Competitiveness and Motivation for Education in Academic Self-Handicapping

Abstract

Previous research examined only the role of interpersonal competition in academic self-handicapping. Therefore, from the multidimensional perspective, the goal of the presented research on academic self-handicapping was to determine the role of (1) different attitudes to competition, (2) the reasons that motivate people for competition and (3) the reasons for avoidance of competition. We also aimed at distinguishing the roles of different types of motivation for education in academic self-handicapping, according to the level of self-determination. Participants were 748 high school students.

In academic self-handicapping the results confirmed the relevance of distinguishing among different dimensions of competitiveness. Those denoted by self-worth protection proved to be more characteristic of academic self-handicapping than those depicted by testing one’s own limits and by high importance of the quality of task accomplishment. Regarding motivation for education, amotivation played the important role. Intrinsic motivation correlated with academic self-handicapping negatively, but extrinsic motivation showed no significant correlation. Important implications for refinements of pedagogical practice are discussed.

Keywords: competitiveness, motivation for education, academic self-handicapping, high school students