ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF VERBAL ENCOURAGEMENT CUES ON MUSCULAR STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, AND CARDIORESPIRATORY PERFORMANCE AMONG COLLEGE-AGED INDIVIDUALS

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Verbal encouragement (VE) has previously been linked to improved exercise performance, though it is still unclear what VE cues lead to the most optimal performance results. Based on Achievement Goal Theory, a motivational climate may emphasize either personal improvement (mastery) or performance relative to peers (performance).

Purpose: To evaluate the effects of mastery VE (MVE) and performance VE (PVE) on exercise performance during 1RM Bench Press, PACER, push-up, and plank assessments. Additionally, we examined differences in exercise performance by sex, mastery goal orientation (MGO) and performance goal orientation (PGO).

Methods: Sixty college students were recruited to participate in a randomized-crossover study examining the effects of verbal encouragement on exercise performance. All participants were randomly assigned to either MVE, PVE or control (CVE) and completed two baseline phases and two experimental phases. A repeated measures ANOVA was utilized to examine exercise performance differences between the baseline and experimental phases by VE group. Tukey’s HSD was used to examine between group differences.
Results: Significant plank differences existed between MVE, PVE, and CVE groups ($F(2,57) = 20.394, p<.001, \, \omega^2=.393$), with significant differences between MVE and PVE (-28.52 seconds, $p=.002$), MVE and CVE (+23.89 seconds, $p=.015$), and PVE and CVE (+52.41 seconds, $p<.001$). Plank performance differences were also identified when stratifying exercise performance stratified by sex. Significant differences existed between female MVE and PVE ($p=.028$), MVE and CVE ($p=.009$), and PVE and CVE ($p<.001$), but only between male PVE and CVE ($p=.021$). No other significant differences existed among VE groups during the 1RM, PACER, push-up, and plank. Goal orientation did not have any effect on exercise performance during any of the assessments.

Conclusion: VE may significantly improve plank performance, and males and females may respond to VE differently. Furthermore, our study identified preliminary evidence that MVE and PVE may impact plank exercise performance differently. These findings support current literature on VE effects during concentric exercise assessments. No other significant performance differences existed for the 1RM, PACER, push-up, or plank. This study is one of the first to examine Achievement Goal Theory and motivational climate, may guide researchers in creating a VE framework.