

WHAT ABOUT THE CLASSMATES? AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH TO REVEAL THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERCEPTION OF CLASSROOM GOAL STRUCTURES

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Goal theory assumes that students' motivation is influenced by their individual features and also by the environment. Within the framework of goal theory, motivational characteristics of students are described by their goals, whereas the learning environment is described by goal structures. Goal theory research on students' perceptions of the classroom goal structure has mainly focused on teachers' practice through a deductive approach. However, this seems to interfere in revealing the factors that influence classroom goal structures. The aim of the present research is to reveal the connection between goal structures and additional classroom features based on students' perceptions with the help of an inductive approach. A series of 3 studies was conducted to identify new factors in the classroom which are related to students' perceptions of goal structures. In Study 1 (N=168, 5th to 7th graders), a Hungarian questionnaire was developed based on previous instruments (Midgley et al., 2000; Urdan, 2004) to measure classroom goal structures. CFA supported the latent factors ($\chi^2_{(43)}=63,32$; $p<.02$; RMSEA=.053; CFI=.98; TLI=.97), and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales were suitable (mastery goal structure =.88, performance goal structure =.87). In Study 2 (N=450, 7th graders), statements from the Classroom Goal Structures Questionnaire and open-ended questions related to classroom climate were used following the method of Patrick and Ryan (2008). However, instead of a focus on the teachers' practice, the open-ended questions concentrated on the whole classroom. Based on qualitative analysis, the following three Likert-type scales were created: interaction with peers with a pedagogical aim, recognizing peers, and views about the classroom community. In Study 3 (N=248, 6th to 8th graders), the new scales as well as classroom goal structures and perceived teacher emotional support (a reference scale from previous studies) were measured. A factor analysis supported the expected structure; however, the variable of 'recognizing peers' was divided into two factors with the emerging new construct named 'mocking peers'. All new scales were found to have a significant role in the perception of goal structures, even in relation to the integral role of the previously identified environmental variable of teacher emotional support. The findings contribute to unpacking what goal structures mean to young adolescents and reveal new aspects of the classroom in relation to goal structures. The evidence from the three studies presented support the usefulness of the inductive approach in examining classroom goal structures.

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