

Abstract

The present study examines the hypothesis that individuals can regulate their regulatory focus in order to maximize their motivation on goal pursuit. The change in students' regulatory focus was examined longitudinally, i.e., preparing and achieving in the mid-term test of a course. Seventy-three Hong Kong undergraduates aged from 18-22 voluntarily participated in this study. Participants completed an online survey, including the Regulatory Focus Questionnaires (RFQ), a categorization task and the Behavior Identification Form (BIF) at three time points, namely at the start of the semester, two weeks before mid-term test and the day before mid-term test.

Individuals show a tendency to regulate their regulatory focus system regarding the temporal distance. Individuals in predominant promotion and prevention focus tend to differ in their mental construals. However, the fit or non-fit interaction of regulatory focus and temporal distance was not supported. The current study provides insight into the interaction of regulatory focus and temporal distance by extending from manipulation of the situations by imaging scenarios to real time experience.

Keywords: Regulatory focus theory, Temporal Distance, Mental Construals