



Achievement goals and self-efficacy: A meta-analysis



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ABSTRACT

This meta-analysis examined the relations between achievement goals and self-efficacy. One hundred and twenty-five studies consisting of 148 samples ($N = 61,456$) reporting the relations between academic achievement goals and academic self-efficacy were included. The correlations of mastery and mastery approach goals with self-efficacy were generally moderate to strong, while those of performance avoidance and mastery avoidance goals with self-efficacy were low. Goal valence was meaningfully related to self-efficacy, whereas the support for the goal definition was inconsistent. Publication status, proportion of males, mean age, and achievement goal measure did not exert significant moderating effects, whereas those for country where the research was conducted, the proportion of Caucasians, the self-efficacy measure, the domains of achievement goals and self-efficacy, and matching between achievement goal and self-efficacy domains varied with the achievement goal factor. The four-factor model was based on a relatively small number of samples, and so future research is needed to determine whether there are differences in correlations of mastery avoidance and performance avoidance goals with antecedents and consequences.

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1. Introduction

Two major constructs in achievement motivation are (1) self-efficacy, referring to the perceived competence of an individual to succeed at or accomplish a certain task (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986), and (2) achievement goals, determined in terms of how competence is defined (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984). Because competence forms the core of these two constructs, it is not surprising that achievement goal theorists have linked achievement goals and self-efficacy. For example, Dweck and Leggett (1988) suggested that individuals who believe that competence is malleable tend to adopt mastery goals, whereas individuals who believe that competence is fixed tend to adopt performance goals. Nicholls (1990) suggested that an individual who believes that competence is determined by effort is more likely to adopt mastery goals, while an individual who believes that competence is determined by normative comparison tends to adopt performance goals. Ames (1992) suggested that there are differences in how mastery and performance goals are linked to concepts of success. Because individuals adopting mastery goals focus on absolute or intrapersonal standards and believe that effort will lead to success and mastery, they tend to have a high perceived self-efficacy. In contrast, self-efficacy will be jeopardized when an individual who tries his or her best does not succeed. Elliot (1999) reported a link between achievement goals from a three-factor achievement goal model and self-efficacy, and suggested that students with high competence perceptions tend to adopt approach goals such as mastery and performance approach goals, while students with low competence perceptions tend to adopt avoidance goals such as performance avoidance goals.

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Two lines of theories have been integrated in achievement goal theory that differentiates between (1) mastery from performance goals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) and (2) approach and avoidance motivations (Elliot, 1999, 2006). Both of these perspectives are informative, and so they should be integrated to examine the correlation between achievement goals and self-efficacy. Hence, it is important to explain how the effects of goal definition and goal valence are related to self-efficacy. Research into achievement goals (Ames, 1992; Elliot & Dweck, 1988) suggests that mastery goals are related to adaptive learning behaviors, while performance goals are associated with maladaptive behaviors. Mastery goals would therefore be expected to be related to a relatively high self-efficacy, with performance goals related to a relatively low self-efficacy. In approach motivation, behaviors are directed toward desirable outcomes and are thus related to enjoyable learning experiences. On the other hand, behaviors are directed toward undesirable outcomes in avoidance motivation and have been associated with stressful learning experiences (Elliot, 1999, 2006). Approach motivation is therefore expected to be related to a relatively high self-efficacy, whereas avoidance motivation has been related to a relatively low self-efficacy.

The achievement goal model has evolved from a two to a three to a four-factor model and conceptual distinctions among achievement goals have been established in the relevant literature. However, empirical differentiation remains unclear and agreement on how many factors should be included in the achievement goal model is lacking. To determine the utility of achievement goals, each achievement goal should be meaningfully correlated with antecedents and consequents. Accordingly, achievement goals should result in different nomological networks, so examining the correlation between achievement goals and self-efficacy is pivotal. If mastery and performance goals are differently correlated with maladaptive/adaptive behaviors, then differentiating mastery from performance goals has benefits. Differences should exist between the correlations of mastery and performance goals of the same goal valence with self-efficacy. The importance of approach versus avoidance motivations can also be argued, because it is well documented that the effects of these two motivations are related to desirable or undesirable affects or attitudes (Elliot, 2006). Therefore, different correlations should exist between approach and avoidance motivations of the same goal definition with self-efficacy. For example, if the correlations of the mastery approach and mastery avoidance goals with self-efficacy were similar, then bifurcating the mastery goal into mastery approach and avoidance components would be unnecessary. Further, the power of each achievement goal to predict self-efficacy should be established. If an achievement goal is highly correlated with self-efficacy, then the practical utility can be high.

Some researchers (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash, 2002; Luo, Paris, Hogan, & Luo, 2011) have argued that mastery and performance goals are not mutually exclusive and have claimed that individuals can adopt multiple goals simultaneously (Pintrich, 2000). Recent research (e.g., Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Luo et al., 2011) has supported the multiple goal perspective and found that an individual with high mastery and performance approach goals tends to have high academic achievement. The multiple goal perspective was not adopted in this study owing to the insufficiency of the statistics in primary research (Harackiewicz et al., 2002). The following correlation pairs can be compared:

1. Mastery goals and self-efficacy versus performance goals and self-efficacy.
2. Mastery approach goals and self-efficacy versus performance approach goals and self-efficacy.
3. Mastery avoidance goals and self-efficacy versus performance avoidance goals and self-efficacy.
4. Mastery approach goals and self-efficacy versus mastery avoidance goals and self-efficacy.
5. Performance approach goals and self-efficacy versus performance avoidance goals and self-efficacy.

Differentiating mastery goals from the performance goals was supported if the differences in pairs 1, 2, and 3 were sufficiently large, while the approach and avoidance motivations were warranted if the differences in pairs 4 and 5 were sufficiently large.

1.1. Empirical findings about achievement goals and self-efficacy

The relations between achievement goals and self-efficacy have been studied extensively during the past decades, but the findings have varied. For example, Wey (1998) found that the correlation coefficients of mastery and performance goals with self-efficacy were 0.54 and 0.40, respectively; whereas Curda (1997) found them to be 0.26 and -0.13 , respectively. The reported correlations between achievement goals and self-efficacy have also varied when using a three-factor model. For example, Bembunty (2001) examined the relations between math achievement goals and math self-efficacy in a sample of 102 undergraduate students. The correlation coefficients of self-efficacy with the mastery, performance approach, and performance avoidance goals were 0.61, 0.01, and -0.39 , respectively. Different strengths and directions of correlations were found by Valkyrie (2006), who sampled 500 college students with mean age of 24.54 years and found that the corresponding coefficients were 0.44, 0.12, and 0.02, respectively.

The reported relations have also varied for a four-factor model. For example, Bong (2009) compared the following four groups of students using a four-factor achievement goal model: lower, middle, and upper elementary school students, and middle school students. The correlation coefficients of self-efficacy with the mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, and performance avoidance goals were from 0.46 to 0.67, -0.16 to 0.17, 0.40 to 0.54, and -0.08 to 0.25, respectively. Relatively low correlations were found by Cao (2012), who sampled 68 graduate students to examine these

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