

The Role of Cultural Factors on Students' Social and Achievement Goals Motivation

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Abstract. The present study hypothesized that student's motivational goals could be predicted by cultural factors such as ethnic identity (exploration and commitment) and social achievement goals (social development, social demonstration-approach, and social demonstration-avoidance). A total of one-hundred fifty-nine university students participated in the study with the results showed that students' social goals motivation positively predicted achievement motivational goals, but ethnic identity did not predict any motivational goals. Students' horizontal and vertical relationships within the Indonesian context, was also measured in relations to their social achievement goals and ethnic identity. In the Indonesian context, vertical relationships pattern had predictive role on social demonstration-approach goal. A further exploration on how social goals predict motivational goals is needed for a more thorough comprehension on how these two variables interact.

Keywords: social achievement goals, ethnic identity, horizontal and vertical cultural orientation, achievement goals motivation.

Introduction

Students' motivation has been an important topic in any educational settings as shown by many studies (eg. Dweck, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997) as it is the desired condition in any learning process. Achievement goal motivation defines motivation as something that guide and direct one's cognition and behavior toward a particular goal (Dweck & Elliot, 1983). The goal drives the students in different ways as they try to achieve different goals. Some students may want to achieve mastery level, others may want to compete with others.

Previous studies have shown that the type of motivation which a student has will affect their approach to learning (Ames, 1992), and also their academic performance (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999). Achievement motivation itself has been found to be related to varieties of factors, such as emotional intelligence

(Sontakke, 2016), gender (Sutantoputri & Watt, 2013) and also ethnicity (Murniati, Sutantoputri, & Purwanti, 2013; Sutantoputri & Watt, 2012), Students' achievement motivation itself can be affected by a lot of factors. Based on the nature of achievement goals itself, it could be students' goals motivation can be also affected by their social goals especially in a collectivistic culture such as Indonesia which emphasizes sociability. In a society which emphasis on sociability and interdependence, to get along or to be accepted by others would be an important matter. This would make social competence as something to attain for. As social goals in a collectivistic culture seem to be imperative, it would not be surprising if they could also motivate students in a certain way. For example, a student who wants to show off his/her social skillfulness and abilities to be accepted by his/her friends might be more likely to want to demonstrate his/her academic abilities in contrast with a student who only wants to develop his/her social skills and abilities. In fact, previous study showed that students' social goals predicted different types of learning approached among students (King, Ganotice & Watkins, 2014). This shows that social goals have significant weigh-in on academic behaviors amongst students.

Putting students' achievement motivation and social goals in a larger perspective of one as a member of one's culture, it would not be surprising to see culture to have an impact on the goals, as culture has been found to affect one's motivation and behavior (Banks, 1993). One cultural factor that has been found to affect students' motivation in the Indonesian context is ethnic identity (Sutantoputri & Watt, 2012). Ethnic identity refers to one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group. This belonging to one's ethnic group cannot be chosen by oneself as it is defined not only by one's racial group but also by one's affiliation to one's cultural heritage which include its values, traditions, and language. Students' strong ethnic identification has been found to have a positive relationship with their motivational goals (Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001). As ethnic identity is associated with ethnic group values, it would not be unexpected to see that one's cultural orientation would be found in association in some level to it. Previous study in the Indonesian context found that one's collective self-esteem, which can be related to one's ethnic identification, is related to one's cultural orientation (Sutantoputri & Evanytha, 2013).

One's culture can be individualism or collectivism, depending on where s/he was born and lives. Individualism refers to a culture which encourages individual independence whereas collectivism culture encourages its people to be interdependence (Triandis, 1995). In general, most Western countries are associated with individualism, whereas most Asian countries with collectivism. Within either culture, there are some differences within the culture. For example, in a collectivistic culture with a Confucian background there could be a more leaning toward authoritarian values and traditional sociability as Confucian teaching emphasizes on honoring one's parents and respect to the orderly, but on other collectivistic cultures there might be different perception on those values, although they all encourage sociability. Triandis and Geldfand (1998)

proposed that what makes the distinction across cultures would be how the people put importance on their horizontal and vertical social relationships. One's horizontal and vertical social relationships can affect their values and behavior (Shavitt & Cho, 2016). The dichotomy of horizontal and vertical relationships gives a deeper insight of cultural factors as it shows layers of the fabric of culture which would have different effect on a lot of things, which might include students' social achievement and achievement motivation goals. The present study proposed that students' achievement motivation could be affected by social achievement goals and that both goals, in turn, could be affected by ethnic identity; and that ethnic identity and social achievement goals would be influenced by the pattern of their social relationships (horizontal and vertical patterns).

Achievement Goal Motivation

Achievement goal motivation refers to students' motivation to develop or demonstrate their competence at an activity (Dweck, 1986). There are three well-established achievement goal motivations: learning, performance approach and avoidance goals (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Students who are motivated to develop their competence and task mastery are said to have a learning goal motivation. Students who are motivated to demonstrate their competence at an activity would have a performance approach goal, whereas they would have a performance avoidance goal when they are motivated to avoid looking incompetent at an activity. Another type of motivation is known as work avoidance goal (Archer, 1994). Work avoidance goals refer to students' motivation to do as minimum as possible at an activity not because of academic incompetence but just because they prefer to do the least work possible. This study explored learning, performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance goals

Social Achievement Goals

People have different social goals motivation. These goals will direct their social behaviors. Ryan and Shim's (2007) study found three types of social achievement goals which are distinct from academic achievement goals: social development goal, social demonstration-approach goal, and social demonstration-avoidance goal. Someone has a social development goal when s/he is motivated to develop her/his social competence. S/he has a social demonstration-approach goal when s/he is motivated to demonstrate her/his social competence, whereas s/he has a social demonstration-avoidance goal when s/he is motivated to avoid getting negative judgment from others. Both social demonstration goals are concerned with social desirability, with the approach leaning toward positive social desirability whereas the avoidance concerns with avoiding undesirability. As face saving behavior is known to be important in collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995), it could be that social demonstration-avoidance would be prevalent in the Indonesian context and might predict achievement motivational goals.

Ethnic Identity

There are many facets to one's ethnic identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004) such as self-categorization (how one labels oneself as a part of certain ethnic group), private regard (one's positive or negative attitudes toward one's ethnic group). Phinney (1992) developed an ethnic identity measurement which measures critical components of commitment and exploration of the ethnic identity which were assumed to be cross-cultural. Commitment refers to one's sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, this could vary between one individual to another. One may have commitment to one's ethnic group through identification with parents, other may have strong commitment to his/her ethnic group through his/her knowledge and understanding of his/her ethnicity which was formed by exploring the subject. Exploration itself can be explained as one's active seeking of information and experiences important to one's ethnicity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). These two constructs although have been found to be distinctive on their own (Roberts et al, 1999) may have a close relations as one's exploration toward one's ethnicity would need a certain level of commitment and vice versa. As ethnic identity changes over time and context, it also means that one's exploration may continue throughout one's course of life. It is expected that one may reach one's ethnic identity achievement which comprises of having a firm commitment to one's ethnic identity which is formed by a thorough ethnicity exploration as opposite to foreclosure or moratorium stage (Marcia, 1980). The former refers to having commitment without sufficient exploration, such as only by identification with parents or role models, whereas the latter is having an ongoing exploration in regard to one's ethnicity without any commitment. The revised version of Phinney (1992) ethnic identity measurement (Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised; Phinney & Ong, 2007) was used to measure students' ethnic identity in the present study as it can give information on the strength and security of ethnic identity.

Horizontal and Vertical Relationships Patterns

Triandis and Geldfand (1998) proposed that there are horizontal and vertical aspects of individualism and collectivism; where horizontal aspect refers to one being equal with others and vertical aspect refers to a pattern of hierarchy. People with a horizontal individualism orientation would be more likely to be perceived unique and self-reliant; people with a vertical individualism orientation are concerned with having a high status and would engage in competition with others to achieve it. People with a horizontal collectivism orientation encourage interdependence and social harmony and sociability without hierarchical order, whereas people with a vertical collectivism orientation also encourage interdependence, social harmony, and sociability but with a hierarchical order. The present study explored these four patterns in the Indonesian context to gain valuable knowledge of cultural patterns in Indonesia. This study proposed that students' motivational goals could be affected by their social achievement goals and their ethnic identity. In turn, students' social achievement goals and ethnic identity could be influenced by their cultural orientations.

Methodology

Participants. One-hundred fifty-nine students from two private universities participated in this study. One-hundred fifty-eight students identified their gender, with thirty-three as males, and one-hundred twenty-five as females. One-hundred fifty-three students identified their ethnicity, with one-hundred eighteen students as Native Indonesians, thirty-three students as Chinese Indonesians, and two students as from Other ethnicity background.

Instrumentation

Social achievement goals scale (Ryan & Shim, 2007) had three dimensions: social development ($\alpha = .644$), social demonstration-approach ($\alpha = .766$), and social demonstration-avoidance goal ($\alpha = .557$). The coefficient reliabilities for motivational goals subscales were: learning goals ($\alpha = .808$), performance approach goals ($\alpha = .837$), performance avoidance goals ($\alpha = .738$), and work avoidance goals ($\alpha = .745$). Ethnic identity scale (Phinney & Ong, 2007) had two dimensions: exploration ($\alpha = .804$) and commitment ($\alpha = .840$). Horizontal and vertical patterns had 4 dimensions (Triandis & Geldfand, 1998): horizontal individualism ($\alpha = .652$), vertical individualism ($\alpha = .636$), horizontal collectivism ($\alpha = .428$), and vertical collectivism ($\alpha = .581$). Some of the reliability scores were found to be high, which indicated a good internal consistency, some were not so. It was decided to keep the items to have them tested for the next step of the study. The reliability for horizontal collectivism was found to be low but it was still included in the analysis to give additional information in the Indonesian context.

Analysis

Two multiple linear regression models were engaged to analysis the study data. One model had motivational goals (learning performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance) as dependent variables with social achievement goals (social development, social demonstration-approach, social demonstration-avoidance) and ethnic identity (exploration and commitment) as predictors. The second model had horizontal and vertical cultural patterns as predictors, with social achievement goals and ethnic identity as dependent variables.

Results

Social development goals predicted only one achievement goals, namely learning goals ($\beta = .398, p < .01$). Students who were motivated to develop their social skills and abilities were more likely to have a learning goal orientation. Social demonstration-approach also only predicted one achievement goals, which was performance goals ($\beta = .418, p < .01$); students who were motivated to be socially favored were more likely to try to demonstrate their competence in front of others. Social demonstration-avoidance goals predicted performance avoidance goals only ($\beta = .324, p < .01$); students who were motivated to avoid being socially undesired by others were more likely to avoid looking

incompetent in front of others. Work avoidance goals were not predicted by social achievement goals and ethnic identity. Ethnic exploration and commitment did not predict any motivational goals, which suggests that for the present study, the measurement for ethnic identity in the present study which were divided into exploration and commitment, were not found to affect motivational goals.

Social development goals and social demonstration-avoidance goals were not predicted by any of the vertical and horizontal cultural patterns. Vertical individualism orientation was found to predict social demonstration-approach goals ($\beta = .293, p < .01$) with students who were likely to be motivated in getting a high status by individual competition with others were more likely to have a motivation to get a favorable judgment by others. It was also found to be negatively predicted by vertical collectivism ($\beta = -.253, p < .01$), which shows that students who were leaning toward interdependence and submission to authority were less likely to have a social demonstration-avoidance goal.

Discussion

As expected, students' social achievement goals did predict their motivational goals. This would not be because they were in a same league with each other as Ryan and Shim's study (2007) showed that social achievement goals were distinct from academic motivational goals. This means the present study shows that students' social motivation could be considered as a factor that can affect students' motivational goals. In a collectivistic culture such as Indonesia where saving face is considered to be important, the result that social demonstration-approach predicted performance approach goals was not surprising. To outperform others could be one way of being respected, honored, which could also be seen as accepted in a hierarchical society as Indonesia. Previous study with Indonesian university students (Sutantoputri & Watt, 2012) showed that contrary to most results found in Western countries, performance avoidance goals positively predicted students' academic performance. The authors suggested that it could be due to cultural influence to not lose face which is a prevalent concept in many collectivistic cultures in Asia. It might explain why students who focused on avoiding negative judgment from others would be more likely to avoid looking incompetent. As they did not want to lose face socially, they would not want to look incompetent in front of others. One of the results of the present study also showed that social development goals predicted learning goals positively. It seems that although social development goals and learning goals are distinct from each other, the nature of both goals might be the reason why social development goals predicted learning goals positively. It could be that the mastery inclination of both goals might be caused by students' trait predisposition. Work avoidance goals were not predicted by any social goals. This is not surprising as the items for work avoidance goals were distinctly different from other goals, including performance avoidance goals. The work-avoidant students in the study chose to do the least work possible because they wanted to. This would not be influenced by the desire to master, to outperform others, or not to lose face.

Some intriguing results came up for horizontal and vertical orientations. One of them was the low reliability for horizontal collectivism dimension where it was expected that within the Indonesian context, the value of collectivism would be more prevalent, but instead items supporting (horizontal) collectivism such as "To me, pleasure is spending time with others" did not fare well on reliability scale. When a factor analysis was run for the four dimensions, from 4 items of the dimensions, one was not found to load at all ("The well-being of my peers is important to me"). Also, the results of this study showed that only vertical cultural orientation had any effect on students' social achievement goals. It would be apt to the Indonesian context which has a patriarchal and hierarchical society rather than an equality (horizontal) value. Students with vertical individualism orientation were found to be more likely to have social demonstration-approach whereas students with vertical collectivism orientation would be less likely to have social demonstration-approach. The result would be appropriate as students who were more competitive would be more likely wanted to demonstrate their social competence whereas students who leaned toward authoritarian and traditional sociability might prefer not to be perceived as showing off as they valued conformity. Students with vertical individualism orientation were more likely to do some exploration in regard to their ethnicity, although they were not more likely to commit. This might be related to their wanting to be perceived to be socially competent. It is reasonable for people who want to be perceived socially competent, as having social skillfulness and social abilities, to want to learn as much as they could about their ethnic background in the effort to use it to their social advantage, as an attempt to increase their social standing.

Conclusion

The study has also shown that in Indonesia, vertical orientation is much prevalent than horizontal orientation, and that vertical orientation indeed affected social goals. A further study into the process of how this orientation affects social goals could give a better value in understanding of the relationships between those variables for further study. As mentioned in the discussion, Indonesia is a patriarchal and hierarchical society which may cause the adoption of vertical orientation in the cultural measurement.

The present study has shown that, within the Indonesian context, students' motivational goals were influenced by their social goals. But, it has not shown how this might be so. It is advisable to study how social goals in particular affect motivational goals. By knowing how social goals affect motivational goals within the Indonesian context, it can be used to help the learning process by reinforcing the social goal which can effectively affect their learning motivation. For further study, it is also important to have a much reliable scale for horizontal collectivism. In sum, the result of the present study has been beneficial to the study of cross-cultural educational psychology as it gives significant knowledge of the relationships among cultural factors, social and motivational goals.

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