

Academic Self-Handicapping and Achievement Goals: A Further Examination

Carol Midgley

University of Michigan

and

Tim Urdan

Santa Clara University

This study extends previous research on the relations among students' personal achievement goals, perceptions of the classroom goal structure, and reports of the use of self-handicapping strategies. Surveys, specific to the math domain, were given to 484 7th-grade students in nine middle schools. Personal performance-avoid goals positively predicted handicapping, whereas personal performance-approach goals did not. Personal task goals negatively predicted handicapping. Perceptions of a performance goal structure positively predicted handicapping, and perceptions of a task goal structure negatively predicted handicapping, independent of personal goals. Median splits used to examine multiple goal profiles revealed that students high in performance-avoid goals used handicapping more than did those low in performance-avoid goals regardless of the level of task goals. Students low in performance-avoid goals and high in task goals handicapped less than those low in both goals. Level of performance-approach goals had little effect on the relation between task goals and handicapping. © 2001 Academic Press

“I could have aced the test, but I put off studying until the last minute.” “I could have gotten a good grade in this course, but I spent a lot of time with my friends this semester.” The struggle to escape looking stupid (Covington, 1992) predisposes some students to engage in strategies such as these that will deflect attention away from their ability should poor performance occur. Unfortunately, these strategies also are likely to undermine performance. Thus they are called self-handicapping.

Much of the earlier research on the use of handicapping strategies was

This study was funded by the William T. Grant Foundation. We are grateful to the students who participated in this study.

Address Correspondence and reprint requests to Carol Midgley, School of Education, University of Michigan, 610 East University Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259. E-mail: cmidgley@umich.edu.



conducted by personality theorists and often in laboratory settings (see Higgins, Snyder, & Berglas, 1990, pp. 100–102 for a table summarizing these studies and the strategies that have been examined). Only recently has the study of handicapping been extended into the academic domain. Prior to the current study, we conducted three studies of the reported use of handicapping by students, with three different samples (Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Urdan, Midgley, & Anderman, 1998). We used goal orientation theory as the lens through which to examine academic self-handicapping. Goal orientation theory is concerned with the meaning and purpose of achievement to the individual. A comparison is often made between the goal to develop ability (a personal task goal) and the goal to demonstrate ability or hide the demonstration of lack of ability (a personal performance goal) (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Maehr, 1989; Nicholls, 1989).

The goal structure in the learning environment is also integral to goal orientation theory. Classrooms and schools, through their policies and practices, can emphasize mastery, effort, improvement, and intellectual development (a task goal structure) and/or relative ability and competition among students (a performance goal structure) (Ames, 1984; Midgley, 1993; Urdan, 1994). In a classroom where a performance goal structure predominates, teachers frequently compare students' abilities and performance, students compete with each other and are recognized for their performance relative to others, and the importance of grades and test scores is discussed frequently. When this is the case, students' awareness of how others perceive their ability is a central concern, and strategies to appear able, or at least to avoid appearing unable, are likely to be used (Covington, 1992). Our studies have been based on the premise that an orientation to demonstrating ability (a personal performance goal orientation) and/or the perception that the learning environment emphasizes relative ability and competition among students (a performance goal structure) is associated with a greater reported use of strategies to deflect attention away from ability as a reason for low performance, should it occur (self-handicapping).

Our first study (Midgley & Urdan, 1995) was conducted with a sample of 8th-grade students attending two middle schools in a working-class community. In this study, personal task goals, personal performance goals, and perceptions of an emphasis on task goals in the school were unrelated to reports of handicapping, whereas perceptions of an emphasis on performance goals in the school were positively related to handicapping. It should be noted that both the handicapping scale and the scales assessing achievement goals were refined and improved after this study was conducted. The second study (Midgley et al., 1996) was conducted with a different sample of 8th-grade students attending one middle school in an ethnically diverse working class community. Personal performance goals were positively related to the reported use of handicapping, whereas personal task goals were unrelated

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات