

The Effects of Feedback on Students Achievement Goals: Interaction between Comparative Reference and Regulatory Focus

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Extended Abstract

Aim

Students evaluate their achievement in different ways and respond differently to situations depending on their goals or objectives. This study examined how the type of feedback and regulatory focus and interaction affect the orientation of student's achievement goals.

Method

This study is an applied study by its purpose. An experimental research method with a four-group pretest-posttest design was used. The statistical population of this study includes all sixth-grade female students of schools in district 6 of Mashhad in the academic year 2019-2020. A random cluster sampling method was used. The participants were 128 students and were randomly divided into four groups. Four conditions were designed. The first was a self-referential feedback condition in which participants received feedback comparing their current score to the score from the previous set. The second was the normative feedback condition, in which participants received feedback comparing their current score to the average score of others. The third condition was the focus of regulation. In this case, there were two conditions crossed with the referential and normative feedback conditions. One was a condition in which participants received feedback that highlighted students' successful performance when they answered correctly and received no feedback when they answered incorrectly. In addition, participants received zero points at the beginning of the task and one point for each correct answer. And in the prevention-oriented feedback condition, participants received the feedback they did when their answer was incorrect. In addition, participants received full points at the beginning of the task and one point was deducted for each incorrect answer. For the experimental conditions, a modified Stroop task was used. This task consists of three sets of 20, with each set having a total score of 20. Therefore, the total score for each set varied from 1 to 20. Participants saw two words-one large and one small-and were asked to judge whether the color of the smaller word and the meaning of the larger word on the screen matched. Participants had 3.5 seconds to answer each item. In the comparison-reference manipulation, total scores on each sentence were compared to their previous test scores (i.e., self-referential feedback) or to other participants' scores (i.e., normative feedback). Before and after the intervention, participants completed the Elliott and McGregor Achievement Goal Orientation Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the factor covariance analysis model and SPSS-24 software.

Findings

Results indicated that self-referential feedback increased goal orientation related to mastery of the approach in conditions that served promotion, but did not increase goal orientation related to avoidance of the approach in conditions that served prevention. Normative feedback increased goal orientation for performance approach when it was the promotion focus and goal orientation for performance avoidance when it was the prevention focus.

Discussion

According to the results of this study, it can be said that feedback is one of the most important factors in the formation of students' achievement goals. The type of selective orientation leads to different behaviors and emotional consequences in students. The practical implications of the results were discussed.

Keywords: Feedback, Achievement Goals, Comparison Reference, Regulatory Focus.