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Two Facets of Competitiveness and their Influnce on Psychological Adjustment, Achievement, and Decision-Making

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Poster Presentation P22

TWO FACETS OF COMPETITIVENESS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT, ACHIEVEMENT, AND DECISION-MAKING

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The purpose of this study was to better understand the influence of competitiveness as a personality trait on several life domains including psychological adjustment, achievement, and decision-making. Competitiveness was differentiated into two distinct facets. Superiority competitiveness represents a drive to outperform others with an emphasis on social comparison. Mastery competitiveness was differentiated as a focus on self-improvement and mastery of absolute challenges without regard for external standards. In terms of psychological adjustment, the effects of these facets of competitiveness on depression, loneliness, self-esteem, anxiety, and eating patterns were examined. Achievement was measured by assessing an individual's Grade Point Average and degree of conscientiousness. By looking at decision-making, the aim was to better understand how competitiveness influences our decision to pursue challenging situations. The relationship between future aspirations and competitiveness was also explored. Within the domain of psychological adjustment, it was hypothesized that superiority competitiveness was associated with higher degrees of depressive symptoms, loneliness, anxiety, and disordered eating patterns than mastery competitiveness. Mastery competitiveness was predicted to be associated with higher degrees of self-esteem than superiority competitiveness. It was also hypothesized that mastery competitiveness would be associated with an elevated level of academic achievement and would be related to the desire to pursue challenging situations compared to superiority competitiveness. Participants included 60 General Psychology students. Questionnaires were used to assess the aforementioned dimensions within psychological adjustment, achievement, and decision-making. A vignette was administered describing a typical situation students would face, in which participants were required to indicate their personal response by choosing one out of the two options. The results of the study will most likely reveal a relationship between superiority competitiveness and higher levels of depressive symptomology, anxiety, loneliness, and disordered eating patterns. With mastery competitiveness, a relationship will most likely be observed in greater levels of academic achievement and self-esteem. Results will probably also indicate an association between mastery competitiveness and a greater inclination to pursue challenging situations.