



Engaging in Exercise Motivated by Negative Affect Moderates the Association between Obligatory Exercise and Eating Pathology

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INTRODUCTION

Obligatory exercise has been linked with eating and body image psychopathology and may be a disordered eating behavior itself. Some disordered eating behaviors (e.g., binge eating and self-induced vomiting) have been found to occur in response to states of heightened negative affect.

PURPOSE

This study investigated whether exercising in response to negative affect moderates the association between obligatory exercise and eating-related psychopathology.

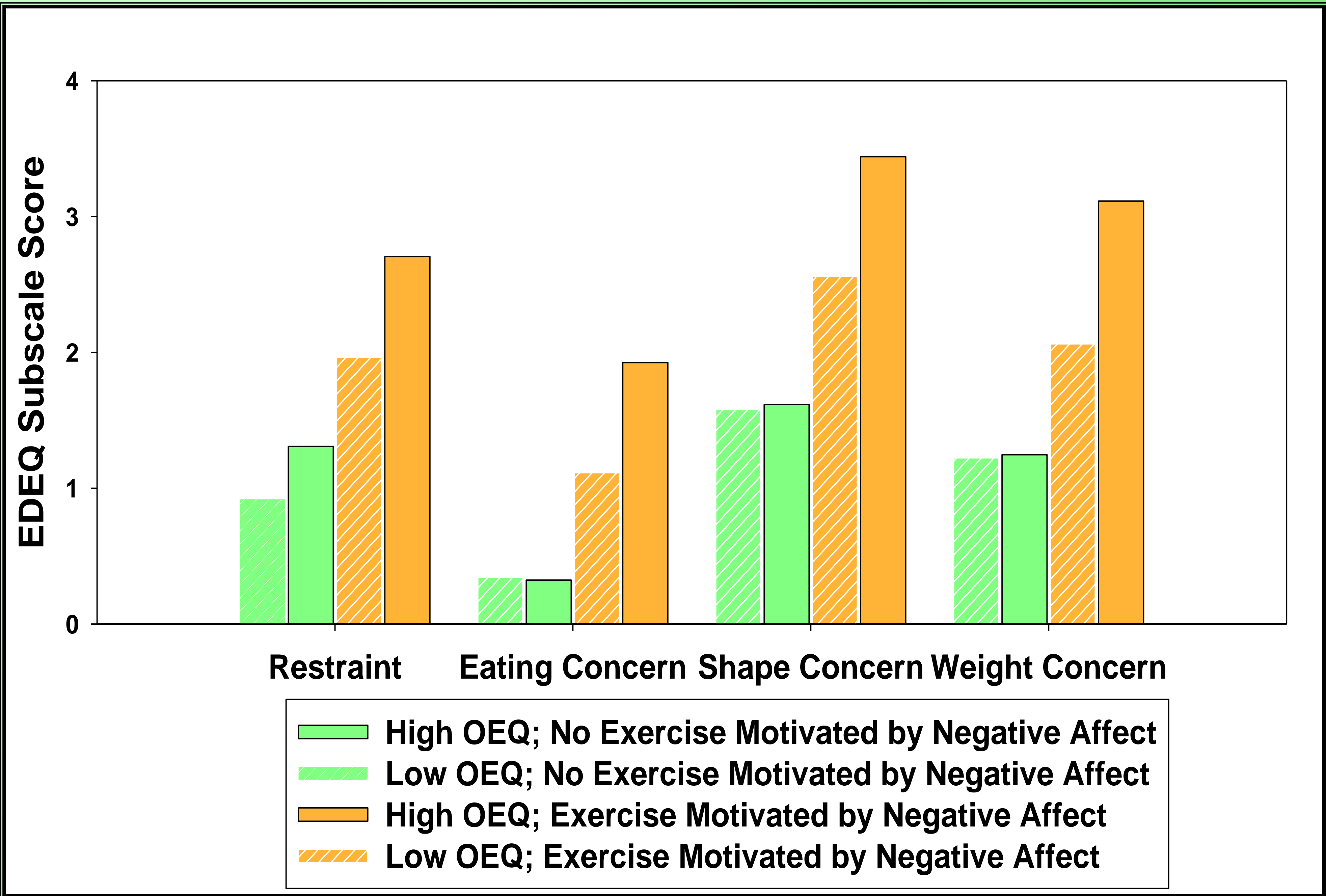
METHODS

Participants
Undergraduate men and women ($N=176$) from a northeastern university who exercised at least occasionally participated in this study for credit toward a course requirement.

Measures
As part of a study investigating the prevalence and correlates of negative affect motivated exercise, participants completed the Obligatory Exercise Questionnaire (OEQ), Eating Disorder Examination–Questionnaire (EDE-Q), and a question probing whether they ever exercised in response to negative affect.

RESULTS

Analyses revealed significant main effects for negative affect motivated exercise and OEQ total scores on all four EDE-Q subscales and significant interactions of these variables on the Eating Concern and Weight Concern subscales (Table 1). The interaction terms were not statistically significant for the Restraint and Shape Concern subscales.



CONCLUSIONS

The results suggest that exercise motivated by negative affect moderates the relationship between obligatory exercise and some eating-related psychopathology. The results further suggest that obligatory exercisers may not demonstrate elevated eating-related psychopathology, as measured by the EDE-Q subscales, in the absence of engaging in negative affect-motivated exercise.

Table 1. Results of Multiple Regression Moderation Analyses									
	Restraint		Eating Concern		Shape Concern		Weight Concern		
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t	
Negative Affect Exercise	.381	5.12*	.375	5.15*	.345	4.64*	.350	4.72*	
OEQ Total Score	.173	2.20*	.176	2.29*	.190	2.41*	.176	2.23*	
Interaction	.028	.40	.162	2.28*	.107	1.47	.133	1.83*	

* $p<.05$