who have been classified as low activity in order to get an understanding of their motivational profile and take into consideration how this can connect to the more general theories done by other researchers and also provide knowledge on their practical findings within sport psychology.

Method.

The participants -

This study comprised sixteen University of Wales Trinity Saint David undergraduate students. The International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) was used to class all participants as having lower levels of physical activity. Those who volunteered to participate ranged in age from 18 to 28. Informed consent was received, and all replies were anonymous.

Design and procedure -

The investigation worked on a cross-sectional quantitative design. The subjects completed the Behavioural Regulation in Exercise Questionnaire (BREQ-3), which calculates six motivational sections based on SDT: amotivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identifiable regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic regulation. Responses to suitable items were averaged to direct each subscale score.

Moreover, the participants filled out the IPAQ, which ranked them in accordance to their levels of physical activity. The ongoing analysis only included individuals who showed the low levels of the activity in the group. The means and standard deviations for each type of motivational regulation were calculated after the data was put into a spreadsheet. The motivational inclinations of low-activity students were looked into using these vivid statistics.

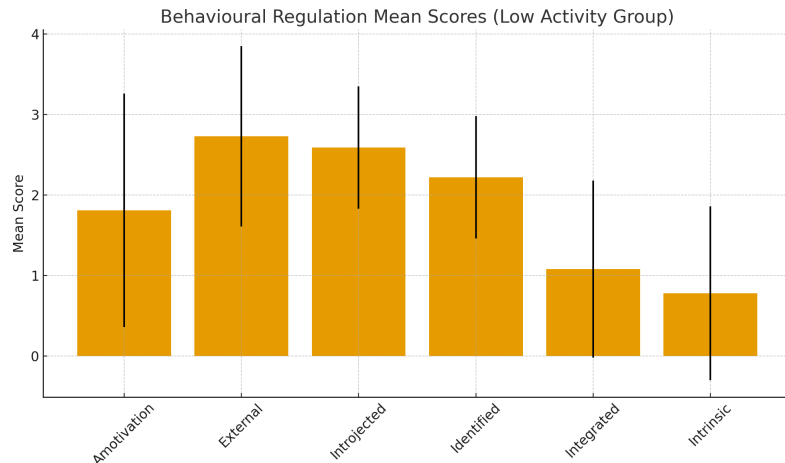
Results.

The mean scores and standard deviations for every behavioural regulation subscale are produced in Table 1. There were clear distinctions between the various types of motivation.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Behavioural Regulation Subscales (Low Activity Group, n = 16).

Behavioural Regulation Type	Mean	Standard Deviation
Amotivation	1.81	1.45
External Regulation	2.73	1.12
Introjected Regulation	2.59	0.76
Identified Regulation	2.22	0.76
Integrated Regulation	1.08	1.10
Intrinsic Regulation	0.78	1.08

Figure 1. Behavioural Regulation Mean Scores for Low Activity Students (n = 16)



As we can see these findings show that controlled motivation, distinctly external regulation, showed that it has the highest mean score ($M = 2.73$), overpowering the motivational profile. Furthermore, introjected regulation ($M = 2.59$) was similarly high, highlighting that certain students' choices towards exercise might be influenced by internal pressure or guilt. On the other hand, the more individualised types of regulation, identified, integrated, and intrinsic, were especially lower, with intrinsic regulation having the lowest mean ($M = 0.78$). Amotivation also showed a moderate score with a larger range, suggesting that the participants' levels of disengagement varied. Overall, the group's motivation patterns seem to be in line with what is typically seen in those who don't usually exercise much.

Discussion.

The purpose of this study was to look into how university students who were grouped as low active act in correlation to their levels of physical activity. My results showed a clear motivational profile with relatively low levels of autonomous motivation and controlled method of regulation. The results reflect on the trends noted in previous studies and closely link with primary ideas of Self-Determination Theory.

The increased levels of external regulation gives us the idea that most students might be driven more by expectations, social contrast, or peer pressure rather than by their own selfworth or enjoyment. Other studies state, people who are essentially motivated by external factors often find it difficult to continue exercising more than normal because these motivations do not meet their psychological requests for competence or autonomy (Gillison et al., 2006). The higher level of introjected regulation tells us that some of the students can, in some circumstances, show feelings like shame for not exercising, but these kinds of thoughts are also unstable and unrelated to sustained adherence.

Moreover, the relatively low levels of intrinsic motivation seen in the sample of results I gathered reflect a lower level of enjoyment or interest in physical activity. This is important to note because intrinsic motivation strongly coincides with constant exercise engagement and greater psychological well-being (Teixeira et al., 2012). The low intrinsic and integrated regulation scores might also explain why these certain individuals fall into the low-activity category.

The results are definitely consistent throughout the research on the university students, who clearly show in the results that they often struggle to absorb the use of exercise due to the competitiveness, pressures and different routines (Kwan et al., 2013). Many of the students' results showed that they also experience transitional periods during university life, which can come between the development of exercise habits and it reduces the opportunities for them to have enjoyable, personalised physical activities. The results show that low-activity levels vary greatly, as shown by the reasonable variability in amotivation. While some of the participants could not really understand the benefits of physical activity, others might just purely lack the time or organisation to be able to do or commit to it. The variety of results shows the necessity of individualised strategies for encouraging students to participate in physical activity.

Practical implications

The outcome of these results indicated the importance of encouraging students' self-motivation in order to support their adaptation and continuation of healthier activity levels. University-based exercise psychologists and professionals are important to this process. The ones that are the most helpful are autonomy-supportive tactics that incorporate assisting the participants in identifying personally important goals, providing options for activity types, and fostering ability through their own advancements. Feelings of accomplishment, another important aspect of SDT, may be improved by adapting supportive and together environments, through different peer-led sessions or group-based activities.

The students' transitions from controlled to autonomous regulation might also be supported by motivational interviewing, reflecting goal-setting sessions, and creating activities that put pleasure ahead of pressure or performance. Over time, these tactics may increase students' involvement in physical activity as well as their overall wellbeing and self confidence.

Conclusion.

To conclude, this investigation looked into the connection between low-active university students' behavioural regulation and levels of physical activity, giving out a motivational profile strongly dominated by regulated rather than autonomous ways of motivation. In addition to the significantly low intrinsic and integrated motivation, we asked the students to report increased external and introjected regulation, which reflects their restricted enjoyment and personal self esteem during exercise. The results are consistent with the Self-Determination Theory and earlier studies showing that people who are not often involved in physical activity tend to be less autonomously motivated and more dependent on influences from those around them. In order to guide initiatives meant to increase student physical activity, it is important to look into these patterns. Exercise psychologists and practitioners can play a key role by building autonomy-supportive environments, helping the students develop personal and relevant goals, and promoting enjoyment-based participation. Improving autonomous motivation may assist better psychological health as well as healthy activity habits. The study's overall results clearly highlight the significance of focused, theory-based strategies for

encouraging physical exercise in universities so students gain healthier lifestyles for the future.

References.

1. Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2000) *The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behaviour*. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), pp. 227–268.
2. Gillison, F.B., Standage, M. and Skevington, S.M. (2006) *Relationships among adolescents’ weight perceptions, exercise goals, exercise motivation, quality of life and leisure-time exercise behaviour: A self-determination theory approach*. Health Education Research, 21(6), pp. 836–847.
3. Ingledew, D.K. and Markland, D. (2008) *The role of motives in exercise participation*. Psychology & Health, 23(7), pp. 807–828.
4. Kwan, M.Y., Cairney, J., Faulkner, G.E. and Pullenayegum, E.E. (2013) *Physical activity and other health-risk behaviours during the transition into early adulthood: A longitudinal cohort study*. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 45(4), pp. 324–332.
5. Mullan, E., Markland, D. and Ingledew, D.K. (1997) *A graded conceptualisation of self-determination in the regulation of exercise behaviour*. Journal of Sports Sciences, 15(5), pp. 377–378.
6. Ntoumanis, N., Ng, J.Y.Y., Prestwich, A. and Quested, E. (2021) *Self-determination theory applied to health contexts: A meta-analysis*. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 16(6), pp. 1199–1226.
7. Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2017) *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. New York: Guilford Press.
8. Teixeira, P.J., Carraça, E.V., Markland, D., Silva, M.N. and Ryan, R.M. (2012) *Exercise, physical activity and self-determination theory: A systematic review*. International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 9(1), p. 78.

- 1500 word essay.
- For sport psychology at University standard 100% grade.
- Examine relationship between behavioural regulation to exercise and physical activity levels for a group of students from The University Of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- Intro - 500 words. A review relating to motivation and behavioural regulation of exercise. This needs to include research relating to behavioural regulation of different activity levels and differences in motives between population groups (including students)
- Method - Briefly outline the participants, procedures and design of the study (200 words)

- Results - using my data, present results into appropriate format e.g stats, table figures (250 words)
- Discussion - Discuss findings in relation to existing theories and previous research. Relate this section to the findings to the research discussed in the introduction and either support or reject the previous findings. Brief explanation of the practical implications (include the role for exercise psychologists) of my findings and research literature. (550 words)
- Harvard cited for me references at the bottom (at least 10)