

Self-control rituals (#4248)

Author(s)

Allen Tian (Wuhan University) - dtian2@ualberta.ca
Juliana Schroeder (UC Berkeley) - jschroeder@berkeley.edu

Created: 05/24/2017 05:49 PM (PT)

Public: 12/06/2017 08:56 PM (PT)

1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

We predict that engaging in a ritual (vs. engaging in "random" gestures) will make people exert more self-control (in this case: spend less time on distracting tasks when working).

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Amount of time spent on distraction task. Here we operationalize "distraction task" as a fun video game.

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

We will randomly assign participants to one of two conditions: ritual or random gestures. The ritual condition is designed to require rigid, repetitive behaviors conducted in a fixed sequence. Both conditions will contain the same number of steps and take around the same time to complete.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We will run independent t-test analyses to test whether there is an effect of condition on time spent.

6) Any secondary analyses?

- We will have a manipulation check to test whether the behaviors performed in the ritual condition feel more "like a ritual", rigid, repetitive, and meaningful than behaviors in the random gestures condition.
- We may try to rule out alternative possible mechanisms for our predicted effect by measuring task involvement, difficulty, general affect, or interest in task at the end of the survey.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

200 participants (100 per condition)

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., data exclusions, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

- Participant selection: To involve self-control, there needs to be a conflict between a "fun" task and a "work" task. Therefore our participants must believe that playing the video game is fun. To do this, we will restrict our participants to those who agree that playing these types of games are enjoyable and restrict to younger participants (below age 60). Because this study involves a writing task, we will also include only U.S. citizens who report their first language is English. Finally, we will exclude participants who fail our attention check question at the beginning of the survey.
- Authorship team: The other authors on this paper are: Gerald Haubl, Jane Risen, Michael Norton, and Francesca Gino