

Abstract

Receiving useful advice can facilitate one's goal pursuit. However, not all attempts at advice-giving are equally well received. In the current study, how recipients' phases in goal pursuit affect perceived advice effectiveness was investigated. Borrowing from the Rubicon model of action phase, before goal enactment, there are two distinct phases in goal pursuit, naming the pre-decisional phase and post-decisional phase. In the pre-decisional phase, people are pondering which goal to pursue while in the post-decisional phase, people are concerned with how to implementation of the chosen goal. It was hypothesized that in the post-decisional phase, recipients face concrete constraints on the method of goal pursuit that was difficult to be observed by advice-givers, while recipients in the pre-decisional phase were open to different sources of information. Hence, compared to recipients in the pre-decisional phase, people in the post-decisional phase would have a lower intention to follow the given advice. To improve advice quality for the recipients in the post-decisional phase, asking questions about the constraints they face were hypothesized to be useful. Two studies involving the communication of friend pairs were conducted to test the above hypotheses. Study 1 was a correlational study. The differences in the quality of advice between phases were tested by inviting friend pairs to use letters to exchange their advice. In study 2, the goal phase \times constraint consideration was tested using a 2×2 design. Friend pairs engaged in a face-to-face advice-giving session. Study 1 failed to demonstrate the difference in advice quality between the two phases. Study 2 failed to demonstrate the interaction goal phase \times constraint consideration and found that constraint consideration improves advice quality regardless of phases. The implications of the current study on advice in goal pursuit are discussed.