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Related Self-motives? Examining the Association Between Self-verification and Self-handicapping

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Self-Verification

- Refers to the tendency to seek feedback consistent with one's self-concepts
 - Humans feel discomfort when others view us differently than we view ourselves (Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989)
- Individuals are motivated to self-verify to maintain a sense of control and predictability (Swann et al., 1992)
- Individuals self-verify for both negative and positive traits
- More likely to self-verify for traits felt to be personally important and about which we are certain (e.g., Swann et al.; Swann, 1990; Swann et al., 1992a).

Self-Handicapping

- A self-presentational strategy individuals use in social contexts to maintain positive self-esteem when faced with ego threat (Banaji & Prentice, 1994)

Self-Handicapping (cont'd)

- Lowers expectations of others before one performs a task to reduce any negative feelings in the event of failure
- People self-handicap when they are uncertain of abilities and are motivated to defend insecurely held positive self-image (Jones & Berglas, 1978)

Hypothesis

Individuals who self-handicap are less likely to self-verify and individuals who self-verify are less likely to self-handicap.

Method

Questionnaires were distributed to Psychology 101 students at the University of Dayton

- *Self-Handicapping Scale* (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982)
- *Feedback Seeking Questionnaire* (Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull & Pelham, 1992)
- *Self-Attributes Questionnaire* (Pelham & Swann, 1989)

Results

- For the emotional stability trait, feedback seeking was positively associated with certainty when high in self-handicapping
- For the emotional stability trait, self-handicapping was negatively associated with certainty when low in feedback seeking
- For the common sense trait, feedback seeking and importance scores were positively associated when self-handicapping was high

Discussion

- Results do not support the hypothesis
- Directions to the *Feedback Seeking Questionnaire* seem to have been confusing
- Additional research is needed to further understand the association between self-verification and self-handicapping