

## Too Exhausted to Do It? Maybe Your Self-Evaluation is Not Involved: The Activation and Operation of Self-Regulation

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Baumeister proposes a strength model of self-regulation and suggests that self-control consumes inner resource, leaving individuals in a state of ego depletion and making them less able to perform subsequent self-control task. Other research suggests that the impairment of performance is only an indication of conservation. When the self-control resource is limited, individuals just become more discriminating as to the task that they are about to perform. That is, motivation might play an important role in self-regulation. Tesser suggests that different self-functions work under the same self-system to maintain rather than maximize one's positive self-evaluation. In the present study, we tried to combine these two lines of thinking and proposed that all self-control behaviors confluence one another to maintain a positive self-evaluation. Individuals would exert their remaining source, even in the high ego depletion condition, to perform an enhancement-related self-control task if their self-evaluation was threatened. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (success feedback: contingent vs. non-contingent)  $\times$  2 (ego depletion: low vs. high)  $\times$  2 (task type: performance-interfering vs. performance-irrelevant) experimental design. The main dependent measure was the number of trials accurately accomplished on the stroop task. Results gave support to our hypotheses. Individual who received non-contingent success feedback would manage to perform significantly more trials when they were told that the stroop task would interfere with their subsequent formal task than performance-irrelevant, even when they were highly depleted. Furthermore, when receiving contingent successful feedback (i.e., self-handicapping tendency was low), individuals with low ego depletion showed no differences on the performance with those who in the high ego depletion condition. In other word, we found individuals would manage to exert the remaining inner resource to accomplish more trials on the self-control task which could provide "excuses" for their possible future failure, even when they were "exhausted." However, their basic motive was to maintain rather than maximize their positive self-evaluation.

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