

Effects of Emotional States on Self-control Replenishment

Yip Ning Yi 1155030873

Supervisor: Prof. FUNG Helene Hoi-lam

Abstract

Previous researches have shown that positive affect helps to improve self-control in subsequent tasks after ego depletion by its restorative effect. This study aimed at investigating the effect of different emotional states (i.e. neutral, happy, sad and anxious) on the performance of self-control tasks upon previous depletion. It replicated one of the studies in Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli & Muraven, (2007) with an addition of the mild anxiety condition. The result showed that participants in the anxious condition did the best in the GRE task with the highest mean of accuracy and efficiency. The participants in the neutral and happy conditions persisted longer in the GRE task than those in the sad and anxious conditions. And, participants in the happy and sad condition showed significantly more willingness in helping to find more participants for the study. Possible covariates of trait self-control and expectancy effect were examined as well. Investigation on the mechanism behind the effect of happiness, sadness and anxiety on self-control replenishment remain for future research.