

Experimental economics summary paper



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Introduction The study as a whole looks into the patterns of the relationship of reward bundling with smokers. It was conducted through the forming of three concentrate groups divided into Free (those where no suggestion is made), Suggested (those who were persuaded) and Forced (those who were told what to do). The study focused on the decision-making of the subjects and over what they would choose between smaller sooner also called SS or larger later or LL. The concept of the research is anchored on the notion that addiction is attributed with repetitive behavior and that those who suffer from it have little patience compared to others. This can be better understood in the example provided by the authors to a person who is trying to lose weight through diet and how he/she must regard a simple piece of chocolate not as a single reward with very few cost staked but an overall threat that affects his/her consumption in the future. This provided view of linked together concepts of self-signals “ bundles together similar rewards in the foreseeable future, putting the expectation of getting them at risk in the current choice” (Hofmeyr et al., p. 4). Thus, the subjects overall perception of what causes addiction is reduced with the instinctive knowledge that consumption of such at one point affects future consumption. Findings The results reveal that in comparing smokers with non-smokers, those included in Forced who are smokers will choose LL if they are compelled to correlate their present choices to its effect in the future. This shift from an SS reward preference was seen significantly in smokers than non-smokers. Some variables were also reported to give more credit to the overall results of the study. In smokers, it may be noted that African-Americans were recorded to low probability of selecting LL while increased age would prefer LL. In non-smokers, higher income leans toward LL and higher baseline choose SS.

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There were two patterns determined in the study. The first one is that suggestion or compulsion offered as a prospective commitment (more apparent with smokers) creates forward-looking choices than when such manipulation is absent. The second pattern reinforces the previous in that smokers are likely to pick LL rewards through repeated experience in making a choice (Hofmeyr et al., p. 14).

Description of an Interesting Result At the conclusion of the study, the paper suggests that overall it does not tackle the root cause of addiction but finds that there is a tendency for a pattern in a smoker to respond to instigation of salience in their drug use or addiction that is not found in non-smokers. This shows that it may not even affect their judgment while under influence such as smoking and that this propensity can be manipulated. The researchers suggest that this is a promising finding to aid in self-control as a cure for addiction. This is interesting because though it is a completely different approach than that of figuring out the root cause of a person's addiction, it focuses on behavior modification which is yet to be established as a veritable treatment for addicts. It is worth consideration as an alternative therapy. In the same light, the study may be further expounded because it was conducted in a fairly small population sample.

Discussion Question Was there an impulsive rejection to forced suggestion among non-smokers in the population where such was employed? Stated differently, did the non-smokers immediately accept the suggestions?

Bibliography Hofmeyr, Andre, et al. "The Relationship Between Addiction and Reward Bundling: An Experiment Comparing Smokers and Non-Smokers." (n. d.).