

## DO PEOPLE GET DEPLETED? REPLICABILITY, CULTURAL GENERALIZABILITY, AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Friday, January 29, 2016, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

**Chair:** Veronika Job, University of Zurich

**Co-Chair:** Krishna Savani, Nanyang Business School

This symposium starts with a presentation of latest research on the replicability of the ego-depletion effect with early indications suggesting a negligible effect. Subsequent presentations investigate moderating variables (cultural context, lay beliefs and political ideology), showing that ego-depletion and sustained self-control depend on both individual and contextual factors.

**Speakers:** Joshua Clarkson, Krishna Savani, Martin Hagger, Jason Chow

### ABSTRACTS

#### SELF-CONTROL CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Evidence from three studies reveals a critical difference in self-control as a function of political ideology. Specifically, greater endorsement of political conservatism (versus liberalism) was associated with greater attention regulation and task persistence. Moreover, this relationship is shown to stem from varying beliefs in freewill; specifically, the association between political ideology and self-control is mediated by differences in the extent to which belief in freewill is endorsed, is independent of task performance or motivation, and is reversed when freewill is perceived to impede (rather than enhance) self-control. Collectively, these findings offer insight into the self-control consequences of political ideology by detailing conditions under which conservatives and liberals are better suited to engage in self-control and outlining the role of freewill beliefs in determining these conditions.

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#### IS EGO-DEPLETION A CULTURAL PHENOMENON?: ACTS OF SELF-CONTROL IMPROVE SUBSEQUENT PERFORMANCE IN CULTURES IN WHICH WILLPOWER EXERTION IS BELIEVED TO BE ENERGIZING

The strength model of self-control has been predominantly tested with people from Western cultures. The present research asks whether the ego-depletion phenomenon generalizes to cultures emphasizing the virtues of exerting self-control in everyday life. Study 1 documented that whereas people from U.S. American cultural contexts tended to believe that exerting willpower is depleting, people from South Asian Indian cultural contexts tended to believe that exerting willpower is energizing. Using a standard dual task ego-depletion paradigm, Study 2 found that whereas Americans exhibited the standard ego-depletion effect, Indians exhibited a reverse ego-depletion effect. Studies 3 to 5 replicated the reverse ego-depletion effect in India using diverse tasks. Study 5 further showed that Indians who believed that exerting willpower is energizing were particularly likely to exhibit the reverse ego-depletion effect. Together, these studies reveal the underlying cultural basis of the ego-depletion phenomenon.

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#### MULTIPLE HIGH-POWERED REGISTERED REPLICATIONS OF THE RESOURCE-DEPLETION EFFECT

The conceptualization of self-control as a "limited resource" is popular and has received support in meta-analytic tests ( $d=0.62$ ). However, some have questioned the strength of the effect or whether it exists at all. Recent analyses suggest that the effect may be inflated due to large numbers of small-sample studies showing large effects. Addressing this concern, we conducted a coordinated series of pre-registered, high-powered replications of the ego-depletion effect adopting a standardized two-task paradigm using a letter "e" task and multi-source interference task. Multiple samples were collected from independent laboratories ( $N=25$ ) as part of the APS's registered replication reports initiative. Ten laboratories' have completed data collection and final completion and analysis is due in July 2015. Replication in our lab revealed a null effect size ( $d=0.01$ ). Results are expected to contribute to the debate on small-study bias and provide a robust test of the true size of the ego-depletion effect.

Martin Hagger<sup>1</sup>, Nikos Chatzisarantis<sup>1</sup>

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#### EGO-DEPLETION REDUCES SELF-EFFICACY TO FURTHER SELF-CONTROL: A MOTIVATED COGNITION PERSPECTIVE OF EGO-DEPLETION

Recent research has demonstrated that ego-depletion motivates people to engage in cognitions that favor withdrawal of effort (e.g., downplaying the importance of a goal). Across three experiments, we found that initial self-control exertion resulted in lower self-efficacy to further control oneself. We further found that self-efficacy mediated the interaction effect between ego-depletion manipulation and implicit theory of willpower on subsequent self-control (Experiment 3). Particularly, decrease in self-efficacy was observed only among "limited theorists" (vs. "non-limited theorists"), who believe that willpower is limited and have strong motivation to conserve mental energy. Taken together, the present research supports the idea that ego-depletion can impair self-control by motivating cognitions that favor conservation of mental resources. Implications for the role of motivated cognition in self-control impairments will be discussed.

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