



## Self-esteem, self-confidence, anxiety and claimed self-handicapping: A mediational analysis

Guillaume R. Coudeville<sup>a,\*</sup>, Christophe Gernigon<sup>b,1</sup>, Kathleen A. Martin Ginis<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Université des Antilles et de la Guyane, Laboratoire Adaptations au Climat Tropical Exercice et Santé (ACTES), UPRES EA 3596, BP 250, 97157 Pointe-à-Pitre Cédex, Guadeloupe, France

<sup>b</sup> Université Montpellier 1, Faculté des Sciences du Sport et de l'Éducation Physique, UFR STAPS, Laboratoire Conduites Addictives, de Performance et Santé (EA 4206), 700, avenue du Pic Saint-Loup, 34090 Montpellier, France

<sup>c</sup> McMaster University, Department of Kinesiology, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4K1, Canada

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 4 August 2010

Received in revised form

14 March 2011

Accepted 22 May 2011

Available online 12 June 2011

#### Keywords:

Excuses

Achievement context

Social comparison

Basketball

### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** The purpose of the present study was to examine the mediational role of self-confidence and anxiety in the relationship between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping in an achievement context.

**Design:** To test this mediational role, the three-step procedure advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used.

**Method:** After hearing and reading about specific conditions of performing that were intended to favor invoking excuses for future poor performance, 68 competitive basketball players completed measures of self-esteem, anxiety (cognitive and somatic), self-confidence, and claimed self-handicapping. Then, they warmed-up and carried out a basketball task.

**Results:** Self-esteem negatively predicted cognitive anxiety and positively predicted self-confidence. In turn, self-confidence negatively predicted claimed self-handicapping and mediated the relationship between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping. Cognitive and somatic anxieties did not mediate the relationship between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping. Together, these results suggest that individuals with low self-esteem use more claimed self-handicaps because they have lower self-confidence.

**Conclusion:** These findings shed light on the psychological processes that lead people with low self-esteem to use strategies of claimed self-handicaps.

© 2011 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Berglas and Jones (1978) defined self-handicapping as “any action or choice of performance setting that enhances the opportunity to externalize (or excuse) failure and to internalize (reasonably accept credit for) success” (p. 406). For example, if a self-handicapping person performs poorly, then the failure can be attributed to the performance impediment rather than the person's ability or competence. On the other hand, if the self-handicapping person performs well, then the athlete creates the impression of being especially competent and talented, because success was achieved despite obstacles. In addition, they may also internalize the augmented perceptions of competence (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989).

### Self-esteem and self-handicapping strategies

As noticed early by Jones and Berglas (1978), self-handicappers are legion in the sports world. Indeed, Rhodewalt (1990) mentioned that athletic and intellectual performance settings are particularly suited to examine self-handicapping in the face of evaluative threat and potentially self-damaging feedback. Field studies have been used to identify the antecedents of the use of self-handicaps prior to competitive or evaluated physical activity events (for reviews, see Coudeville, Gernigon, Martin Ginis, & Famose, submitted for publication; Martin Ginis, Lindwall, & Prapavessis, 2007; Prapavessis, Grove, & Eklund, 2004). Self-esteem is one factor that has been studied as an antecedent. Self-esteem is the evaluation that individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves. It expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval toward the self (Rosenberg, 1965).

Martin and Brawley (2002, Study 2) found that low self-esteem was associated with greater claimed self-handicapping prior to

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +590 48 31 70.

E-mail addresses: [gcoudevy@univ-ag.fr](mailto:gcoudevy@univ-ag.fr), [guillaumeCoudeville@hotmail.com](mailto:guillaumeCoudeville@hotmail.com), [coudevg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:coudevg@mcmaster.ca) (G.R. Coudeville), [christophe.gernigon@univ-montp1.fr](mailto:christophe.gernigon@univ-montp1.fr) (C. Gernigon), [martink@mcmaster.ca](mailto:martink@mcmaster.ca) (K.A. Martin Ginis).

URL: <http://www.performance-sante.fr>

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +33 (0)4 67 41 57 51; fax: +33 (0)4 67 41 57 08.

a fitness test. In another study examining the determinants of self-handicapping strategies in sport, Coudevylle, Martin Ginis, and Famose (2008) showed that self-esteem was significantly negatively correlated with claimed self-handicapping. Indeed, several authors have suggested that low self-esteem individuals are likely to self-handicap more frequently than high self-esteem individuals (Martin & Brawley, 2002; Prapavessis & Grove, 1998; Snyder & Higgins, 1988) because low self-esteem individuals encounter more situations where they doubt their ability to be successful. Thus, self-confidence may be a more proximal factor than self-esteem when predicting claimed self-handicapping use.

### Self-esteem, self-handicapping strategies and potential mediators

Although several studies have examined the direct relationships between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping, little is known about the psychological processes that mediate these relationships. In their review of the self-handicapping literature, Arkin and Oleson (1998) suggested that the combined influence of state and trait beliefs about the self could be an important area of investigation for self-handicapping researchers. In the present study, we focused on the state beliefs of anxiety and self-confidence, and the trait belief of self-esteem. State anxiety is a psychological (i.e., cognitive anxiety) and physical (i.e., somatic anxiety) response to a threat to the self-concept, characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of tension (Spielberger, 1970). In athletes, self-confidence is an athlete's belief or degree of certainty that he or she has the ability to perform successfully in sport (Vealey, 2004).

It seems plausible that the use of claimed self-handicapping may be also linked to situation-specific high anxiety or low levels of self-confidence. On the one hand, some studies have shown that trait self-esteem correlates negatively with scores on measures of manifest anxiety and social anxiety (e.g., Leary & Kowalski, 1995). This has been supported by Suliman and Halabi (2007) who showed that self-esteem is negatively correlated with state anxiety (i.e., cognitive and somatic anxieties) and self-confidence among baccalaureate nursing students. That said, because self-esteem reflects thoughts about the self, it makes sense that self-esteem would be more related to negative thoughts or concerns about performance (i.e., cognitive anxiety) and not with perceived bodily symptoms of competitive anxiety (i.e., somatic anxiety). On the other hand, self-esteem was found to positively relate to self-confidence (Campbell, 1990, Study 1). Indeed, people with low self-esteem want to succeed as much as people with high self-esteem but they are simply less confident that they will be able to do so (McFarlin & Blascovich, 1981).

Much has been written about the role of ability uncertainty (e.g., Berglas & Jones, 1978) and threat to self-esteem as predictors of self-handicapping (Snyder & Smith, 1982). In sport contexts, for instance, trait competitive anxiety (Martens, Vealey, & Burton, 1990) was found to positively relate to situational manifestations of claimed self-handicapping (Ferrand, Champely, & Brunel, 2005) and state competitive anxiety was found to positively relate to trait measures of self-handicapping (Prapavessis & Grove, 1994; Prapavessis, Grove, Maddison, & Zillmann, 2003). Furthermore, Ryska, Yin, and Cooley (1998) showed that athletes' reports of performance-debilitating obstacles prior to competition were positively correlated with their states of cognitive anxiety (negative concerns about performance) and somatic anxiety (perceived bodily symptoms of competitive anxiety), and negatively correlated with their state of self-confidence. In addition, Kuczka and Treasure (2005) found that claimed situational self-handicapping was positively correlated with self-efficacy, a construct that is conceptually close to self-confidence (Bandura, 1997).

Given the links that exist between self-esteem and cognitive anxiety and self-confidence on the one hand, and between states of

anxiety and self-confidence and claimed self-handicapping on the other hand, it seems worthwhile to examine the role of cognitive anxiety and self-confidence as potential mediators of the relationship between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine these mediated relationships in a sport setting, since sport is an achievement context that is propitious to self-handicapping (Jones & Berglas, 1978). We examined the mediational relationships among athletes performing a basketball task. It was predicted that the negative relationship between self-esteem and claimed self-handicapping would be mediated by cognitive anxiety and self-confidence.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants were 68 competitive basketball players, 34 men ( $M_{\text{age}} = 21$  years;  $SD = 4.5$ ) and 34 women ( $M_{\text{age}} = 19.5$  years;  $SD = 3.9$ ). To ensure that participants would be personally invested in the experimental task and its outcome, all players competed at the French regional level—a sufficiently competitive level. Participants were recruited from eight different teams. Note that the data from 56 participants represent a secondary analysis of data previously published (Coudevylle, Martin Ginis, Famose, & Gernigon, 2009).

#### Measures

##### General Self-esteem

Vallières and Vallerand's (1990) French version of Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure general self-esteem. This scale includes 10 items capturing a continuum of self-worth statements. The original scale has been used extensively for research in samples with a variety of ages, nationalities, and socioeconomic levels (Rosenberg, 1965) and has demonstrated consistently acceptable internal consistency reliability (coefficient alphas of 0.72–0.87; Wiley, 1989). Each item was answered on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree).

##### Cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence

State anxiety and self-confidence were measured using Cury, Sarrazin, Peres, and Famose's (1999) French version of the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory – 2 (CSAI-2; Martens et al., 1990). This questionnaire, which was found to be reliable and valid for French athletes, consists of seven items measuring cognitive anxiety, seven items measuring somatic anxiety and nine items measuring self-confidence. According to Martens et al., cognitive anxiety is conceptualized as negative expectations of success and cognitive concerns about oneself; somatic anxiety is conceptualized as the perception of one's physiological arousal; and self-confidence is conceptualized as one's belief in meeting the challenge of the task to be performed. Participants indicated the extent to which they were currently experiencing the content of each item using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (completely). The questionnaire has been extensively utilized in sport settings and possesses strong reliability and validity (Martens et al., 1990).

##### Claimed Self-handicapping

A scale that was adapted from that used by Martin and Brawley (2002, Study 2) was used to measure claimed self-handicapping. Whereas Martin and Brawley's scale consisted of just seven possible impediments, our scale consisted of thirteen impediments that athletes may use as self-handicaps such as: "I am feeling tired," "I have personal concerns in this moment". These impediments were chosen because they were those most frequently cited by athletes in Carron et al.'s studies of self-handicapping in sport (Carron, Prapavessis, &

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

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