

Departmental Seminar

The Multi-lab Replication of the Ego-depletion Effect: Summary, Impact and Implications for the Replication “Crisis”

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. | April 25, 2017 (Tuesday)

CPD-2.16, Central Podium Level | Centennial Campus | The University of Hong Kong



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Abstract

Self-control has been conceptualized as a limited resource with the acute state of self-control failure termed ego-depletion. A substantive body of research, including meta-analyses has supported the ego-depletion effect in multiple contexts, including health behaviour. However, subsequent analyses has raised questions over the strength of the effect, with some estimates suggesting it is no different from zero. In response, my colleagues and I coordinated a pre-registered replication of an ego-depletion experiment with collaborators in multiple labs ($N = 23$) and meta-analyzed the resulting data set ($N = 2,141$). The analysis indicated an effect that was no different from zero for multiple outcome variables. I will summarize the fundamental ideas behind the replication project, outline its methods from inception to dissemination, and discuss its implications for the ego-depletion effect and the field in general. I will also outline the impact of the project including responses from the media and scientific community, and its broader implications for the ‘replication crisis’. The replication has catalyzed subsequent reanalyses that have further extended its findings including the application of mediation analyses on the role of effort and statistical tests to detect bias. The replication has influenced theory development and further research. However, it also has limitations and the bounds of its contribution should be recognized. I will provide recommendations to guide future replications including identification of an effect of interest, consultation with original study authors, pre-registration, coordinating labs, analysing results, and disseminating findings.

~All are Welcome~