Assignment One

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Research Methods in Social Psychology

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P1: Many evidences from the study of health communication show that those who struggle in social situations may be at greater risk for mental health problem. However, we may have not known definitively about how communication, as a social skill, effects physical health. **The research topic is “How communication effects people’s physical health”.**

P2: **Independent variable in this case should be communication.** To be more specific, communication is defined as a social skill that allow people to interact effectively and appropriately with others. **Dependent variable in this case is physical health/fitness.** Physical health is a state of health and well-being. It generally refers to a measure of the body's ability to function efficiently and effectively in work and leisure activities, to resist hypokinetic diseases, and to meet emergency situations.

**The basic hypothesis is that “more communication generally leads to better physical health condition”.**

P3: The measurement of communication skill is usually based on **self-reported questionnaire or investigator-administered measures**. An example of communication measurement quiz is shown in table 1. Overall, I emphasis two aspect of communication: engagement and efficiency.

Table 1. Part of a Common Communication Skill Quiz

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Not at all | rarely | sometimes | often | Very often |
| I try to anticipate and predict possible causes of confusion, and I deal with them up front. |  |  |  |  |  |
| When I write a memo, email, or other document, I give all of the background information and detail I can to make sure that my message is understood. |  |  |  |  |  |
| If I don't understand something, I tend to keep this to myself and figure it out later. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I'm surprised to find that people haven't understood what I've said. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I can tend to say what I think, without worrying about how the other person perceives it. I assume that we'll be able to work it out later. |  |  |  |  |  |

Physical fitness are such characteristics as cardiovascular-respiratory fitness, muscular strength, endurance, body composition, and flexibility (Dubbert, 1992).  **Although not directly related to health and wellness, skill-related fitness includes the components of agility, balance, coordination, speed, power, and reaction time.** Measurement of these components are summarized in Table 2. These measurements usually can only be done in lab environment with professional equipment. It ensures the reliability of the measurement, while also brings new problem including high cost and the measurement noise from lab environment.

Table 1: Common physical health measurements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type | Measurements |
| Cardiorespiratory endurance measures | expired air samples obtained while subjects perform graded maximal exercise on an ergometric device |
| Body Composition | body mass index, anthropometry or measurement of skinfold thicknesses |
| Muscle strength | abdominal and upper-arm girdle musculatures and isometric or isokinetic dynamometers and isotonic one-repetition maximum tests |
| Flexibility | a measure of hip range of motion by using equipment |

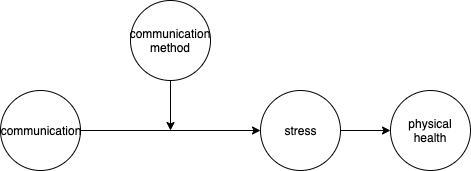
P4: **the mediator in this study can be “stress”.** This can also base on self-reported questionnaire. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is one of the most common measures for assessing global stress perceptions. Another choice is the Stress Overload Scale (SOS), which is comprised of 30 items and is designed to measure “stress overload”, a state described in stress theories as occurring when demands overwhelm resources.

**The basic hypothesis is, more communication leads to less stress, and improve the general physical health. Communication has an undirected effect on physical health.**

P4: **moderator that may be interesting for this study is: communication method.** To make it simple, I want to take a binary variable of communication type: “in person communication dominated” or “digital communication dominated”. I want to investigate it because there is a debate about whether the popularity of the social network today shorten the distance of people in the community and empower our communication. I want to the difference of conventional and modern communication methods in terms of their effects on physical health.

**My assumption would be: there is an obvious positive effect of in person (physical) communication on physical health, while the effect of digital communication on physical health is not significant.**

To summarize, please check in Figure 1. I apologize again that I made the case of this assignment too complex and misleading for the first submission.



*Figure 1*: Research Framework