

Emotion Regulation on Goal Pursuits

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Abstract:

Emotion Regulation is the process through which a person inflects their emotions consciously and unconsciously (Bargh, Williams, 2007; Rottenberg, Gross, 2003) to aptly respond to substantial/environmental demands (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Emotion regulation is the development of emotion which is determined by which emotion we have, when we have them and how we express or experience it. With determining these emotions how a person achieves his/her goal is what we investigate in this study. Psychological flexibility has the capability to change behavior in such a way that it integrates the consciousness with an open approach to one's thoughts and feelings which is a constant while pursuing a goal. Hayes (1999) suggested that the psychological flexibility benefits mental health by diminishing the impact of negative internal events and helping the person to clearly define and achieve the goals important to them. Emotional stability is the process of a person's personality trying to continually strive for greater levels of emotional health, in both spheres; intra-physically and intra-personally.

Keywords: : emotion regulation, emotional stability, psychological flexibility, goal, goal attainment, emotions.

Article History: Submitted: 05th August, 2020,
Published: 30th September, 2020.

Revised: 20th August, 2020,

Accepted: 30th August, 2020,

I. INTRODUCTION

Goal pursuits according to Gollwitzer consists of four stages. To achieve a goal, it is important that firstly, one starts focusing on only one major goal he/she wants to achieve which is called the pre-decisional phase. Secondly, they plan and initiate working on their goal. Planning and making an if-then plan reinforces the person's regard to achieve his/her goal and behavioral performance; making this the pre-actional stage. Thirdly, pursuing and achieving the goal is called the actional phase; to gear up the process of reaching the goal the person needs to act upon his goal and start pursuing his plan. Lastly, the person evaluates and makes further plans on other goals that he kept on hold which is called the post-actional stage.

Achievement of goals needs motivation. The concept of motivation i.e. the activities which are initiated, directed and assisted to fulfil the needs which could either be psychological, emotional or physical can be put under two types of motivation; extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In a study, it was seen that students believed that they can achieve goals with the right amount of effort, and their willingness to apply that effort can be elaborated if the tasks given are specific and short term. So as to motivate the students or any other person, motivation needs to be in the right amount; a person can make these judgement calls for the task/goal he needs to complete. But when a person pushes his limit to demonstrate a behavior with higher performance it can be termed as achievement behavior. There has to be some kind of motivation structure to accelerate achievement behavior.

When the person is able to endeavour his goals, his self-esteem is boosted with progress shown in achieving his goals which gives his life a purpose. When a person is focused on his goal he feels empowered in their pursuits and feels

satisfied when within his peers or social groups. But sometimes, the self-opinion of the person's ability and self-directed behavior can be negative as they are only focused on winning and outperforming others. Studies showed if the person only focuses on self-improvement without the comparison with others they have better recall memory and satisfied wellbeing. All these debating factors while pursuing a goal of completing a task suggests to us that a person needs to be flexible as thoughts and behavior in these mindset makes oneself stressful. A goal directed behavior creates a positive effect as a constant motivator. When a flexible goal directed behavior is reflected it can result in motivation. Increased motivation can let people readjust their actions within the situations. More interestingly, flexibility or rigidity is directly related to positive affect goal directed behavior. Psychological flexibility has been found to enhance one's ability to handle stressful situations. Emotion enables us to contribute to new spheres of motivation, goal directed behavior and greater variety of actions to cope with competitive life demands.

Emotions help in physical and mental activity transmitting strength from different directions. Emotions filter our senses while angry or happy. They act as a regulator to our senses when we feel a certain kind of emotion. Emotions or the patterns of emotions a person experiences at a given time influences everything that person does. Emotional flexibility refers to the ability to acknowledge a situation-appropriate emotional aspect and recover from one's original emotional response when situation changes. Emotional flexibility has been linked/associated with psychological health. There are two elements to emotional flexibility: sensitivity to situational demands and ability to regulate

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emotions. Emotion regulation capacity can be demonstrated by expression-suppression-experience-avoidance channels. Emotional flexibility plays an important role while achieving a goal as without this, a person won't be in the right mind to pursue something. Emotional flexibility comes under emotion regulation. Emotion regulation is the process by which one influences three conditions; 'which emotions we have', 'when we have them', how we express or/and experience it'. In recent years emotion regulation has been integrated into the models of pathopsychology. Re-evaluating stressful situations or unpleasant environments and replacing them with positive perspectives, positive interactions and problem solving can reduce the stress of the person. Emotional stability is the process of a person's personality trying to continually strive for greater levels of emotional health, in both spheres; intra-physically and intra-personally. It has been indicated that if there is a delay in satisfaction of needs, higher tolerance level, low frustration level, believe in long term planning flexibility of delaying or/and revising your plan as the demands of the situation and the person can keep himself under-control; he/she is said to be emotionally stable

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY - It has been found that there have been six other collaborated sub-processes that define psychological flexibility: Acceptance, cognitive defusion, flexible attention to the present, self-as-observer, values-based action, and committed action. These processes need active emotion regulation, attention; (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Larsen and Prizmic, 2004). To overcome these differences, we use the demands-resources theory (JD-R: Demerouti et al., 2001) which is used to examine a cognitive-behavioural pattern, psychological flexibility. This theory involves the acceptance of avoidance emotions even the negative emotions while enduring the goal directed behavior (eg., Hayes et al., 1999). For example, imagine a waiter facing a dissatisfied, irritated customer. Using surface acting, the waiter might fake a smile and seem to be calm while internally fume in anger and frustration. In the meantime, if the waiter tries deep thinking with the technique of deep breathing and having positive thoughts; he can release his frustration and feel calm (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1979). A peculiar therapy, acceptance and commitment theory (ACT) is based on psychological flexibility. There has been much overlapping between the traditional cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and ACT. because of which ACT has been labelled as third-wave. Acceptance and commitment go hand in hand as these two processes characterize the CBT pattern known as psychological flexibility. Acceptance and commitment refer to just accepting to the moment in the present without bringing other associated thoughts, emotions but adapting the correct behavior which is required for the current situation while pursuing the goal (Hayes, 2006; Martin et al, 1998). If defined more explicitly, acceptance is the zeal to experience thoughts and emotions inclusive of negative ones like anger, frustration without letting others reflect their actions (Bond and Bunce, 2003). Whereas commitment refers to tailoring one's behavior as needed to meet goals of a person irrespective of all the negative thoughts and emotions

(Hayes, 2006). Technically speaking, psychological flexibility is when the cognition communicates with the contingencies of reinforcement to help or interfere with the ability to pursue goals. Hayes (1999) suggested that the psychological flexibility benefits mental health by diminishing the impact of negative internal events and helping the person to clearly define and achieve the goals important to them. The intervention based on ACT gives positive response/outcomes in people with psychological problems. In work settings too, psychological flexibility has been found to enhance the employer's ability to handle stressful situations (Bond and Bunce, 2003) which means one needs to keep his emotions in check so as to overcome all psychological problems. Emotional flexibility comes under emotion regulation. Before which, it is important to understand what emotions are and how all this is interconnected.

EMOTIONS - Over the past years, emotions have been a part of debate for science of behavior. Some scientists suggested that emotional theory is not fundamental than activation, arousal or any explanatory power (Lindsley, 1957) whereas others (Izard, 1971, 1972; Tomkins, 1962, 1963) established that emotions are the primary motivation of human beings. While some established their research on grounds that not every emotion a person feels is permanent. Many emotions are short term and are not left with any affect or action whereas some emotions are left with us for a very long time which may disrupt or disorganized some kind of behavior which are not beneficial to personally and to others (Arnold, 1960a, 1960b; Lazarus, 1968; Young 1961). Whereas others argued that emotions are important for organizing, motivating and assisting behavior (Izard, 1971, 1972; Mowrer, 1960). Emotions are very important for the survival of a human being because being in touch with your emotions makes you feel happy, sad, joyful. Guilty, worried, anxious etc.

EMOTION REGULATION- Emotion Regulation is the process through which a person inflicts their emotions consciously and unconsciously (Bargh, Williams, 2007; Rottenberg, Gross, 2003) to aptly respond to substantial/environmental demands (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). Theoretical models ally successful emotional regulation with healthy bodies, improved relationships and improved work performance (John and Gross, 2004). And complication in attaining emotion regulation associates' mental disorder. Theoretical models ally successful emotional regulation with healthy bodies, improved relationships and improved work performance (John and Gross, 2004). And complication in attaining emotion regulation associates' mental disorder. Re-evaluating stressful situations or unpleasant environments and replacing them with positive perspectives, positive interactions and problem solving can reduce the stress of the person (Gross, 1998). Lately, Gross' (1998) influential model of emotion regulation focuses on reappraisal as an approach that concludes in positive emotional and positive physical responses to emotion evoking stimuli. Recently a study (Gratz & Roemer, 2004) concluded an increased interest in mindfulness as an adaptive emotion regulation. Hayes (1999) showed his concern on experiential avoidance. Experiential avoidance can be defined as the elimination of a multitude of psychological struggles/experiences including thoughts,

emotions, sensation, memory and urges. Because of which it has been argued that it results in negative outcomes, arising from problems with mood to substance abuse to negative thoughts preventing them from turning into actions (Wenzlaff, Wegner, 2000). Similarly, Emotion regulation models of eating disorders such psychological experiences lead to compulsive eating and unfit compensatory behaviors (Heatherton & Baumeister, 1991; Mc Carthy, 1990). If the person suffering accepts his negative emotions, thoughts and outcome there can be developed correspondence treatment in ACT (Hayes, 1990). Comparatively talking about our topic about achieving goals, emotion regulation plays a vital role in keeping a balance in the person pursuing a goal. We discuss the avoidance of thoughts, people, situations, discomfort, difficulties in this experiment. Avoidance of these factors for a long time do not result in a positive outcome. So, it is necessary to give a chance to ACT and get better results and feel better while under pressure. Avoidance seems to be a two- factor theory which proposes; firstly, fear is inherited through classical conditioning and secondly, as avoidance seems as a solution to them, fear remains constant in them and is maintained through operant conditioning. Conditions visible like this results in anxiety disorders, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) etc. (Lissek, 2009; Foa & Kozak, 1986). Thus, the three emotion regulation strategies that have been protective against psychopathology are reappraisal, problem solving and acceptance.

III. HYPOTHESIS

1. More the emotional stability, the better chances are of achieving the goal.
2. More emotionally flexible one is while pursuing his/her goal the higher chance there is of achieving a goal.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The data of this study has been collected from different 13 nationalities i.e. on Indian, American, Arabian, Israeli, Turkey, Canadian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Nigerian, Kenyan, French, Egyptian, Greek aged between 20 -40 years with first or at least second language as English. This is an experimental study which was done on university students specifically on international students to analyze if emotional stability or/and emotional flexibility is the predictor of goal pursuits. They assigned themselves one positive goal that they would like to achieve in four weeks and one negative concern in their life they would like to address to get rid of. Participants were given questionnaires as : Brief Aspirations and Concerns in Life Inventory (BACLI), Discomfort in Goal Pursuit Scale (DIGP), Brief Experiential Avoidance Questionnaire (BEAQ), Motivation To Pursue My Goal, Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), and a follow up scale was invented to review if the participants were able to achieve their goals. The follow up was done via email after four weeks of self-assigned goals.

There were some common goals found in these participants. Some of the positive goals were:

Completing dissertation, losing weight, starting gyming, Getting a job.

Some of the negative goals were: Stop overeating, avoid overthinking, stop procrastination, Avoid junk-food.

According to each scale and coding was done for various variables wherever needed. After which the data was put in the IBM SPSS statistics version 24 for statistical analysis where two more variables were added with a scale from 0-5 and 6-10 named achieve1(goal1 positive) and achieve2(goal 2 negative) against the follow up data follow up 1 and follow 2 respectively. A series of correlation and linear regression was performed to check the hypothesis and predictor of goal attainment.

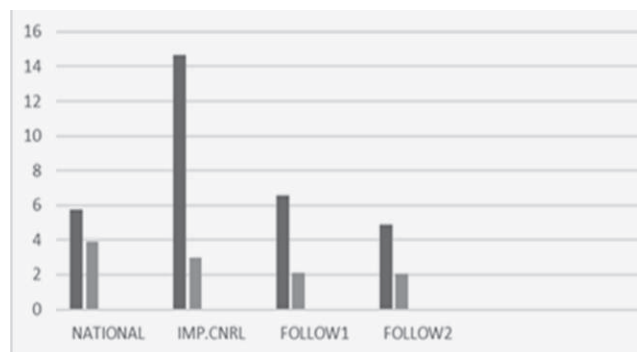


Figure1 : Impulse Control as A Predictor of Goal Pursuits in International Students

Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
	(Constant)	11.947	2.012		.000
	Impulse Control	-.365	.134	-.519	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Followupgoal1
FIGURE2 : follow up 1 REGRESSION ON POSITIVE GOAL

Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
	(Constant)	19.814	7.578		.026
	Non acceptance emotions	-.599	.322	-1.037	.093
	Difficulty in reaching goal	-.412	.285	-.603	.179
	Impulse Control	.148	.303	.218	.635
	Emotional Awareness	-.119	.169	-.223	.497

Emotion Regulation Strategies	.441	.258	1.098	1.712	.118
Emotional Clarity	.014	.264	.022	.055	.957
BEAQTOT	.020	.049	.113	.408	.692
DIGFInt	-.044	.135	-.111	-.326	.751
DIGFFlex	-.231	.117	-.533	-1.974	.077
Motivation to pursue goal 2	-.653	.646	-.362	-1.012	.336
BACLITOT2	.266	.672	.147	.396	.700

a. Dependent Variable: Followupgoal2 FIGURE3: follow up 2; REGRESSION DONE ON NEGATIVE CONCERNS

V. RESULTS

There were 22 participants ($n=22$) which showed Mean= (BACLI 1 = 7.29, S.D= .972)(BACLI 2 = 6.27, S.D = 1.12)(DERSTOT= 93.86, S.D= 16.51)(BEAQTOT= 53, S.D= 11.45)(DIGPInt= 32.72, S.D= 5.11)(DIG Flex= 28.45, S.D= 4.67)(followup1 = 6.59, S.D = 2.10),(followup2= 4.86, S.D= 2.03).

23% of variants show how likely someone is to achieve their goals. Impulse control is the predictor of goal attainment in this study($p=.013$). Regression was done on both goals; positive goal(follow-up1) and negative concern(follow-up2). In follow up1, regression model; impulse control is a significant factor($p<.05$). There was no significance found in follow up2 regression.

There were some similar goals within the participants.

There were some similar goals among the participants that they wanted to achieve in four weeks. Some of them are: the positive goals; completing dissertation, losing weight, starting gyming, getting a job. Negative concerns; stop overeating, avoid overthinking, stop procrastination, avoid eating junk food. Out of 22, 13 participants were able to achieve their goals. 9 participants could not or were in the process of achieving their goals.

In the questionnaire, MTPG participants showed that if given a longer duration, they would have been able to achieve their goals justifying that their goal was big- and the-time duration was not apt. The preferred time was three months not four weeks.

The diversity of participants showed a different result. We see different kinds and ways of them pursuing things. Cultural intelligence is something to be addressed. It can have different meanings. It may seem as a behavior considered intelligence at some point, but naturally it is just a specific culture. This may include quick grasp of any application of earlier learned information in some cultures, getting friendly or open to a conversation with strangers i.e. other cultures. On the other hand, cultural intelligence can also mean that a person is prone to adjustments and has lived a nomadic life so adjusting to a new lifestyle is a learned skill which can be achieved for them in minimal stress. They are interactive and extroverted when blended with the culture they are put in easily. These definitions can be concluded by saying that they

make their adjustments in their own behavior with their own comfort level. For some, adjusting to a new culture, new country comes easy but for some it takes a huge leap of faith, self-confidence and getting out of comfort zone to establish themselves. Firstly, the language barrier is the major zone they have problems with. As their first language is not English; communicating, understanding, writing assignments everything becomes frustrating. Having common cultures friends or a mixture of cultural friends helps as they all help each other and self-confidence is built again. So, to analyse this behavior and predict their stimulator of goal attainment this experiment was designed.

VI. CONCLUSION

The questionnaires of this study bring the participants to relate to their real-life situations. Not every human character can be targeted to experimental manipulation. Therefore, the aspect of the variable studied cannot be studied experimentally. Many participants became focused as this study gave them a timeline of four weeks to accomplish their goals. Participants with severe negative concerns felt relieved as this gave them an edge to get motivated to complete their positive goal diminishing their thought of practicing their negative concern. This study helps the person with their personal goals as well as professional goals as many aspects of life are reflected when a person wants to accomplish something. It involves: social commitment, personal joy, some sacrifices, emotional awareness, emotional stability, motivation and many more. This changes the perception of the person and the way he looks at any given opportunities. As impulse control is the predictor of goal pursuits. If a person has better competence of keeping his thoughts, emotions and actions in control without having negative effects like avoidance, paranoia, anxiety etc. therefore has a better chance in achieving his goals.

VII. DISCUSSION

Achievement of goals plays a vital role for international students from a different perspective. When we talk about goals for this specific kind, we divided their goal types into two: according to goal theory; task goals and ego goals. Task goals generally indicates the perception of the school for any given assignment which is meant for positive psychological well-being. Whereas ego goals underline the negative psychological well-being that is usually the result of decisions taken by themselves. Students/individuals take part in such tasks so as to evolve and develop their skills, gain competence and improve understanding. The students interested in task goals are expected to get qualitative results with enhanced self-regulatory learning strategies. In contrast to this, ego goals focus on quick results rather than meditative learning which results in half knowledge of the subject which gives a negative view to the task. Although these goals were seen to be perceived by students with low competence. And for students with high competence, ego goals were associated with some negative(personal) opportunities of their own and some positive outcomes. The role of goals chiefly is of learning and achieving although task goals and ego goals affect a wide spectrum of actions, thoughts and emotional

well-being, self-evaluation, patterns of behavior, coping and emotion. In conclusion to this, if a person brings his ego in between his goals or winning something and switches to ego goals rather than task goals he is more likely to lose control in the long run and there is no benefit of this, only negative outcomes.

VIII. REFERENCES

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