ABSTRACT

The evolvement of consumer healthy lifestyle certainly creates new opportunities and at the same time posing marketing challenges to marketers in the health-related industries. A good understanding of the shifting consumer social psychological factors influencing healthy lifestyle behaviour is integral to capitalising on these business opportunities available. Exercise participation was the main focus of this study as it is regarded as an important component of healthy lifestyles and desired public health behaviour.

There are several behavioural models exist in the health literature such as the health belief model, protection motivation theory, theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour, self-efficacy theory, locus of control, self-determination theory, transtheoretical model of stages of change. A review of these models suggests the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB, Ajzen 1991) as an appropriate and effective model in examining exercise behaviour. Hence, the present study adopted the TPB as the underpinning theory. The TPB has received great attention in the exercise domain. However, the findings from some of these studies were mixed. These conflicting results indicate a need for clarification of conceptual definitions, operationalisation, and measurement of the TPB constructs which were addressed in the present study.

Although there is general support for the use of TPB, the sufficiency of the model has been questioned. Specifically, the role of personality has received increasing attention in the exercise research. Past research has initially focused on personality as an outcome of physical activity. Later, some researchers have focused on personality as an antecedent of exercise behaviour. There are also researchers who have either compared the personalities of inactive/unfit persons to active/fit persons or examined the role of personality in predicting exercise adherence. In most past studies, numerous factors derived intuitively have been included in the original TPB model with an aim to increase the predictive power of their modified model. However, very few researchers have looked into a more comprehensive and integrative model which enables the examination of factors that influence exercise behaviour simultaneously.

The main thrust of this study is to propose and test an integrative model of exercise behaviour which aims to: (1) test a theoretical model that integrates the social cognitive constructs contained in the TPB and the five personality factors adopted from the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM, Tupes and Christal, 1961; Norman, 1963) in predicting exercise intention and behaviour; (2) examine the model efficacy of disaggregated multi-components TPB structure compared to the traditional single concept TPB measure; (3) investigate the effects of social cognitive and personality factors on exercise intention and exercise behaviour; (4) examine the mediating effect of exercise intention that links social cognitive predictors and personality constructs to exercise behaviour; (5) predict group membership based on personality and social cognitive constructs.
The present integrative model of social cognitive and personality factors to explore determinants of exercise behaviour is a new application. This study represents one of the first attempts to examine individual exercise participation from marketing perspective. A good understanding of factors affecting the decision making, evaluations and behavioural aspect of individual exercise behaviour is expected to help the development of health-related marketing theory.

Cross-sectional survey data was collected via self-administered surveys from general adults sample (n = 512) in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The present study involves three phases of data analyses. First, the constructs are validated using exploratory measurement assessment tools such as corrected item-total correlation, exploratory factor analyses, and reliability test for internal consistency. The measurement model is then created and tested for unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using confirmatory factor analysis. Second, several preliminary analyses have been conducted (i.e., descriptive statistics, chi-square, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, discriminant analysis, and Pearson correlation coefficients) to provide greater insights to marketers and public policy makers. Lastly, alternative model comparisons are performed using the SEM technique, which aim to: (1) test and confirm the optimum measurement structure for TPB predictors; (2) test and confirm the hypothesised partial mediation model. Upon establishing the model fit, the significance, direction, and magnitude of each hypothesised structural parameter are assessed.

Multivariate analysis using SEM has supported the proposed integrated model of exercise behaviour based on the tenets of TPB and FFM, which accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in exercise intention ($R^2 = 0.807$) and behaviour ($R^2 = 0.421$). Specific findings revealed that: (1) all social cognitive and personality predictors were significantly correlated with exercise intention and exercise behaviour; (2) attitude components, perceived control, and conscientiousness predicted exercise intention with affective attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of exercise intention; (3) perceive control, exercise intention, extraversion and conscientiousness predicted exercise behaviour (conscientiousness was found to be the strongest predictor of exercise behaviour); (4) exercise intention mediates the links between attitude component, perceived control, conscientiousness and exercise behaviour, but the mediating effects were small.

Other empirical findings include: (1) the alternative model comparison demonstrated that both attitude and subjective norm constructs performed better when modelled as a disaggregated two-factor structure; whereas the PBC construct is best modelled as a single perceived control concept which captures merely the perceived control measures; (2) the independent sample t-tests produced significant mean differences between ‘high active’ and ‘low active’ exercise groups in terms of all social cognitive constructs, personality factors, and exercise behaviour; (3) conscientiousness and extraversion are the second and third most important factors in discriminating the two exercise groups, respectively, after taking into account exercise behaviour. This study has important implications for marketing practitioners, consumer researchers, and public policy makers interested in the determinants of consumer healthy lifestyle behaviour.