

# What Motivates our Contingencies of Self-Worth

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# Contingencies of Self-Worth

- Domains that self-esteem are based on
- Examples:
  - Power over others, god's love, approval from others, morality, academic success, etc.

# Academic Contingency

- Doing well in school gives me a sense of self-respect
- I feel better about myself when I know I'm doing well academically

# Academic Contingency Contd...

Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn & Chase, JPSP 2003

- Test grade
  - Good score
    - SE and identification ↑
  - Bad score
    - SE and identification ↓
  
- Greater for Academically Contingent

# Academic Contingency Contd...

Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, PSPB 2002

- Applying to grad school
  - Acceptance days
    - SE ↑
  - Rejection Days
    - SE ↓
  
- Results moderated by academic contingency

# Academic Contingency and Performance Goals

- Performance goals Buck, & Wolfe 2004
  - My goal in classes is to get a better grade than most of the students
- Motivation to work for grades

# Intellectual Contingency

- Approach - take advantage of chances to get smarter
  - Proficiency in a particular subject or field gives my self-esteem a boost
  - Having knowledge I can teach gives my sense of self-esteem a boost
- Avoidance - avoid looking unintelligent
  - My self-respect goes down when I can't comprehend something important
  - It bothers me if I cannot intellectually argue a point

# Intellectual Contingency and School Goals

Buck & Wolfe, 2004

- Intel-approach with Mastery Goals
  - I hope to have gained a broader and deeper knowledge of the material when I am done with a class
- Intel-avoid with Work Avoidance Goals
  - I just want to avoid doing poorly in a class

# Self-Determination Theory

- Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic
- Self-determined is psychologically healthy
  - Autonomy
  - Choice
- Elliot & McGregor JPSP 2001
  - Positive predictor
    - Approach goals, deep processing
  - Negative predictor
    - Avoidance goals

# Our Hypothesis

- Self-Determination
  - + with intel-approach
  - - with intel-avoid
  - - with academic

# Web Survey

- Who...
  - N = 235; Mostly White, North American college students
  - 145 women, 61 men [29 missing]
    - Age M = 24; Mode = 18
    - USA = 73%; Canada = 14%
    - Currently enrolled in college = 80%
    - White = 87%; Black/African-American = 4.3%; Asian = 3%

# Scales

- **Intel-Approach (alpha = .80)**
  - When I completely understand something I feel good about myself
- **Intel-Avoid (alpha = .74)**
  - My self-respect goes down when I can't comprehend something important
- **Academic (alpha = .89)**
  - Doing well in school gives me a sense of self-respect
- Contingency scales 1-7 likert, ↑ numbers indicating ↑ endorsement
- **Self-Determination (alpha = .71)**
  - A. I do what I do because it interests me
  - B. I do what I do because I have to
- 1-5 Likert, 1 = only A feels true, 5 = only B feels true

# Correlations

	IC App	IC-Avoid	Acad
1. Intel-approach			
2. Intel-avoid	.32**		
3. Academic	.49**	.52**	
4. Self-Determ	.19**	-.14*	n.s.

• \*  $p < .05$

• \*\*  $p < .001$

• Intel-approach alpha = .80

• Intel-avoid alpha = .74

Acad alpha = .89

Self-Determ alpha = .71

# Partial Correlations

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	Self-Determination
Intel-Approach	.24*
Intel-Avoid	-.19**
Academic	n.s.

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•\* Controlling for IAvoid & Acad;  $p < .001$

•\*\* Controlling for IApproach & Acad;  $p = .003$

# Discussion

- Some contingencies bad
- Self-Esteem
  - Intel-approach +
  - Intel-avoid -
- Approach vs. avoidance