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On or Off Track: Study 5 (#12600)

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This is an anonymized copy (without author names) of the pre-registration. It was created by the author(s) to use during peer-review.
A non-anonymized version (containing author names) should be made available by the authors when the work it supports is made public.

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?

Participants with a broken streak will be less likely to continue playing the games than participants with an intact streak. Participants with a broken streak will also feel less motivated to continue playing than participants with an intact streak.

Participants whose behavior is not tracked explicitly (the no information condition) will fall between these two conditions.

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

Number of participants choosing to play the next game versus stop.

Process measures: 5 items capturing motivation, 4 items capturing self-efficacy and accomplishment, 4 items capturing negative emotions. Items will be averaged together within each scale.

We expect these measures to be correlated across scales as they all capture aspects of goal-setting and goal pursuit.

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

3 between subjects conditions randomly assigned via Qualtrics.

Intact streak condition: all types of games (number and word) count towards their game tracker, leading them to have a streak once they reach game #3.

Broken streak condition: only the type of game they select counts towards their game tracker, leading them to have a streak at game #3 but a broken streak at game #4 (when we switch the type of game).

No information condition: no information is given about their past behavior, no game tracker displayed.

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

Binary Logits and chi square analyses examining effect of condition on likelihood to continue playing after game #4.

One-way ANOVAs examining the effect of condition on each of the 2 process scales (motivation, self-efficacy, negative emotions).

Mediation: Process Model 4 examining the effect of a broken streak versus an intact streak on future behavior, with motivation (5 items averaged) as the mediator.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

No participants for whom we collect our dependent variable (ie who reach game #4) will be excluded.

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.

We will recruit 800 participants on MTurk but a significant portion will decide to stop playing the games before our manipulation at game #4 (they are told they can stop the games at any time and still be paid). If we collect less than 450 participants in the first round, we will not conduct our analyses and will report the survey until we get at least 450 participants. We will use our drop-out rate from the first round to estimate the needed recruitment number for the second round.

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

Secondary analyses:

We may also see how motivation mediates the other pairs of conditions (broken v no info, intact n no info) on future behavior.

We may also analyze how condition predicts negative emotions and self-efficacy, and how those 2 scales mediate the relationship between pairs of conditions and future behavior.

Exploratory measures: we also ask a free response question about why they chose to continue/stop playing, if they enjoy the games, if they play any games/apps similar to the games in the study, and if they viewed playing as a behavior that they should limit/constrain.