

The aim of this project is to examine the paradox that sometimes individuals highly committed to a given cause fail to follow through on their intentions and give in to temptations of everyday life. We observe, for example, that a vegetarian buys leather shoes, the athlete after the training lights a cigarette. Literature provides explanations for such situations, but empirical results do not form a coherent picture regarding the mechanism of such behaviors. In the proposed project we will explain such situations by reference to the self-completion theory by Wicklund and Gollwitzer.

According to this theory, people are involved in certain goals because they are important for their identity, i.e. for how they perceive themselves. An exemplary goal is to be a good employee, a good parent or a person who cares about the environment. To achieve these goals, people engage in various activities. For example, a person devoted to the issue of being a good parent can buy comfortable clothes for their child, cook healthy meals or spend time with them in the afternoons. In a situation when a person finds that he or she has fulfilled himself as a parent, he or she is in a state of self-completeness, when he / she finds that he / she has not completed all the necessary activities is self-incomplete.

Previous laboratory studies have shown that people in the state of self-completeness do not engage in behavior associated with a given goal. I.e. for example, ecologists who experience completeness give up engagement in further pro-ecological behavior. In this project, we will examine whether the state of completeness affects succumbing to temptation, which often contrasts with the main goal. In addition, we plan to show that the state of non-completeness protects from temptation. We will also investigate whether the completeness and incompleteness condition affects the perseverance of pursuing an important goal.

Seven studies were planned in a project planned for a total of five years: two experiments in the laboratory, one in the field, two diary studies and two longitudinal studies with manipulation and a control group.