

Effects of two brief protocols of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on academic procrastination: the role of values

Oscar Alejandro Córdoba-Salgado, Marcela Porras-Melo, Diana Riaño-Hernández, Camilo Hurtado-Parrado & Francisco J. Ruiz.
Fundación Universitaria Konrad Lorenz (Bogotá, Colombia)

Introduction

- Procrastination is a discrepancy between the moment at which an individual has planned to complete an activity and the moment he/she actually does it (Glick & Orsillo, 2015).
- Procrastination occurs when a student postpones his work in order to avoid aversive private events (Glick & Orsillo, 2015).
- Values clarification may decrease procrastination by increasing the intrinsic reinforcing properties of doing academic work.
- An ACT intervention may decrease procrastination by decreasing avoidance and increasing valued action, specially that related to academics.

¿What is the distinctive effect of values clarification on academic procrastination?

Method

Participants

Nine undergraduate students from Bogotá, Colombia (5 female). Between the age of 18 and 32 years (M = 22, SD = 4,2).

Instruments

Academic procrastination scale: Procrastiantion measurement (Busko, 1998; Spanish version Alvarez, 2001).

Cognitive fusion questionnaire (CFQ): Cognitive fusion measurement (Gillanders, Bolderston, Bond, Dempster, Flaxman, et al., 2014; Spanish version Ruiz, Suárez-Falcón, Riaño-Hernández & Gillanders. (Submitted)).

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale- 21 (DASS-21): Exclusion measurement (Lovibond y Lovibond, 1995; Ruiz, F. J., García-Martín, M. B., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., & Odriozola-González, P. (Submitted)).

Daily measurements. Self-monitoring measures of valued actions, academic procrastination and academic activities.

Protocols.

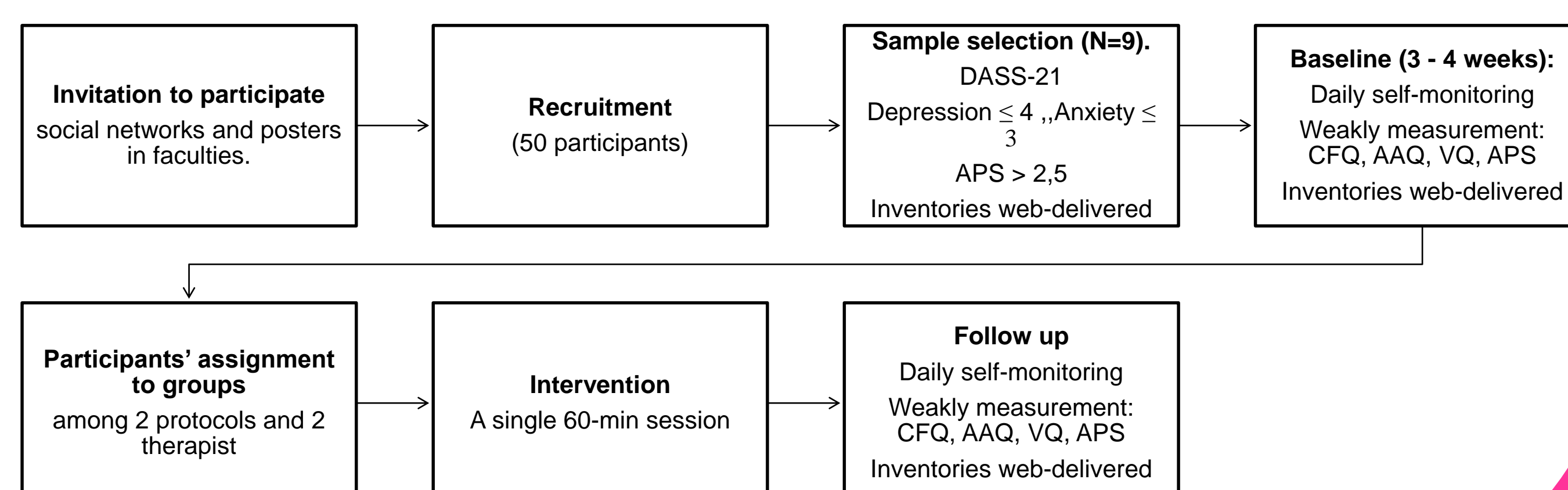
Protocol 1: Defusion, creative hopelessness, and values clarification Ruiz, F. J., Riaño-Hernández, D., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., & Luciano, C. (submitted)..

Protocol 2: Values clarification and committed action.

Design

In this study we use a single case design. Five participants received the intervention session after four weeks of baseline and five after three weeks.

Procedure



Preliminary Results

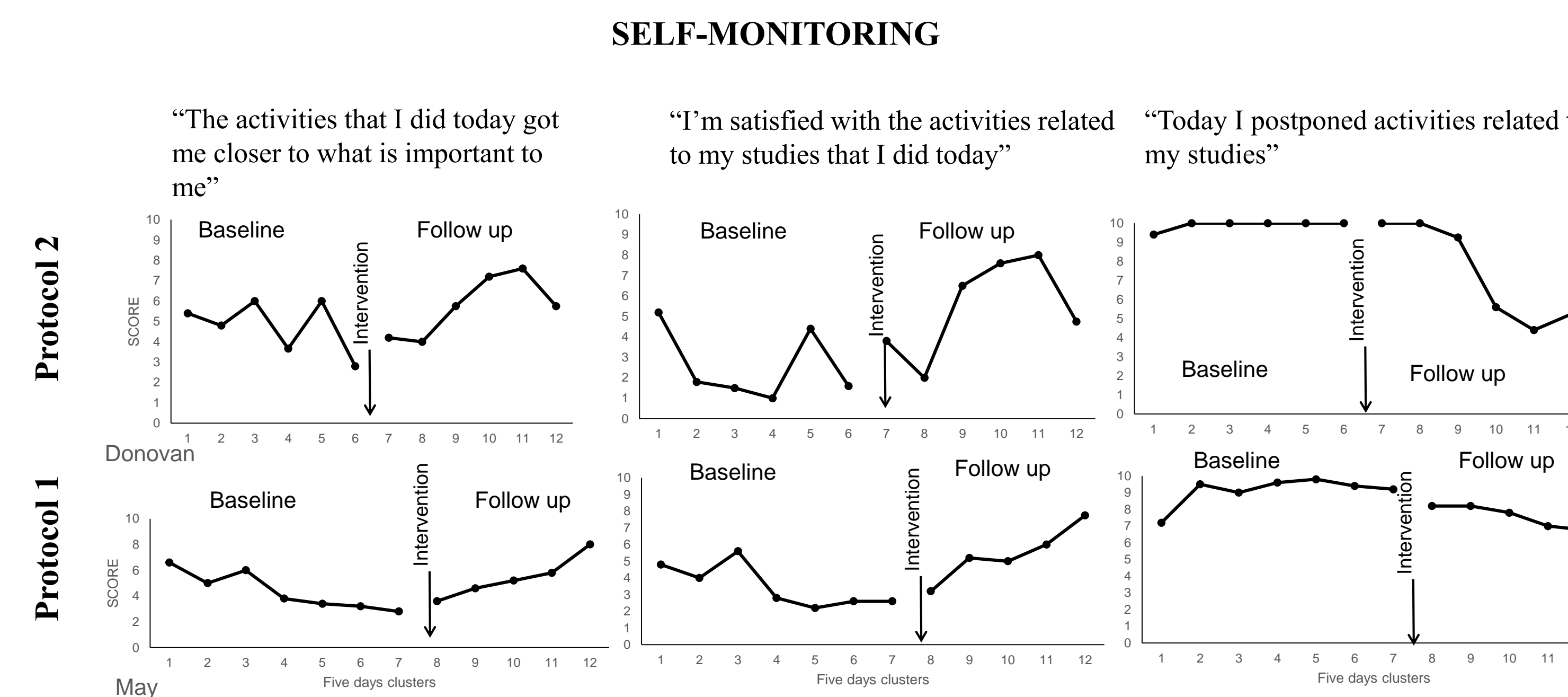


Figure 2. Each graph shows five-day average scores on each one of the three self-monitoring questions for two participants: *Donovan* was exposed to Protocol 2 and *May* to Protocol 1.

QUESTIONNAIRES

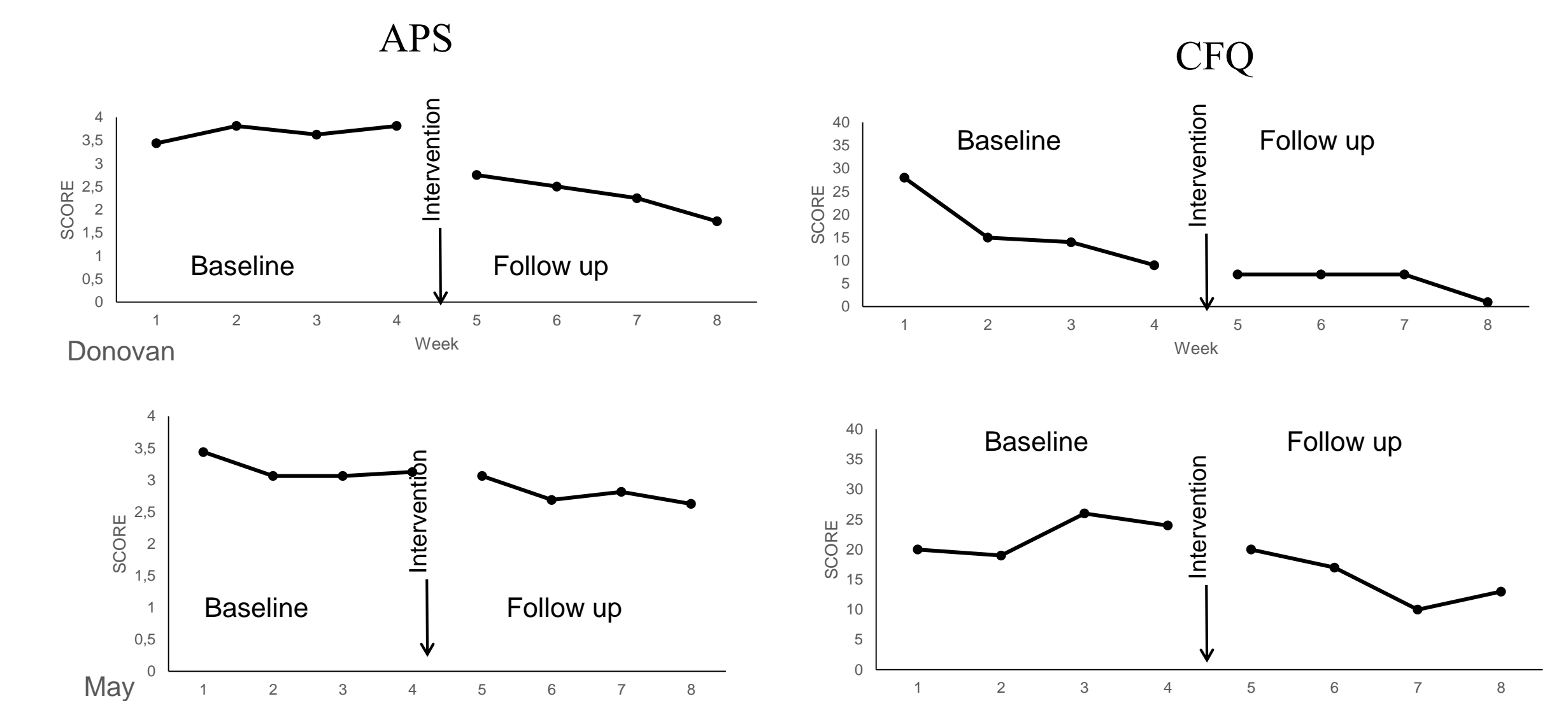


Figure 3. APS and CFQ weekly scores for two participants: *Donovan* was exposed to Protocol 2 and *May* to Protocol 1.

- Self-monitoring data of two participants (Figure 2) indicates that intervention with both protocols produced: (a) an increment in valued action and academic related activities; and (b) a decrement in academic-related postponement.
- As shown in Figure 3, intervention with both protocols produced a decrement in procrastination (APS) of both participants. Though this effect is clearer in Donovan, level and trend analysis of May's data also indicate such effect.
- CFQ data (Figure 3) indicate a decrement in cognitive fusion for both participants. However, negative trend during baseline in Donovan's data limits this interpretation.
- Self monitoring and scale scores of the other participants do not show as clear pattern of change as May and Donovan's

Discussion

Both protocols produced in both participants a decrement in academic procrastination and cognitive fusion, and an increment in valued actions. This supports the model that links procrastination and psychological flexibility (Glick & Orsillo, 2015).

The fact that cognitive fusion in Donovan's case declined, even though protocol 2 was centered only on values clarification, supports the notion that flexibility model processes are closely linked.

May's decrement on academic procrastination was smaller than Donovan's. This suggests that values clarification is key to explain the occurrence of procrastination and its alleviation. While acceptance may play a smaller role.

These findings are consistent with other studies that have underscored the main role of values to explain procrastination (Glick, Millstein, y Orsillo, 2014; Glick y Orsillo, 2015). However, other research on procrastination and ACT has found that all processes of the flexibility model are relevant to explain this phenomenon (Scent, & Boes, 2014; Wang, Zhou, Yu, Ran, Liu, & Chen, 2015). It is worth exploring individuals with high scores in flexibility measures to understand better the relationship between procrastination and psychological flexibility

References

- Álvarez, O. (2001). Procrastinación general y académica en una muestra de estudiantes de secundaria de Lima metropolitana. *Persona*, 13, 159-177.
- Busko, D. A. (1998). Causes and consequences of perfectionism and procrastination: A structural equation model. Tesis de maestría no publicada. Ontario: University of Guelph.
- Gillanders, D., Bolderston, H., Bond, F.W., Dempster, M., Flaxman, P.E., et al. (2014). The development and initial validation of The Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire. *Behavior Therapy*, 45, 83-101. doi:10.1016/j.beth.2013.09.001
- Glick, D. M., Millstein, D. J., & Orsillo, S. M. (2014). A preliminary investigation of the role of psychological flexibility in academic procrastination. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, 3, 81-88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2014.04.002>.
- Glick, D. M., y Orsillo, S. M. (2015). An investigation of the efficacy of acceptance-based behavioral therapy for academic procrastination. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144(2), 400-409. doi:10.1037/xge0000050
- Lovibond, P. F. y Lovibond, S. H. (1995). The structure of negative emotional states: Comparison of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) with the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories. *Behaviour research and therapy*, 33, 335-343. doi:10.1016/0005-7967(94)00075-u
- Ruiz, F. J., García-Martín, M. B., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., & Odriozola-González, P. (in revisión). The hierarchical factor structure of the Spanish version of the Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21. *Psicothema*
- Ruiz, F. J., Riaño-Hernández, D., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., & Luciano, C. (2015). A brief ACT protocol to disrupt problematic worry and rumination. Paper presented at the 13th ACBS World Conference, Berlin
- Ruiz, F. J., Riaño-Hernández, D., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., & Luciano, C. (submitted). Effect of a one-session ACT protocol in disrupting repetitive negative thinking.
- Ruiz, F. J., Suárez-Falcón, J. C., Riaño-Hernández, D., & Gillanders, D. (in revisión). Psychometric properties of the Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire in Colombia. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*.
- Scent, C. L., & Boes, S. R. (2014). Acceptance and commitment training: a brief intervention to reduce procrastination among college students. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 28(2), 144-156.
- Wang, S., Zhou, Y., Yu, S., Ran, L. W., Liu, X. P., & Chen, Y. F. (2015). Acceptance and commitment therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy as treatment for academic procrastination: a randomized controlled group session. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 1-11