Can the Performance of High Self-Monitors Be Influenced by the Perceived Success of their Peers?

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Abstract

Prior research demonstrates that high self-monitors tend to alter their behavior based on social situations, and more generally, that certain cues can be given to people that can influence them to alter their performance on an exam. It has not, however, taken into account the introduction of motivation that could affect the performance of high self-monitors. Thus, the current research was conducted to establish a connection among performance, self-monitoring, and motivation via a social component. All participants completed a practice GRE exam as well as several personality questionnaires, including Snyder's Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1975). About half of the participants were randomly assigned to receive fabricated information (the social component) regarding their peers' performance on the GRE, stating that their peers had performed well above average on the test. An effect between condition and self-monitoring was not found, such that high self-monitors exposed to the social component did not perform significantly better than did low self-monitors. While no conclusive results were found, our research provides insight into self-monitoring and the importance of relevant and strong social components of manipulation.

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Knowing how to present oneself in certain circumstances can be invaluable; the right or wrong word, action, or phrase can completely change the dynamic of an interaction for better or worse. But sometimes it might seem like some people are just better at adapting to social situations than others. This phenomenon is called self-monitoring, and it is the way in which a person regulates or controls his or her behavior around others, and includes both verbal and non-verbal cues and actions (Snyder, 1974). In general, people can be categorized as high or low self-monitors (Snyder, 1974). Low self-monitors tend to behave in a consistent manner regardless of the social situation, tend to have a small group of very close friends, and often prefer to let others keep conversations going, particularly at parties or large social functions (Freidus, 2011; Kim, 2005; Snyder, 1979). High self-monitors are often described as 'social chameleons' for their tendency to adapt their behaviors to each unique social situation with which they might be presented (Snyder, 1979). This can be extremely beneficial and lead to success not only under various social conditions, but also in settings such as the workplace and academic institutions (Baron & Markman, 2000; Bizzi & Soda, 2011; Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Dabbs, Evans, Hopper, & Purvis, 1980; Kilduff & Day, 1994).

Perhaps one of the best settings in which to achieve success is the workplace. It is generally acknowledged that some individuals tend to perform better and get ahead more easily than others in professional settings, but can a specific characteristic be directly linked to job success? Kilduff and Day (1994) sought to establish a connection between self-monitoring and job performance, and whether high self-monitors tended to excel more than low self-monitors. The researchers followed the job success of 139 masters program graduates over 5 years,

tracking their promotions within and between companies, self-monitoring behaviors, job mobility (how often the participant changed jobs and/or employers), and geographic mobility (how often the participant moved). The results demonstrated that high self-monitors tended to move far more often than did low self-monitors, and that these moves more often paid off in promotions across companies. The researchers also found that even when the participants stayed with a company for a length of time, within that period, high self-monitors received more internal promotions than did low self-monitors (Kilduff & Day, 1994). These results could imply that because high self-monitors are very adept at reading social situations, they would also be able to correctly predict the actions that would most often lead to better job opportunities, and would then choose to remain in a company or move, depending on where they felt they would find the most success.

Research suggests that high self-monitors excel not only in professional settings, but also in social settings (Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Kilduff & Day, 1994). Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames (2006) explored the ways in which high self-monitors act to achieve status in social situations. They concentrated mainly on exchange behavior and relations, or how people tend to help each other; the hierarchy of helping behavior and status; and the way that social dynamics can change based upon these behaviors (Flynn et al., 2006). Through several studies, the researchers investigated exchange behavior, that is, the exchange of advice, help, and support in social settings, and the way it is perceived among high and low self-monitors by gauging participants' responses to hypothetical situations involving exchange behavior, and with questionnaires regarding social status, self-monitoring, and perceived generosity. The results revealed that high self-monitors were much better at perceiving exchange relations, that is, who had helped whom, who held a higher status in a hypothetical group, etc. The results also showed

that high self-monitors were very skilled at achieving high status in groups because they were able to portray themselves as more generous, whether this was achieved through social manipulations, or actual generous behavior (Flynn et al., 2006). This study and its results again lend support to the abilities of high self-monitors to not only change their own behaviors to better fit social situations and in this case gain status, but also their skills at successfully reading social situations, which likely aid in the decisions that self-monitors make in order to garner social favor.

While high self-monitors often take an active role in their efforts to gain social status and favor, the tendency for these individuals to adapt their behavior to social situations often manifests itself unconsciously as well (Flynn et al., 2006; Lick, Johnson, & Gill, 2013; Snyder, 1979). Cheng and Chartrand (2003) studied mimicry in social situations among both high and low self-monitors. In two different studies, the researchers observed physical cues and the frequency with which individuals would imitate them. In both studies, participants were instructed to take turns describing a photograph from a magazine with a confederate acting as a peer, a superior, or a subordinate. To measure physical mimicry, the confederate shook his or her foot repeatedly, and the participants' movements in turn were noted via a camera recording. The results revealed that high self-monitors tended to exhibit significantly more physical mimicry than did low self-monitors, particularly when the confederate was acting as a peer or an authoritative figure. The research also demonstrated that low self-monitors engaged in less mimicry, and did not alter their mimicry depending upon the confederate's social status (Cheng and Chartrand, 2003). These results suggest that the tendency for high self-monitors to mimic others is so ingrained in their personality that the propensity to imitate and gain favor with others

pervades even unconscious movement. The research also suggests that high self-monitors also tailor their behavior to another individual based on this person's social status.

Not only do high self-monitors tend to alter their behavior depending upon another person, but they also have been observed changing their attitudes regarding others (Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Harnish, Bridges, & Krajci, 2012; Snyder, 1979). Cowley and Czellar (2012) studied the effects of self-monitoring on attitudes and partiality towards other individuals. In one of their two studies, the researchers ascertained self-monitoring as well as participants' attitudes and ambivalence towards 12 different topics. These objects included watching television, safe sex, the self, and other activities and practices. The participants were also asked their parents' attitudes and ambivalence levels regarding these 12 objects (Cowley and Czellar, 2012). Participants were also assigned to think about a person they either liked or disliked, and were instructed to give this person's attitudes towards the previously mentioned objects. The results showed that high self-monitors were more likely to feel ambivalence when they found themselves with differing attitudes from a person with whom they were familiar and liked. Thus, the results revealed a tendency and desire in high self-monitors to experience the least amount of discrepancy possible among peers that these participants were fond of (Cowley and Czellar, 2012). The research suggests that high self-monitors prefer to experience the least amount of dissonance among their peers as possible, and prefer to have ideas and attitudes similar to others, and that would be considered socially acceptable.

The tendency for high self-monitors to be well-liked and accepted among peers often results in benefits for these individuals not only in the workplace, but also in small social groups (Fuglestad, & Snyder, 2010; Kilduff & Day, 1994). Eby, Cader, & Noble (2003) researched the roles that high and low self-monitors tend to undertake in certain social situations. In their

research, the experimenters divided participants into small groups, each consisting of four individuals. Each group was given hypothetical funds to be added to a budget, and were instructed to allocate the money in the most practical and pragmatic manner possible. The group was not divided into a leader and subordinates; instead, the group was simply instructed to work together (Eby et al., 2003). The interactions of the groups were observed not only by confederates, but also by observers who were blind to the study; self-monitoring was also assessed among participants. The results showed that high self-monitors demonstrated leader behavior and tendencies, measured via the General Leadership Impression scale and nominations and rankings of leaders provided by group members (Lord et al., 1984). These leader behaviors manifested as correct appraisals of the group's constraints and the altering of the leader's own behavior to properly address these needs. Thus, high self-monitors were significantly more likely to emerge as leaders than were low self-monitors (Eby et al., 2003; Lord et al., 1984). These results suggest that high self-monitors take leadership roles not only for social status, but also because they simply are better adept at guiding others due to the aspects of their personality that enable them to accurately and effectively interpret social situations and act upon them accordingly.

Research has shown that high self-monitors tend to change their physical and verbal behavior based upon the social situation they are in, but in what ways does self-monitoring influence the way individuals speak with one another? (Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Eby et al., 2003; Flynn & Ames, 2006; Kilduff & Day, 1994). Dabbs, Evans, Hopper, and Purvis (1980) sought to assess a connection between conversational behaviors and self-monitoring. In their study, the researchers observed and recorded conversations among 164 participants divided into pairs. The groups were instructed to converse with one another and get to know each other, while

judges observed and scored the interactions between the pairs later using the videotaped material and recordings from microphones worn by the participants on their lapels. In one study, participant pairs were created by matching self-monitoring and gender. In the second study, pairs were created based upon gender only, enabling participants of different levels of self-monitoring to interact with one another (Dabbs et al., 1980). The results indicated that high self-monitors spoke more quickly with each other than did low self-monitors or high-low pairs, and also tended to speak in a more simplistic and superficial manner. High and low self-monitors tended to interact and converse easily with one another, and low self-monitors actually began to imitate the actions and conversation styles of the high self-monitors that they conversed with (Dabbs et al., 1980). These results could lend support to many different theories. High self-monitors might have spoken more quickly and superficially with one another because they were aware that they had only a short 10 minutes to get to know each other, and were likely able to comprehend that this would be a brief interaction, but that they should make the most of the interaction by speaking quickly and about as many topics as possible on the surface. This would be consistent with the behaviors of high self-monitors, as they are very skilled at gauging the most socially desirable behavior for each individual situation. These results also suggest that high self-monitors might effectively radiate social convention, and when speaking to low self-monitors, their evident grasp of the conversation and situation might encourage low self-monitors to overcome their social anxiety and converse more easily and comfortably (Freidus, 2011).

To summarize but a few characteristics of high self-monitors, they tend to unconsciously mimic peers in conversation and physical cues to promote affiliation, often receive more internal promotions with companies, and are more inclined to take leadership roles in group settings (Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Eby et al., 2003; Kilduff & Day, 1994). High self-monitors also tend

to believe that they give the best advice, and rate their counsel more highly than do low self-monitors (Harnish et al., 2012). Research suggests that this is because high self-monitors tend to give external socially-based advice, which they feel is more relevant and important than the internal value-based advice that low self-monitors give (Harnish et al., 2012). Each of these traits is based upon social individuals changing how they portray themselves, but research has also shown that other internal and external factors can be universally influential in altering behavior as well (Murayama & Elliot, 2012).

Motivation is a multi-faceted concept that can encompass both external and internal pressures (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014). Thus, motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation generally comes from within, and can be likened to the satisfaction or happiness one gets from completing a task or fulfilling an internal expectation (Cerasoli et al., 2014). Intrinsic motivation has been shown not only to improve creativity, but also performance under some competitive conditions (Eisenberg & Thompson, 2011; Eitam, Kennedy, & Higgins, 2013). Extrinsic motivation, in turn, involves some outside force, such as the promise of a reward, an acknowledgment, or even a good grade on an exam (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Extrinsic motivation can be extremely effective and is reasonably easy to induce, and can be utilized in academic, competitive, and social settings (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Forgeard & Mecklenburg, 2013; Raufelder, Jagenow, Drury, & Hoferichter, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Extrinsic motivation can be used for different purposes such as swaying opinions and encouraging actions or compliance (Cerasoli et al., 2014). In general, psychologists distinguish intrinsic motivation from extrinsic motivation by asserting that a person is intrinsically motivated if the cause or goal they are trying to achieve is personal or especially relevant to themselves (Cerasoli et al., 2014). Conversely, acting from extrinsic motivation is seen as a means to an end,

with a specific reward such as monetary compensation or temporary academic success in mind (Jenkins, Mitra, Gupta, & Shaw, 1998). Overall, research has shown that regardless of extrinsic or intrinsic incentives, motivation can have a powerful influence on individuals in many different settings (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Eisenberg & Thompson, 2011; Eitam et al., 2013; Forgeard & Mecklenburg, 2013; Jenkins et al., 1998; Raufelder et al., 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2013).

Based upon prior research, it can be acknowledged that motivation has many applications and can influence people in various ways (Cerasoli et al., 2014). However, motivation can also have detrimental effects, as can be seen in the research conducted on harmful social behaviors (Amiot, Sansfaçon, & Louis, 2013). In their study, researchers distributed questionnaires to 242 female and male students of varying ages at a university in Montreal. These questionnaires assessed several measures, the first being the frequency with which participants engaged in harmful behaviors. The psychologists defined these harmful behaviors as those that harmed the physical and/or psychological well-being of oneself or others, and gave participants a list on which to check off which behaviors and with what frequency the subjects had engaged in. Researchers also measured the motivations of the participants for the harmful behavior that they engaged in most frequently, asking them why they did so, that is, if they were internally or externally motivated. Finally the questionnaires asked participants about their social in-group, and whether their social group was influencing or approving of the harmful behaviors they personally engaged in. The results showed that those participants who reported that their in-group endorsed and encouraged a harmful behavior felt pressure to engage in said behavior on an external level, but also reported high intrinsic motivation as well (Amiot et al., 2013). These results have several implications in terms of motivation as well as social influence and pressure. Psychologists have suggested that within social groups, the pressure and incentives of in-group

members can be so strong that ideals shared by the group can then be internalized by individual members and lead such members to believe that these beliefs were theirs all along (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It is unclear if this is the case in the current study, however, as the participants with encouraging peers still experienced external pressures. Overall, the current research suggests that in general, social norms and the behaviors of others could have a strong impact on not only the beliefs, but also the actions and motivations of an individual.

While research has been performed on the effects of several factors on performance, these studies have mainly focused on competition, and have been inconclusive (Murayama & Elliot, 2012). Researchers have, however, consistently found that motivation can lead to improvement in certain settings (Eisenberg & Thompson, 2011; Eitam et al., 2013). We can conclude from prior research that motivation can come from many sources, and involve both internal and external incentives, and can even extend to in-group behaviors and social influence. Thus, it would stand to reason that a group of people particularly adept at perceiving and responding to social cues and pressures might then be more susceptible to motivations of a social nature. High self-monitors, as previously discussed, tend to act in ways that will earn them social status. They do this through advice-giving, physical mimicry, leadership assertion, and other manners that will lead to a favorable social presentation on their part (Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Eby et al., 2003; Harnish et al., 2012; Kilduff & Day, 1994). Were high self-monitors to receive motivation of a social nature, we therefore believe that they would respond to it, and alter their behavior accordingly to be congruent with the social cues provided. We also believe that this effect could be extended even to improved performance on a given task.

We chose to use the GRE standardized test to act as the measure of performance for the current research, as it would be familiar to participants in that it is similar to the SAT

standardized test in question style, but it is also difficult and distinctive enough that no single participant would have a significant advantage over another (Educational Testing Service, 2014). We randomly assigned half of the participants to the experimental condition, in which they were told that their peers, that is, fellow Union College students had performed well above average on the GRE, in the 92nd percentile. This information thus acted as our social motivation, as we believed that high self-monitors would respond positively to this cue, and consequently alter their behavior in the form of their own performance to be congruent with that of their social in-group. Hence, we hypothesized that when provided with a source of social motivation, high self-monitors would then improve their performance to correspond with that of their peers.

Method

Participants

74 Union College Students took part in our study. 34 freshmen, 17 sophomores, 12 juniors, and 11 seniors participated in the research. These students were comprised of 41 females and 33 males, ranging from 18 to 24 years old. The participants were offered either 30 minutes worth of class credit for their Psychology courses or $4 in financial compensation for their time.

Materials

As our research sought to study the performance of Union College students on the GRE standardized test, we compiled a set of practice GRE questions from the Educational Testing Service (2014). See Appendix A.1 for the complete set of questions. Several questionnaires were also used to gauge various aspects of the participants' personalities. Snyder's Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1975) was used for our primary analysis. See Appendix A.2 for the full list of questions that were shown to the participants. The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996) was also distributed to the participants. See Appendix A.3 for the questions given

for this scale. Finally, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Marlowe and Crowne, 1960) was distributed to participants. See Appendix A.4 for the full list of questions associated with this scale that were shown to the participants.

Procedure

Upon entering the laboratory, participants were instructed to read and sign an informed consent form. After completing the form, participants sat at computers and began the study. First, all participants were given information regarding the GRE standardized test (Educational Testing Service, 2014). The participants were told that while not all students take the examination, performance on the test has been shown to be an important predictor of many later outcomes, including lifetime earnings. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two groups. The control group then proceeded with the study by taking a set of practice GRE questions. The experimental group, however, was then given additional, fabricated information regarding the GRE exam. These participants were told that the majority of Union College students typically performed well above average on the GRE, in the 92nd percentile, and that in general "Union College students like you perform exceptionally well on this examination." The participants in the experimental group then continued on to answer the practice GRE questions, and all participants proceeded in the same fashion for the rest of the study.

Following the practice GRE questions, participants completed three personality questionnaires, including Snyder's Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1975). These questionnaires also included the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Marlowe and Crowne, 1960) and the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996). Upon completing these questionnaires, participants were asked to provide demographic information; these items

included age, gender, SAT scores, class year, college and high school GPA. Participants were also asked how personally meaningful they felt the GRE was to them, whether they planned to take the exam in the future or if they had taken it already, and how well they believed Union College students tended to perform on the GRE. Participants were then debriefed regarding the true nature of the study, and were made aware of the manipulation and the reason why it was necessary for the research. Finally, the participants were compensated appropriately and thanked for their participation.

Results

First we assessed the reliability of each of the personality scales used in our study. Within the Revised Adult Attachment Scale, three subscales can be computed; closeness, dependency, and anxiety. For the closeness subscale, the items were correlated, ($\alpha = .82$). For the dependency subscale, the items were correlated, ($\alpha = .80$). Within the third subscale, the anxiety subscale, the items were correlated, ($\alpha = .81$). Next, we assessed the reliability of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. These items were correlated, ($\alpha = .77$). Finally, we assessed the reliability of Snyder's Revised Self-Monitoring Scale. These items were correlated, ($\alpha = .77$).

In a manipulation check, participants were asked to rate how well they believed Union College students performed on the GRE on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 corresponding to *well below average* and 5 corresponding to *well above average*. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare participants' ratings of how well they thought Union College students performed on the GRE in the control and experimental conditions. There was not a significant effect of condition, $t(72) = 1.90$, $p = .65$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not differ significantly in their ratings of how well they believed Union College students

performed on the GRE (M = 3.94) from the ratings of participants in the control condition (M = 3.59).

GRE scores were submitted to a 2 (self-monitoring: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a main effect of self-monitoring, $F(1,70) = 4.92$, $p = .03$, such that low self-monitors scored significantly higher on the GRE (M = 4.98) than did high self-monitors (M = 4.15). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1, 70) = .80$, $p = .37$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not score significantly higher on the GRE (M = 4.40) than did participants in the control condition (M = 4.74). These effects were not qualified by a self-monitoring x condition interaction, $F(1,70) = .01$, $p = .93$.

Next, GRE scores were submitted to a 2 (social desirability: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was not a main effect of social desirability, $F(1,70) = .04$, $p = .83$, such that participants with high social desirability did not score significantly higher on the GRE (M = 4.50) than did participants with low social desirability (M = 4.58). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1, 70) = .81$, $p = .37$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not score significantly higher on the GRE (M = 4.37) than did participants in the control condition (M = 4.71). These effects were not qualified by a social desirability x condition interaction, $F(1,70) = 3.53$, $p = .06$.

GRE scores were then submitted to a 2 (anxiety: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was not a main effect of anxiety, $F(1,70) = 1.34$, $p = .25$, such that participants with low anxiety did not score significantly higher on the GRE (M = 4.78) than did participants with high anxiety (M = 4.34). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1, 70) = 1.00$, $p = .32$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not

score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.37$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = 4.75$). These effects were not qualified by an anxiety x condition interaction, $F(1,70) = 2.76$, $p = .10$.

GRE scores were next submitted to a 2 (closeness: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was not a main effect of closeness, $F(1,70) = .49$, $p = .49$, such that participants with low closeness did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.39$) than did participants with high closeness ($M = 4.66$). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1, 70) = .82$, $p = .37$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.35$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = 4.69$). These effects were not qualified by a closeness x condition interaction, $F(1,70) = 2.19$, $p = .14$.

Next, GRE scores were submitted to a 2 (dependency: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was not a main effect of dependency $F(1,70) = 2.30$, $p = .13$, such that participants with low dependency did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.24$) than did participants with high dependency ($M = 4.82$). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1, 70) = .79$, $p = .38$, such that participants in the experimental condition did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.36$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = 4.70$). These effects were not qualified by an anxiety x condition interaction, $F(1,70) = 1.93$, $p = .17$.

Finally, GRE scores were submitted to a 2 (self-monitoring: high, low) x 2 (condition: control, experimental) x 2 (gender: male, female) analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a main effect of self-monitoring, $F(1, 70) = 5.37$, $p = .03$, such that low self-monitors scored

significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 5.04$) than did high self-monitors ($M = 4.14$). There was not a main effect of condition, $F(1,70) = .68$, $p = .41$, such that such that participants in the experimental condition did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.43$) than did participants in the control condition ($M = 4.75$). There was not a main effect of gender, $F(1,70) = .74$, $p = .39$, such that males did not score significantly higher on the GRE ($M = 4.76$) than did females ($M = 4.43$). These effects were not qualified by a self-monitoring x condition x gender interaction, $F(1,70) = .09$ $p = .76$.

A frequency distribution of GRE scores was plotted, and revealed an almost perfectly normal distribution, consistent with standardized test scores (See Appendix A.5, Figure 1). On average, participants answered between 4 and 5 GRE questions correctly ($M = 4.54$). Finally, participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how meaningful they personally felt the GRE was to them, with 1 corresponding to *not at all meaningful* and 5 corresponding to *extremely meaningful*. Participants tended to report that they felt that the GRE was about somewhat meaningful to them ($M = 3.19$).

Discussion

Our research was conducted to test a connection among performance, self-monitoring, and a social component. This social component was implemented via fabricated information regarding the performance of the participants' peers on a GRE exam similar to that which was used in our study. The use of this fabricated information was necessary to lead the participants in the experimental condition to believe that their peers had performed very well on the exam. We hypothesized that this social component would interact with the personality traits of high self-monitors and their tendency to respond positively to social cues (Snyder, 1979).

Our results yielded a significant effect for self-monitoring, as low self-monitors scored significantly higher on the GRE than did high self-monitors. Our manipulation check indicated that the fabricated information was not a sufficient manipulation, such that participants either did not believe or were not paying attention to our statement that Union College students performed well above average on the GRE. However, a significant effect of self-monitoring was found, and its implications are discussed below. Significant effects were not found for the variables of gender, condition, social desirability, or adult attachment, logically following the lack of a sufficient manipulation.

Possible Explanations for the Null Finding

There are many possible explanations for why our manipulation was unsuccessful and why we failed to support our hypothesis, all of which are equally plausible. The first explanation involves the strength of the manipulation. In search of apt wording and an appropriate level of influence, we believe that in light of our results, our manipulation may have been too strong. Oftentimes a lack of results is due to a weak manipulation, but in an effort to avoid this phenomenon, we believe that we may have driven our point home to a fault. We postulate that participants simply might not have believed that Union College students performed in the extremely high 92nd percentile range, and without even realizing it, might have disregarded this information.

Another explanation for our failure to support our hypothesis could be the lack of connection that the majority of students had with the GRE. While we stated the GRE was an important predictor of lifetime success and other future outcomes, when asked how significant and relevant the participants felt the GRE was to them personally, the majority of students reported that the

GRE was only about "somewhat meaningful" to them. Thus, the manipulation might not have been effective simply because in their apathy towards the exam, participants might not have paid close attention to the social component, as they felt that the results were not especially relevant to their own lives.

Finally, the GRE is known to be a difficult exam, and significantly more difficult than the SAT (Educational Testing Service, 2014). The vast majority of participants had not previously been exposed to the GRE exam prior to the study, and therefore their performance may have suffered, if only from the lack of practice for that style of standardized test. Even a successful manipulation might not have been strong enough to influence a participant's performance on such a difficult exam that he or she had never taken before, given the difficulties that, for example, even very high scorers on the SAT tend to have with the GRE (Educational Testing Service (2014).

Implications

While our manipulation was unsuccessful and we did not find a relationship between social motivation and high self-monitoring, an effect of self-monitoring did emerge in our study. Our data revealed that in fact, low self-monitors tended to perform significantly better on the GRE exam than did high self-monitors, an effect that persisted regardless of what condition the participants were randomly placed in. Further research would be need to be conducted to determine if this effect is replicable or this was the result of a type-1 error, however, this effect could be explained by prior findings regarding low self-monitors. Low self-monitors are generally considered to give less thought not only to their own social behaviors, but also to that of others (Snyder, 1974). We suggest the possibility that as low self-monitors dedicate less of

their mental efforts and faculties to changing and adapting their behavior, they may then be able to focus on other aspects, for example, academics. We of course do not posit that low self-monitors are necessarily more intelligent than high self-monitors, rather, we instead propose that their "lack" of social prowess might be compensated by an aptitude for academia. In fact, findings by Guarino, Michael, & Hocevar (1998) lend support to this hypothesis, as the researchers found that low self-monitors were significantly more likely to academically integrate themselves within their college setting than were high self-monitors. The psychologists also found a strong preference for high self-monitoring men in particular to socially integrate themselves, consistent with prior research (Guarino et al., 1998; Snyder, 1994). While more research should be conducted to lend support to this hypothesis, we suggest that low self-monitors might have a tendency toward academics, and that this could be a possible explanation for the effect of self-monitoring on GRE scores in the current study.

Limitations

As with any study, there are bound to be some limitations. As shown in our lack of significant results, an effective manipulation was essential to producing the effects our hypothesis predicted from our research. Had we been able to gauge the manipulation's strength on several test subjects beforehand and had been able to adjust it accordingly, we may have been able to find conclusive results. We chose to use the GRE because we felt that it would have the strongest connection to the participants, but our analyses suggested that this was not in fact the case. If we had been able to select participants that had concrete plans to attend graduate school and for whom the GRE was in fact very relevant and important, we believe that with an appropriate manipulation, we would have been able to produce significant results.

Directions for Future Research

We staunchly believe that based on prior research, a link between self-monitoring, a social component, and performance exists. While we were not able to establish this connection, there are several directions for future research that we believe could do so. Conducting similar research on high school students with regard to the SAT could be a possible avenue for research, as for the majority of high school students who are pursuing college, the SATs are extremely important and relevant to their lives. Additionally, this could be an opportunity to use real statistics for the experimental group rather than fabricated information to act as the social component, as they might be more believable and significant to students than a manipulation. These same tactics could be employed for further research within the college setting as well. If authentic data were collected regarding Union College student's performance on the GRE, this information could likely assist with an effective manipulation, as it would likely be less extreme and thus more believable than the fabricated data used in our research.

Another possible avenue of research could lie not in performance during standardized testing, but in competition-based performance. Competition can have a powerful influence on performance, and it stands to reason that when interacting with peers in a competitive setting, high self-monitors might be more socially motivated to perform better than low self-monitors (Murayama & Elliot, 2012). Finally, while our current study focused on self-monitoring, we believe that other aspects of personality might interact with performance, such as social desirability. People with high social desirability, that is, those who lie minimally, help others, do not gossip, etc., might respond very well to social cues, as they are very socially oriented, as are high self-monitors (Marlowe-Crowne, 1960).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our research explored the relationship between self-monitoring and performance, mediated by social motivation. While our results were inconclusive, we believe that an important connection exists between these concepts. High self-monitors exhibit many distinct behaviors, including their tendency to mimic peers in conversation and physical cues to promote positive relationships, and even tend to excel in the business realm more than their low self-monitoring colleagues (Baron & Markman, 2000; Cheng & Chartrand, 2008; Kilduff & Day, 1994). With these characteristics in mind, it stands to reason that high self-monitors would respond well to motivation of a social nature, particularly when given information about their peers. While we did not find this effect due to our insufficient manipulation, we believe that further research on this topic would be beneficial to studies of self-monitoring, performance, motivation, and social psychology as a whole.

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Appendix A.1

Questions from the Educational Testing Service (2014)

Select the *two* answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole *and* produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.

1. Early_____ of hearing loss is _____ by the fact that the other senses are able to compensate for moderate amounts of loss, so that people frequently do not know that their hearing is imperfect.

(A) discovery . . indicated

(B) development . . prevented

(C) detection . . complicated

(D) treatment . . facilitated

(E) incidence . . corrected

2. The _____ science of seismology has grown just enough so that the first overly bold theories have been _____ .

(A) magnetic . . accepted

(B) fledgling . . refuted

(C) tentative . . analyzed

(D) predictive . . protected

(E) exploratory . . recalled

3. Nonviolent demonstrations often create such tensions that a community that has constantly refused to _____ its injustices is forced to correct them: the injustices can no longer be _____.

(A) acknowledge . . ignored

(B) decrease . . verified

(C) tolerate . . accepted

(D) address . . eliminated

(E) explain . . discussed

4. Since 1813, reaction to Jane Austen's novels has oscillated between _____ and condescension; but in general later writers have esteemed her works more highly than did most of her literary _____.

(A) dismissal . . admirers

(B) adoration . . contemporaries

(C) disapproval . . readers

(D) indifference . . followers

(E) approbation . . precursors

5. There are, as yet, no vegetation types or ecosystems whose study has been _____ to the extent that they no longer _____ ecologists.

(A) perfected . . hinder

(B) exhausted . . interest

(C) prolonged . . require

(D) prevented . . challenge

(E) delayed . . benefit

6. The actual _____ of Wilson's position was always _____ by his refusal to compromise after having initially agreed to negotiate a settlement.

(A) outcome . . foreshadowed

(B) logic . . enhanced

(C) rigidity . . betrayed

(D) uncertainty . . alleviated

(E) cowardice . . highlighted

7. Because she grew up in southern Florida, Zoe was ____to harsh winters, and became quite ____when she found herself driving through a Chicago snowstorm.

(A) resigned . . confused

(B) unaccustomed . . nervous

(C) impervious . . apathetic

(D) immune . . giddy

(E) nostalgic . . tearful

8. The remarkable fact that many inventions had their birth as toys suggests that people philosophize more freely when they know that their ___ leads to no ___results.

(A) cogitation . . trivial

(B) persistence . . satisfactory

(C) speculation . . weighty

(D) creativity . . measurable

(E) conjecture . . inconsequential

Appendix A.2

Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1975)

Read each item and decide whether the statement is *True* (T) or *False* (F) as it pertains to you personally.

(T) (F) 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.

(T) (F) 2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.

(T) (F) 3. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.

(T) (F) 4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.

(T) (F) 5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.

(T) (F) 6. I would probably make a good actor.

(T) (F) 7. In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention.

(T) (F) 8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.

(T) (F) 9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.

(T) (F) 15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.

(T) (F) 10. I'm not always the person I appear to be.

(T) (F) 11. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.

(T) (F) 12. I have considered being an entertainer.

(T) (F) 13. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.

(T) (F) 14. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

(T) (F) 15. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.

(T) (F) 16. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.

(T) (F) 17. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).

(T) (F) 18. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

Appendix A.3

Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996)

The following questions concern how you ***generally*** feel in ***important close relationships in your life***. Think about your past and present relationships with people who have been especially important to you, such as family members, romantic partners, and close friends. Respond to each statement in terms of how you ***generally*** feel in these relationships.

Please use the scale below by placing a number between 1 and 5 in the space provided to the right of each statement.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Not at all characteristic of me — **Very characteristic of me**

1) I find it relatively easy to get close to people. _____

2) I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others. _____

3) I often worry that other people don't really love me. _____

4) I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. _____

5) I am comfortable depending on others. _____

6) I don't worry about people getting too close to me. _____

7) I find that people are never there when you need them. _____

8) I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others. _____

9) I often worry that other people won't want to stay with me. _____

10) When I show my feelings for others, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me. _____

11) I often wonder whether other people really care about me. _____

12) I am comfortable developing close relationships with others. _____

13) I am uncomfortable when anyone gets too emotionally close to me. _____

14) I know that people will be there when I need them. _____

15) I want to get close to people, but I worry about being hurt. _____

16) I find it difficult to trust others completely. _____

17) People often want me to be emotionally closer than I feel comfortable being. _____

18) I am not sure that I can always depend on people to be there when I need them. _____

Appendix A.4

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Marlowe and Crowne, 1960)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

(T) (F) 1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.

(T) (F) 2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.

(T) (F) 3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.

(T) (F) 4. I have never disliked anyone.

(T) (F) 5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in my life.

(T) (F) 6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

(T) (F) 7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.

(T) (F) 8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.

(T) (F) 9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen I would probably do it.

(T) (F) 10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.

(T) (F) 11. I like to gossip at times.

(T) (F) 12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.

(T) (F) 13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

(T) (F) 14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.

(T) (F) 15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

(T) (F) 16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

(T) (F) 17. I always try to practice what I preach.

(T) (F) 18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.

(T) (F) 19. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

(T) (F) 20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.

(T) (F) 21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

(T) (F) 22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.

(T) (F) 23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

(T) (F) 24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong-doings.

(T) (F) 25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.

(T) (F) 26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.

(T) (F) 27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.

(T) (F) 28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.

(T) (F) 29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.

(T) (F) 30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

(T) (F) 31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.

(T) (F) 32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.

(T) (F) 33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

Appendix A.5

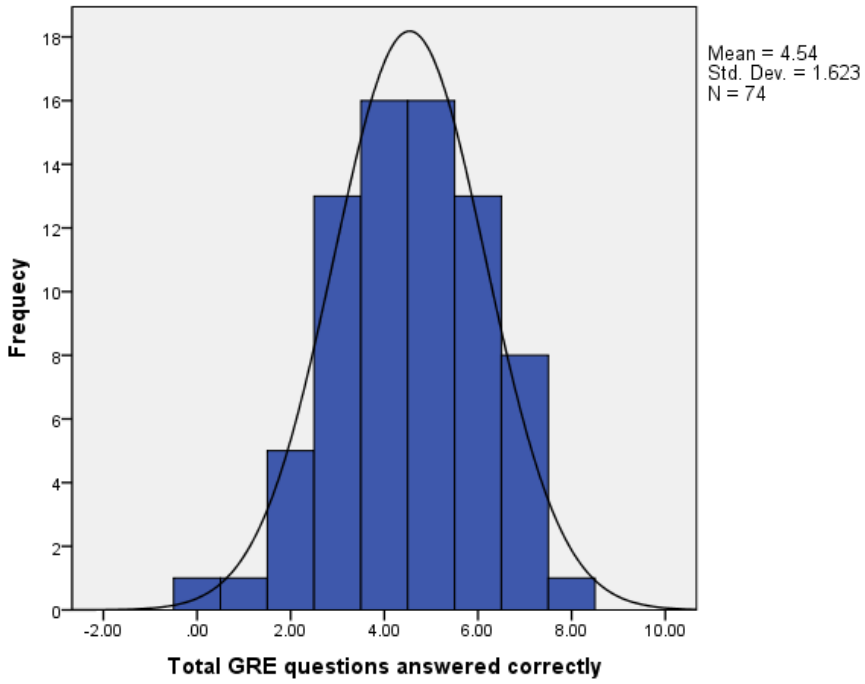

Figure 1. Frequency represents total number of participants to receive each score on the GRE exam. Bell curve indicates distribution of GRE scores across nine possible scores. Standard deviation and means are represented in the figure.