

Time Perspective and the Theory of Planned Behavior: Moderate Predictors of Physical Activity Among Central Appalachian Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to determine how well time perspective and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) predicted physical activity among adolescents residing in the central Appalachian region of the United States.

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Partial funding for this study was provided by The University of Virginia School of Nursing's Rural Health Care Research Center.

Conflicts of interest: None to report.

This article was presented as a poster at the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners 34th Annual Conference, April 17-20, 2013, Orlando, FL.

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0891-5245/\$36.00

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Published online May 2, 2014.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2014.02.009>

Method: A descriptive, correlational design was used. The setting was a rural high school in central Appalachia. The sample included 185 students in grades 9 through 12. Data were collected in school. Variables included components of the TPB, time perspective, and various levels of exercise. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis.

Results: The TPB was a moderate predictor of exercise frequency among central Appalachian adolescents, accounting for 42% of the variance. Time perspective did not add to the predictive ability of the TPB to predict exercise frequency in this sample.

Discussion: This study provides support for the TPB for predicting frequency of exercise among central Appalachian adolescents. By understanding the role of the TPB in predicting physical activity among adolescents, nurse practitioners will be able to adapt intervention strategies to improve the physical activity behaviors of this population. *J Pediatr Health Care.* (2014) 28, e41-e47.

KEY WORDS

Theory of Planned Behavior, time perspective, physical activity, adolescents

Adolescent obesity is an important global health problem. Adolescent obesity is directly related to insufficient physical activity (IPA). Adolescents should

participate in moderate or vigorously intense physical activity for 60 minutes per day (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). In a recent review, Ferreira de Moraes, Guerra, and Menezes (2013) reviewed 15 studies from various countries and found a high prevalence of IPA among adolescents worldwide. The highest prevalence of IPA was found among adolescents in Africa and Latin America. Girls were less active than boys in all studies.

The health consequences related to the lack of physical activity and the resultant obesity among this population include multiple disorders of the cardiovascular, endocrine, gastrointestinal, and skeletal systems (Hodara & Kacharava, 2013; Mustillo et al., 2003). In addition, obese adolescents tend to have decreased levels of self-esteem (Jacobson & Melnyk, 2012) and increased rates of depression (Merten, Wickrama, & Williams, 2008). The American Medical Association (AMA; 2013) recently recommended that obesity be considered a disease rather than a condition, which supports the significance of the problem that affects 17% of children and adolescents in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Therefore it is important for health care providers to understand the variables associated with physical activity behaviors among children and adolescents to provide effective intervention strategies aimed at decreasing the burden of obesity.

Most health behaviors such as physical activity consist of immediate effort for future results. For example, daily walking may result in weight loss in the future. This orientation requires persons to focus on future goals while being motivated to act in the present. This orientation is termed “time orientation” or “time perspective.” Time perspective is a personal temporal orientation toward the past, present, or future that affects the way persons think and act. Time perspective has been studied in many areas of health behavior research. Results indicate that time perspective is directly related to engagement in health-related behavior such as diabetes screening (Crockett, Weinman, Hankins, & Marteau, 2009), risky driving behaviors (Zimbardo, Keough, & Boyd, 1997), physical activity (Hall & Fong, 2003), dietary behaviors (Gellert, Ziegelmann, Lippke, & Schwarzer, 2012) and smoking (Sansone et al., 2013). Zimbardo and Boyd (2008) have identified five major time perspectives: past positive, past negative, present hedonistic, present fatalistic, and future perspective. The past-positive perspective is characterized by remembering past events optimistically, whereas the past-negative perspective is characterized by recalling past events negatively. Persons with a present-hedonistic perspective enjoy taking risks and living for the moment. Future-oriented persons are conscientious planners. Present-fatalistic persons lack personal efficacy, believing they have no control over their future.

Integrating time perspective into an existing behavior model has been suggested as a way of adding to the explanatory power of the model to predict physical activity behavior (Crockett et al., 2009). Being able to understand and predict the physical activity behaviors among adolescents is important when developing intervention strategies aimed at increasing the physical activity behaviors among this population.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB is a cognitive, behavioral approach to understanding and predicting human behaviors and has been used extensively to understand and predict physical activity behaviors among adolescents in the United States (Ickes & Sharma, 2012; Rhoades, Al-Oballi Kridli, & Penprase, 2011) and worldwide, including Canada (Plotnikoff et al., 2013; Plotnikoff et al., 2011; Trinh, Rhodes, & Ryan, 2008), Estonia (Raudsepp, Viira, & Hannus, 2010), Great Britain (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Wang, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009), and China and Poland (Luszczynska et al., 2010).

According to the TPB, the best predictor of performance of a behavior is intention to perform the behavior. Intentions are influenced by behavioral beliefs, attitudes (positive or negative) toward the behavior, normative beliefs, individual perceptions of what significant others believe they should do regarding the behavior, and perceived behavioral control—that is, the person’s beliefs about whether he or she can perform the behavior (self-efficacy) and whether he or she has control over the performance of the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Perceived behavioral control is similar to the self-efficacy construct of Bandura (1998) in his social cognitive theory. According to Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (1998), self-efficacy “refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (p. 3).

Understanding physical activity in the context of time perspective and the variables within the TPB will aid in the development and evaluation of intervention programs aimed at increasing physical activity levels among children and adolescents. For example, when

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