Would I come back? The role of groupness and cohesion in intention to return

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Introduction
- Adherence to exercise has been identified as problematic (Oman & King, 1998)
- One strategy to address this issue involves group constructs, such as:
  - Task cohesion (Spink & Carron, 1994)
  - Groupness (Spink, Wilson & Priebe, 2010)
- Task cohesion and groupness have independently demonstrated positive relationships with either within-group (attendance) or out-of-group (intent to return) measures (Spink, 1998; Spink et al., 2010)
- To date, these constructs have never been examined in combination with out-of-group adherence measures (intent to return)
- Further, these constructs have not been examined together across different settings (cf. Spink et al., 2012)

Methods
- Participants: Adults (28.3 yrs, SD = 12.0; 67% female) who had exercised with others
  - Structured setting (n = 203)
  - Unstructured setting (n = 179)
- Measures: Participants completed an online survey including items assessing:
  - Groupness (Spink, Wilson & Priebe, 2010) – 5 items
    - “Is it enjoyable and rewarding to be part of this activity setting?”
  - Task cohesion (modified GEQ; Carron & Spink, 1992) – 9 items
    - “Members of our group would rather get together as a group than participate alone”
  - Intention to return (Spink & Odnokon, 2001) – 3 items
    - “I would PLAN to return to this same setting if it was to resume again in the future”

Analysis
- Separate multiple regressions (structured and unstructured)
  - DV: Intention to return
  - IV’s: ATG-Task, GI-Task, Groupness

Results

Structured setting F(3,199) = 4.6, p = .004
- ATG-Task β = .18, p = .025
- GI-Task n/s
- Groupness β = .21, p = .023

Unstructured setting F(3,175) = 5.0, p = .002
- ATG-Task β = .28, p = .005
- GI-Task n/s
- Groupness β = .17, p = .046

Discussion
- Both group constructs appeared to play a role in predicting intention to return across exercise settings
  - Together, ATG-Task and groupness were positively associated with intention to return
  - This extends previous research that has examined these constructs independently
  - This is the first study to have examined multiple group constructs with respect to intention to return
  - This expands our view of adherence, which typically involves the examination of in-group measures such as attendance (e.g., Spink & Carron, 1994)
- Results provide preliminary evidence that the relationship between these two group constructs and intention to return are similar across structured and unstructured exercise settings

Future Directions
- As intention is not always linked to behavior, examination of actual return appears warranted (Weinstein, 2007)
- Given the assumed importance of these two group constructs with adherence, exploring variables (e.g., similarity) that may lead to the development of groupness and cohesion would be worthwhile
- Replication of these consistent findings across different exercise settings (structured vs. unstructured) is needed
- Examination of the unique and combined effects of task cohesion and groupness on adherence also would be of use