

Introduction

Healthy Eating

- ❖ Almost 70% of Americans are overweight or obese¹
- ❖ Only 32.5% of Americans are eating more than 2 servings of fruit daily²
- ❖ Thus, eating a healthy diet is becoming increasingly important in the United States

Self-Identity

- ❖ Factors of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) including attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms have been shown to influence fruit and vegetable consumption³
- ❖ Recently, self-identity has become a prominent addition to the TPB and important in the promotion of health behaviors⁴
- ❖ Psychologists have demonstrated the power of social influence on behavior, but research suggests that self-identity may have a stronger influence than social influences when determining behavioral intentions⁴
- ❖ Researchers have yet to determine how self-identity and social influences are connected in healthy eating behaviors among young adults

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012

²Hendrick, B., 2010

³Murnaghan et al., 2010

⁴Rise et al., 2010

Participants

- ❖ 79 College Women
 - Ages 15-53
 - $M=22.92$, $SD=6.92$
 - 79.7% Caucasian, 7.6% African American, 5.1% Asian, 7.6% other
 - Approx. 25% Freshman, 25% Sophomores, 25% Juniors, and 25% Seniors and beyond

Procedure

- ❖ Participants completed a survey about the TPB components and self-identity related to diet and behaviors
- ❖ Participants then recorded their diet for four days using a food diary and an online survey
- ❖ A hierarchical multiple regression was performed to determine if self-identity predicted healthy eating behaviors above and beyond subjective norms and other TPB components

Methods

Analysis

- ❖ A secondary analysis of a larger study exploring healthy eating behaviors was conducted
- ❖ For the larger study, participants completed surveys at three different time periods and then recorded their diets using food diaries
- ❖ For the present study, only for the first time period was analyzed

Measures

- ❖ Demographics: Age, school year, relationship status, race
- ❖ Theory of Planned Behavior Components (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) Intentions, Attitudes, Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norm
- ❖ Self-identity: Healthy-Eater Identity Measure Strachan & Brawley (2008)

Results



| Variables | B | SE B | β | sr ² |
|------------------------------|------|------|---------|-----------------|
| Block 1 | | | | |
| Intentions | .62 | .33 | .27 | .03 |
| Attitudes | .18 | .38 | .06 | .002 |
| Perceived Behavioral Control | -.02 | .37 | -.01 | .00 |
| Subjective Norms | -.32 | .26 | -.13 | .01 |
| Block 2 | | | | |
| Healthy Eater Identity | .59 | .21 | .36* | .07 |

- ❖ TPB components were not significant predictors of healthy eating behaviors
- ❖ Self-identity added an additional 7% of the variance to healthy eating behaviors ($\Delta F(1,73)=7.50$, $p=.008$, $\Delta R^2 = .07$) above and beyond all other TPB factors
- ❖ Self-identity contributed more unique variance than did subjective norms

Hypotheses

- ❖ Increased positive attitudes, stronger social norms, increased perceived behavioral control, a stronger identity related to healthy eating behaviors and increased intentions to eat a healthy diet would predict overall healthy eating behaviors
- ❖ Self-identity would predict overall healthy eating behaviors over and above components of the TPB
- ❖ Self-identity would predict overall healthy eating behaviors to a greater degree than would subjective norms

Discussion

- ❖ Self-identity predicted overall healthy eating behaviors to a greater degree than did subjective norms and added additional unique variance to healthy eating behaviors
 - Results support previous research on the TPB and provide additional evidence for the role of self-identity in healthy eating behaviors
 - More specifically, people may show more motivation to engage in healthy eating behaviors by confirming their sense of self related to healthy eating behaviors
 - This sense of self may be a stronger motivational tool for healthy eating behaviors than social norms
- ❖ The present findings open a new gateway to the investigation of self-identity and its influence on intentions to perform other behaviors such as exercising, studying, and drug-use.
- ❖ Future research should focus on:
 - Self-Identity studies on exercising, smoking habits, studying, work ethic and more
 - Methods to influence self-identity for health related purposes such as the "Self-as-Doer" identity