

How effective is “insisting on depression” as an excuse?

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Introduction

- Purpose
 - To examine the relative effects of “insisting on depression” as an excuse in the absence of symptoms.
- What is “Insisting on depression”?
 - Saying “I think I may have depressive disorder”
- Social Backgrounds
 - “Insisting on depression” is a behavioral phenotype of people with modern type depression (MTD; Kato et al., 2011; Yamakawa & Sakamoto, 2015)

Introduction

- What is MTD?
 - A sort of depressive syndrome
 - Not an established mental disorder, but a generic term
 - Having different features from those of traditional-type depression (i.e., melancholic depression)
 - people with MTD frequently show mild symptoms or does not appear illness in some cases
 - Having been observed in Japan especially after 1990.
 - Similar cases to MTD are reported from Asian countries or regions as well as Australia and USA (Kato et al., 2011)

Introduction

- Insisting on depression & MTD
 - When people with MTD feel depressed because they made mistakes and others held them responsible, they claim that their depression is caused by other's behavior (Sakamoto, Muranaka, & Yamakawa, 2014)
 - Japanese psychiatrists and psychologists point out the function of insisting on depression as an excuse

Literature review

- Previous social psychological studies revealed that various psychological symptoms serve to an excuse (Baumgardner, 1991; Baumgardner, Lake, & Arkin, 1985; Braginsky & Braginsky, 1967; Jones & Burglas, 1978; Schouten & Handelsman, 1987; Snyder & Smith, 1981)
- However, it is still unclear how effective is insisting on depression without showing symptoms.

Methodology

- Participants
 - 216 Japanese undergraduates
- Method & Design
 - Using a hypothetical scenario method
 - A vignette was adapted from Yamakawa & Sakamoto (2015)
 - There was no description which suggested an obstacle to progress (e.g., depressive symptoms).
 - Between-participants design with 5 levels
 - Manipulating the statements of excuse
 - Insisting on depression, Physical illness, work requirements, negligence, & no excuse (control)
 - 4 typical categories of excuses were adapted from Weiner et al. (1997)

Methodology

- Procedure
 - Participants answered the questionnaire during a lecture slot.
 - After reading a scenario, all participants assessed the excuse-maker (Yamakawa & Sakamoto, 2015).
 - Behaviors they would deliver: 7 items
 - E.g., punishing, forgiving, blaming, commiserating
 - Impression & feelings towards excuse-maker: 12 items
 - E.g., likeability, integrity, sympathy
 - From 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Results 1

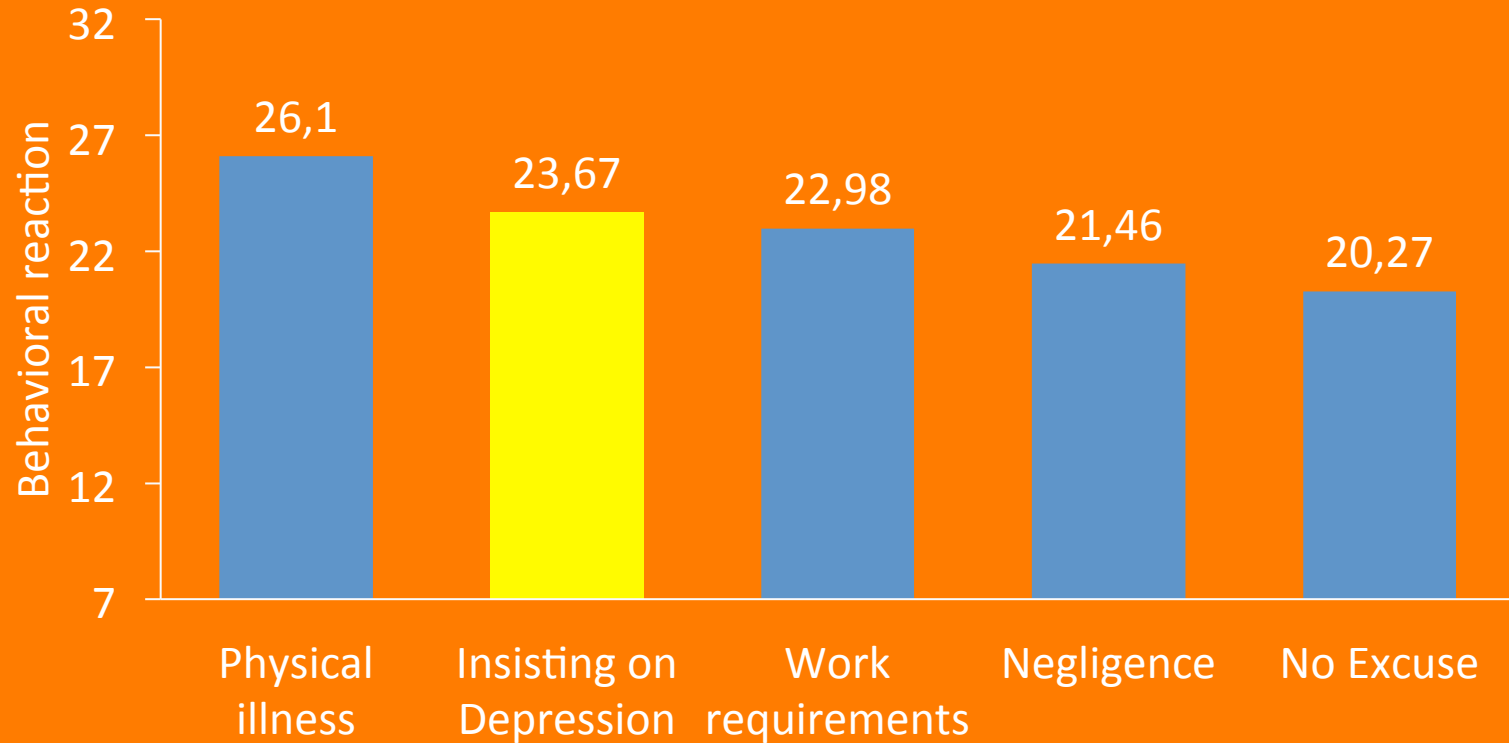


Figure 1 Mean differences in behavioral reaction scores across five conditions

Anova and post-hoc comparison revealed following significant mean differences:
Physical illness > **Insisting on depression**, Work requirements > Negligence, No excuse

Results 2



Figure 2 Mean differences in impression scores across five conditions

Anova and post-hoc comparison revealed following significant mean differences:
Physical illness, **Insisting on depression**, Work requirements > No excuse
Physical illness > Negligence

Implications for policy/Practice

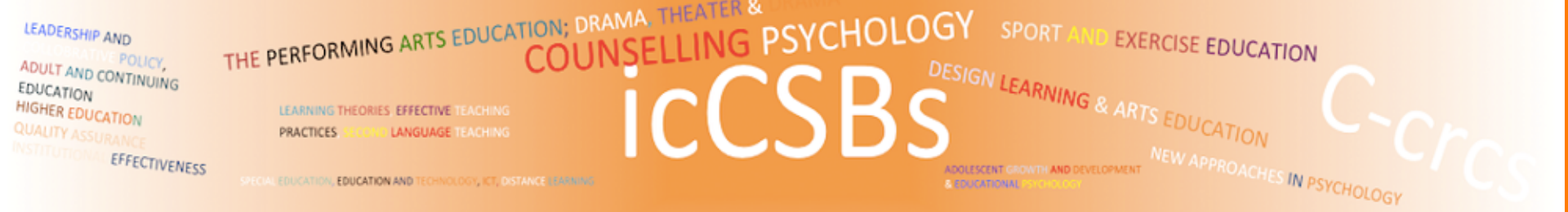
- Even if an excuse-maker did not show any depressive symptoms, insisting on depression was moderately effective excuse.
 - As effective as Work requirements or Physical illness.
- Since the late 1990s, the health education regarding depressive disorder has increased in Japan (Kanba, 2011).
- A kind of implicit social norms to behave generously toward people with depressive disorder may exist.

Implications for policy/Practice

- That implicit social norms might be reflected in our results.
- Perhaps, people with MTD think that they will be able to evade fulfill their duty by insisting on depression.
- However, it is unclear whether they are intentional.

Conclusion

- We examine the relative effect of insisting on depression (saying “I think I may have depressive disorder”) as an excuse.
- Results revealed that even if an excuse-maker did not show any symptoms of depressive disorder, insisting on depression was accepted as intermediately good excuse.



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