

Approach- and avoidance motivation in planning (#51400)

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1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

No, no data have been collected for this study yet.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

The study tests two competing hypotheses about the effects of experimentally induced approach- and avoidance motivation on willingness to plan.

H1a: Approach motivation will lead to a greater self-reported willingness to plan than avoidance motivation.

H1b: Avoidance motivation will lead to a greater self-reported willingness to plan than approach motivation.

Mediation hypothesis 1: If results are as predicted by H1a, the greater effect of approach motivation will be mediated by a relatively greater intensity in anticipated positive affect in this condition, as compared to the intensity of anticipated negative affect in the avoidance condition. A higher intensity of anticipated affect will be associated with a stronger willingness to plan.

Mediation hypothesis 2: If results are as predicted by H1b, the greater effect of avoidance motivation will be mediated by a relatively greater intensity in anticipated negative affect in this condition, as compared to the intensity of anticipated positive affect in the approach condition. A higher intensity of anticipated affect will be associated with a stronger willingness to plan.

Mediation hypothesis 3: Perceived distance to goal will mediate the relationship between motivational orientation and willingness to plan, with a negative association between approach motivation and perceived distance and a positive association between avoidance motivation and perceived distance.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

Willingness to plan will be measured using a four-item scale. This scale assesses participants' willingness to plan for when, where, how, and how much time they are going to spend preparing for the examination. Participants will indicate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 7 = totally agree). The four items will be combined into an average score on willingness to plan.

Anticipated affect for receiving the grade will be measured on a 11-point scale (-5 = very unhappy, 0 = neutral, 5 = very happy).

Perceived distance to the day of the examination will be measured on an 11-point scale (0 = feels like tomorrow; 10 = feels very far away).

The effectiveness of the experimental manipulation will be measured with one item, asking participants to indicate to which extent they are thinking about the grade that they want to achieve (approach condition) or avoid (avoidance condition; 0 = not at all, 5 = to some extent, 10 = to a very large extent).

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

Participants will be randomly assigned to two conditions: approach motivation and avoidance motivation. A goal-framing manipulation will be used. In the approach (avoidance) motivation condition, participants will be asked to consider which grade they would like to ACHIEVE (AVOID) in one of their current classes. They will then be asked to make a goal to achieve (avoid) a certain grade or better (worse).

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

To test H1, an independent t-test (two-tailed, $\alpha = .05$) will be conducted to investigate the effect of condition on willingness to plan. For the manipulation check, two one-sample t-tests will be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation. The average scores on the manipulation check will be compared against the value 4 (i.e., below the value of 5: "to some extent"), and the test will be run separately for each condition. The three mediation hypotheses will be tested using 10 000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples with Model 4 in the PROCESS macro.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

At the end of the questionnaire we will administer a comprehension check, where participants indicate whether the goal they were asked to set was approach-oriented or avoidance-oriented. Participants answering this question wrongly according to condition (e. g. indicating approach in avoidance condition) will be excluded.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

Targeting a student population, data collection will be stopped after 400 participants have been recruited to the study.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

For exploratory purposes we will also collect information about years of education, mood, prior grades, personal relevance of the goal, predicted grade, and time spent completing the survey.

Years of education will be measured with one item, where participants will be asked how many years of higher education they have completed per today.

Mood will be measured using the Worcester Affect Scale. Participants will be asked how positive or negative their current feelings are on an 11-point scale (0 = not at all positive, 10 = extremely positive; 0 = not at all negative, 10 = extremely negative)

Prior grades will be measured using one item, where participants are asked to indicate what grade they received on their last exam (A-F).

Personal relevance of the goal will be measured using one item, where participants are asked to evaluate how personally relevant they experience the goal they were asked to set as part of the experimental manipulation (0 = not at all relevant, 10 = very relevant).

Expected grade will be measured using one item, where participants are asked which grade they think they are most likely to attain in the subject they focused on in the survey (A-F).

Time of completing the survey will be measured with one item, where participants are asked whether they completed the survey preceding a lecture, in the break of a lecture, subsequent to a lecture or independent of a lecture.