

What matters more for students' beliefs about help seeking: Academic goals or social goals?

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- Seeking academic help when needed is an adaptive learning strategy
 - Perceived costs, e.g., requirement of social interaction, implication of incompetence, or feelings of indebtedness, may inhibit willingness to seek help from others (Karabenick, 2006)
 - Students more likely to seek adaptive help when they perceive benefits of doing so (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997)
- Students' goals for their achievement at school and for their relationships with their peers may influence their beliefs about help seeking

Academic achievement goals

Mastery

Understanding
& personal
improvement

“Really
understanding
my work is
important to
me.”

Performance- Approach

Demonstrate
academic
competence

“My goal is to
look smarter
than other
students.”

Performance- Avoidance

Avoid appearing
academically
incompetent

“It is important
to me that I
don't look
stupid.”

Ames, 1984; 1992; Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Nicholls, 1984

Social achievement goals

Development

**Develop
meaningful
relationships**

“It’s important to
me to have
friends who really
understand me.”

Demonstration- Approach

**Demonstrate
social
competence**

“It’s important to
me that others
think of me as
popular.”

Demonstration- Avoidance

**Avoid appearing
socially
incompetent**

“My goal is to
avoid doing
things that would
cause others to
make fun of me.”

Ryan & Shim, 2006; 2008

- Academic goals
 - Mastery/task goals predict benefits of HS and instrumental HS, less HS avoidance; performance/ego/ability goals positively predict costs of HS and HS avoidance (Butler & Neuman, 1995; Karabenick, 2004; Newman, 1998; Roussel, Elliot, & Feltman, 2011; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997)
- Social goals
 - Development (intimacy/approach) goals predict greater instrumental HS and less HS avoidance; demonstration (social status/dominance/popularity/avoidance) goals predict costs of HS, expedient HS, and HS avoidance (Kiefer & Shim, 2016; Roussel, Elliot, & Feltman, 2011; Ryan, Hicks, & Midgley, 1997; Ryan & Shin, 2011)
- Are both equally important? Which matters more?

Aim of the current study

- To determine the extent to which academic and social achievement goals predict perceived benefits and costs of help seeking
 - Determine whether academic and social goals are structurally distinct factors
 - Estimate a structural model of the six goals predicting help-seeking benefits and costs, controlling for gender & GPA
 - Examine effects of the goals by themselves and when included with other goals

- Surveys administered to 9th-12th grade students ($n = 976$, 51% female) at a US public high school
- Help seeking benefits (3 items, $\alpha = .81$)
 - E.g., “I think asking questions in my classes helps me learn”
- Help seeking costs (4 items, $\alpha = .81$)
 - E.g., “I think other kids might think I am dumb when I ask questions in my classes”
- 5-point Likert scale

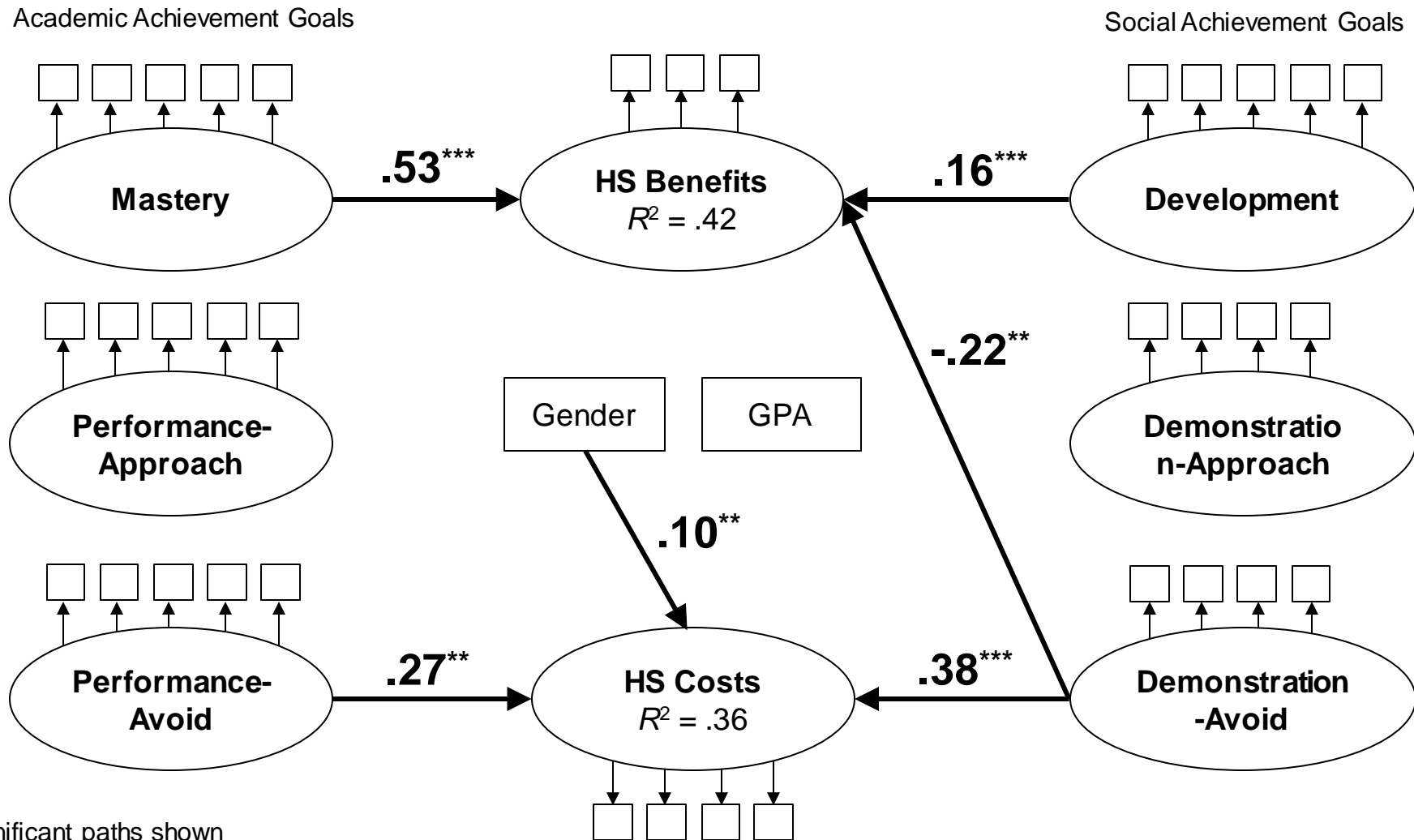
Benefits & costs measures adapted from Newman (1990) Attitudes Toward Help-Seeking Questionnaire

- Academic achievement goals
 - Mastery (5 items, $\alpha = .88$)
 - Performance-approach (5 items, $\alpha = .87$)
 - Performance-avoidance (5 items, $\alpha = .82$)
- Social achievement goals
 - Development (5 items, $\alpha = .91$)
 - Demonstration-approach (4 items, $\alpha = .85$)
 - Demonstration-avoidance (4 items, $\alpha = .81$)
- 5-point Likert scale

Academic goal measures from PALS, Midgley et al., 2000; Social goal measures adapted from Ryan & Shim (2006)

- Structural equation modeling using Mplus v. 6.12
- Separate academic & social goals, with 3 goals within each domain, resulted in best fitting model
- The overall SEM model with the 6 goals predicting perceived benefits & costs of help seeking had acceptable fit
 - $X^2 = 2030.62$, $df = 596$, $X^2/df = 3.41$
 - $CFI = .92$, $TLI = .91$, $RMSEA = .05$, $SRMR = .06$

Results



Only significant paths shown
Covariances between latent variables not shown

Predicting Help Seeking Benefits

Additionally, each goal entered by itself (controlling for gender & GPA) to explore independent effects of goals on HS benefits

Predicting HS benefits...	With other goals	Goal by itself
Academic - Mastery	.53 ***	.61 ***
Academic - Performance-Approach	.07	.14 ***
Academic - Performance-Avoidance	.02	.08 *
Social - Development	.16 ***	.39 ***
Social - Demonstration-Approach	.09	.03
Social - Demonstration-Avoidance	-.22 **	-.08 *

Standardised coefficients reported

Predicting Help Seeking Costs

Each goal entered by itself (controlling for gender & GPA) to explore independent effects of goals on HS costs

Predicting HS costs...	With other goals	Goal by itself
Academic - Mastery	-.06	-.04
Academic - Performance-Approach	-.05	.40 ***
Academic - Performance-Avoidance	.27 **	.48 ***
Social - Development	-.04	.02
Social - Demonstration-Approach	.05	.41 ***
Social - Demonstration-Avoidance	.38 ***	.56 ***

Standardised coefficients reported

Variance Explained

Each goal entered as a sole predictor in separate structural models to estimate variance explained (R^2) for benefits & costs

	HS Benefits (R^2)	HS Costs (R^2)
Academic - Mastery	.38	.00
Academic - Performance-Approach	.02	.16
Academic - Performance-Avoidance	.00	.24
Social - Development	.16	.00
Social - Demonstration-Approach	.00	.15
Social - Demonstration-Avoidance	.01	.31

- Both academic & social goals matter for students' beliefs about the benefits and costs of academic help seeking, controlling for their GPA and gender
- Which goals matter more?
 - Social goals matter more for beliefs about cost - Demonstration-avoidance goals explained the most variance in costs (31%)
 - Academic goals matter more for beliefs about benefits - Mastery goals explained the most variance in benefits (38%)

- In general, mastery/development goals associated with benefits while performance/demonstration goals associated with costs
 - Academic mastery, and to a lesser extent social development goals, predicted higher perceived benefits of HS
 - Demonstration-avoidance, avoiding looking socially incompetent, predicted higher perceived costs of HS and lower benefits of HS
 - Avoidance goals—are they more harmful than approach goals?

- Importance of developing students' social and academic motivation, since both have implications for academic help seeking beliefs in the classroom
- Classrooms should discourage social demonstration-avoidance goals in students
 - Challenging during adolescence, a time of heightened self-awareness & striving to fit in with peers
 - Possibilities: accepting classroom climate, support diversity, discourage competition, social icebreakers, collaborative learning

Limitations & Future Work

- Did not account for effects of multiple goals
 - Person-centered analysis (e.g., LPA) to determine how goal profiles differ in terms of help seeking beliefs
- Correlational design, self-report
 - Combine measures of beliefs with observational or teacher/peer report of help seeking behaviors
 - Longitudinal and/or experimental designs
- Examine the role of the classroom social context & peer group dynamics



Thank You

- Questions or comments

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- Data collected when I was a PhD student in the Combined Program in Education and Psychology at the University of Michigan



- Thank you to our discussant, Dr. Stuart Karabenick, to the symposium co-chair, Dr. Serena Shim, and to the Motivation in Education SIG

EXTRA SLIDES

Means & Standard Deviations

Variable	M	SD
Help Seeking Benefits	3.44	.97
Help Seeking Costs	1.87	.83
Academic – Mastery	3.96	.81
Academic – Performance-Approach	2.18	.91
Academic – Performance-Avoidance	2.13	.88
Social – Development	4.04	.91
Social – Demonstration-Approach	1.99	.83
Social – Demonstration-Avoidance	2.04	.85
Grade point average (GPA)	3.29	.77

Note. All on scale of 1 (not at all true of me) to 5 (very true of me) except GPA, which ranges from 0-4.

CFA for competing goal models

	χ^2 (df)	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Three factors combining academic & social (Mas/Dev, Pap/Dap, Pav/Dav)	4888.58 (347)	.70	.67	.09	.12
Four factors combining approach & avoid (Mas, Pap/Pav, Dev, Dap/Dav)	2204.41 (344)	.88	.86	.05	.07
Six factors (Mas, Dev, Pap, Dap, Pav, Dav)	1499.30 (335)	.92	.91	.05	.06
Six factors (Mas, Dev, Pap, Dap, Pav, Dav) with 2 correlated pairs of items	1142.87 (333)	.95	.94	.04	.05

Note. Mas = Mastery; Dev = Development; Pap = Performance-Approach; Dap = Demonstration-Approach, Pav = Performance-Avoidance; Dav = Demonstration-Avoidance

Correlation Matrix

Estimated correlation matrix among latent variables

	Mas	Perf-App	Perf-Avoid	Dev	Dem-App	Dem-Avoid	Benefits
Mastery	-						
Perf-App	.19	-					
Perf-Avoid	.14	.84	-				
Development	.45	.08	.05	-			
Dem-App	.01	.66	.59	.14	-		
Dem-Avoid	.02	.55	.65	.11	.76	-	
HS Benefits	.62	.14	.07	.39	.01	-.07	-
HS Costs	-.05	.40	.49	-.01	.45	.56	-.07

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