Motivation for Participation in Competition and Avoidance of Competition: the Role of the Accuracy of Comparative Self-Evaluations of Academic Performance

Abstract

To investigate the role of academic achievement in the reasons for participation in and/or avoidance of competition more clearly, the presented research was aimed at assessing the role of the discrepancy between objective evaluations and subjective self-evaluations of academic performance in secondary school students. The differences between under-raters, accurate raters, and over-raters in their reasons for participation in and/or avoidance of competition were investigated. The study comprised 534 secondary school students. The results do not clearly indicate possible benefits of the positive bias; we found that under-rating may have some advantages in the sense of mastery orientation and self-improvement motives (upward comparison) in competitive situations. Concerning other reasons for participation in competition, as well as reasons for avoiding it, students were found to rely more on teachers’ objective measure of academic performance than on the (in)accurate aspect of social comparison information.

Keywords: competitiveness, comparative self-evaluations, academic achievement, social comparisons, secondary school students