THE COMPETITION IS FIERCE: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK
AT GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BEHAVIORAL
SELF-HANDICAPPING

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ABSTRACT

Title: THE COMPETITION IS FIERCE: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BEHAVIORAL SELF-HANDICAPPING

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This study is an exploration of factors connected to gender differences in behavioral self-handicapping. Participants were given surveys measuring their epistemological beliefs about ability, preference for performance or learning goals, focus upon ego involvement or task orientation during a challenge, self-esteem, self-esteem security, and competitiveness. Scores on these surveys were compared to scores on Jones and Rhodewalt’s (1982) self-handicapping scale. Results indicated that high scores on trait self-handicapping were significantly related to low self-esteem, self-esteem insecurity, and performance orientation during tasks. A subset of these survey takers were given a chance to behaviorally self-handicap, with their decision compared to personality traits measured earlier. A current feelings scale was administered to measure emotions incurred after being given the choice to behaviorally self-handicap. Results reaffirmed that males were significantly more likely to behaviorally self-handicap than females. Significant predictors of the self-handicapping scale were not relevant in predicting participants who selected to self-handicap behaviorally. Instead, a stepwise regression revealed that gender and competitiveness best predicted who would select a behavioral self-handicap. Pearson correlations were performed with a questionnaire that measured participants’ concerns during the second session. Results suggested that behavioral self-handicappers selected the response to
protect private self-esteem, whereas trait self-handicappers (those who scored high on the self-handicapping scale) were concerned about impression management. How these results apply to gender differences in behavioral self-handicapping was analyzed.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Before the first human accomplishment there was probably the first human excuse. As humans, we often attribute blame away from themselves and towards outside sources. We perform this task to protect our self-esteem against failure (Baumeister, 1991).

A jujitsu martial arts championship was underway. The reigning champion was challenged by an undefeated contender named Ryan Gracie. The champion was shocked when Ryan arrived with a bandage upon his shoulder. Ryan claimed that he had injured his shoulder the week before but had too much honor to postpone the fight. The champion triumphed. After the fight, the champion argued that Ryan's arm was not injured at all. Instead, the champion claimed Ryan was using the bandaged arm to cast doubt away from Gracie's actual fighting ability (www.fightworld.com).

This story illustrates a type of excuse making. It involves using naive attribution beliefs to use outside circumstances as a replacement for personal failure to perform. A jujitsu world contender may have used bandages to suggest that rather than failing honestly at a fight, he was unable to perform because of an injury. If the champion's allegations are valid, Ryan Gracie was displaying a behavior described by Berglas and Jones (1978) as self-handicapping. Berglas and Jones define self-handicapping loosely as "any action or choice of performance setting that enhances the opportunity to externalize (or excuse) failure and internalize (reasonably accept
credit for) success" (Berglas & Jones, 1978 p. 78). A more specific explanation of self-handicapping is that it is a self-destructive behavior in which a person puts him or herself under a deliberate handicap to obscure attributions of failure to his or her ability.

Research on self-handicapping has shown that men are more prone to behavioral self-handicapping than women (Hirt, McCrea, & Kimble, 2000). The present study is an exploration of belief systems and self-characteristics associated with the choice to self-handicap behaviorally. Belief systems explored include epistemological beliefs about the nature of ability. Do behavioral self-handicappers believe that ability is innate or is it something that is gained through experience? Also, are behavioral self-handicappers more concerned with how they appear while doing a task or are they more focused upon the task itself? This study will also be looking at whether there are self-esteem differences between behavioral self-handicappers and non-behavioral self-handicappers. This study will examine whether the self-esteem of behavioral self-handicappers is secure or insecure. Competitiveness is another self-characteristic measured in the study. Finally, this study will look at whether any assumptions concerning inherent superiority expressed through sexism exist in behavioral or non-behavioral self-handicappers.

A goal of the study is to determine if any specific sex differences exist in these belief systems or personal characteristics. If differences arise, whether the characteristics are related to behavioral self-handicapping will be analyzed.

About Self-Handicapping

Berglas and Jones (1978) studied people's beliefs about attributing failure or success to themselves. The researchers were interested in whether people would deliberately harm their abilities to succeed. Berglas and Jones believed that this type of self-sabotage occurred because
of lack of self-knowledge about competence. The researchers engineered a design to test whether people would deliberately put themselves at a disadvantage if they were unsure whether they would succeed on a self-relevant evaluation. Insecurity would be instilled for participants by giving participants "non-contingent success". In other words, some participants would be told that they had succeeded without having any idea how the participants had accomplished the feat. In Berglas and Jones' (1978) groundbreaking study, participants were told that they would be undergoing an experiment that tested the changes in cognitive ability while under the influence of medication. Participants were led to believe that they would be given a difficult cognitive test before and after ingesting a drug to compare performances. The drugs offered could either assist the participant by improving his or her ability on the evaluation or harm the performer's chance of success. Unbeknownst to participants, all drugs offered were placebos.

Berglas and Jones were curious about the motivation behind selecting a self-sabotaging belief. Was self-sabotage employed to protect private self esteem, or was it to improve one's standing in social situations? To further explore this, the researchers employed a public and private condition in their design.

Participants were first given a pre-test. The test-takers were assigned to one of two groups. One group received problems that were solvable. The second group received problems that could not be solved.

The researchers informed the participants that the problems given would measure intellectual ability of the participants. This information made success on solving the problems relevant to participants’ self-esteem.

All participants were told they were successful in solving the problems. The solvable problems were of intermediate difficulty so that participants were not stymied into helplessness
while working through the problems. To ensure actual success on the solvable problem-solving group, the experimenter would select easier or harder problems based upon the participant's performance. Participants in the solvable questions group were given accurate information about the number of questions performed correctly and incorrectly. This group was referred to as the “contingent success” condition.

The other group was given problems that had no solution. The participants were told that they were successful in solving the problems with no basis for them to determine how they succeeded. Feedback given by the researcher was intentionally vague to ensure that this group was unsure how they had managed to perform successfully. This group was referred to as the “non-contingent success” condition.

In the public condition, the experimenter was told the score aloud by the test taker. The private condition involved having a sealed envelope with the participant's score given to the participant directly. Participants were led to believe that a post-test would follow after ingestion of the drug.

Before the post-test, participants were asked whether they would choose a drug that would make good performance more likely (a facilitating drug) or unlikely (a hindering drug). They were given a chance to select no drug to be a "control" subject. Participants were allowed to select the dosage of the drug.

Results indicated that male participants who were unsure of a successful outcome tended to select the "harmful" drug for the second test. Females were less likely to select the handicapping drug, even if unsure of their ability. Males were more likely to attribute success to ability than females, who usually attributed success to luck. A public or private acknowledgment of test scores did not seem to affect the self-handicappers' performance, suggesting that self-
handicapping was employed to protect private self-image rather than as an impression management technique.

A second study was performed with similar methodology. However, in this study all participants received the same score regardless of success or failure, making the contingent success condition less valid. Half of the subjects received success feedback and half did not. Again, results indicated that women thought their success was based on luck, and males thought success was based upon ability. Males tended to be more confident when they had positive feedback regardless of the solvability of problems. A replication of results in self-handicapping was confirmed. Males who had reached success feedback with impossible-to-solve problems tended to select the debilitating drug more than any other set of participants (Berglas & Jones, 1978).

*Are All Types of Self-handicapping Considered Equal?*

As self-handicapping studies began to accumulate, Leary and Shepperd (1986) observed differences in the types of self-handicapping discussed by researchers. The researchers focused on two basic methods people used to accomplish self-handicapping.

The first type was referred to as behavioral self-handicapping. To perform a behavioral self-handicap, a performer must physically place an impediment in front of him or herself before performing a task. Berglas and Jones’ (1978) first study focused upon selection of behavioral self-handicaps. Participants who wished to blur the lines of negative attribution for poor performance selected a drug that they believed would hinder performance. Hirt, Deppe, and Gordon (1991) referred to this self-handicap as more costly because it made success more difficult for performers.
The other type of self-handicapping occurs when the performer claims a pre-existing condition that may hinder performance. The claimed self-handicap is offered to the observer before performance begins. Leary and Sheperd (1986) refer to this methodology as a "pre-emptive strike" to attribution of failure. The uncertainty about performance is admitted in advance, and the performer acknowledges personal difficulties that obscure the link between failure on a task and him or her self. The performer must be willing to create a personal sacrifice to maintain his or her ego defense: a claimed self-handicapper admits he or she has flaws up front to the observer (Higgins, Snyder, & Berglas, 1990).

While a claimed self-handicap may be more costly in the beginning to the actor, it is more advantageous to use than a behavioral self-handicap. The actor does not need to perform an activity to get in his or her own way. This person has the freedom to try as hard as the non-self-handicapper. The claimed self-handicap is a more sophisticated form of self-handicap that allows effort to be expended (Hirt et al., 1991).

Empirical evidence suggests that people prefer use of a claimed self-handicap to a behavioral self-handicap (Hirt et al., 1991). Hirt et al. performed a study that allowed participants to be able to claim a self-handicap or claim a behavioral self-handicap. In conditions when both methods were available to performers, all opted for the claimed self-handicap instead. Behavioral self-handicaps were only employed as a last resort for self-handicappers.

**Gender Differences in Self-Handicapping**

An intriguing finding across studies is a gender difference amongst self-handicappers. While both sexes are equally likely to employ claimed self-handicaps (Kimble & Hirt, 1993), males are far more likely to behaviorally self-handicap than females. Hirt et al. (1991) conducted a study with four conditions in which participants were given an opportunity to
behaviorally self-handicap or claim a self-handicap, or use a behavioral self-handicap only. Hirt et al. found that only male participants behaviorally self-handicapped when no other alternative was available.

Hirt et al. (2000) hypothesized that the reason females were less likely to behaviorally self-handicap was that they did not feel as threatened by the evaluation as men did. However, even when increasing self-threat by encouraging self-focus with a bogus camera and a personality test, results remained consistent with previous research that found only men behaviorally self-handicapped by withholding practice effort.

Dietrich (1995) argued that it was possible that intellectual evaluations were less self-relevant to females than social evaluations. She hypothesized that females would be more likely to behaviorally self-handicap if they were tested in a social domain.

Participants in Dietrich's (1995) study were asked to estimate the number of dots on a computer screen as accurately as possible. Participants were split into conditions in which they were told that dot estimation abilities indicated intelligence or a condition in which dot estimation was indicative of high social ability. Participants then estimated the amount of dots on 31 screens. All participants were given non-contingent success feedback by having an experimenter score their performance and tell them their estimates were amazingly accurate. Participants were then given the opportunity to self-handicap before a future evaluation. Participants were told that researchers were interested in how stimulus conditions affected the accuracy of the task, and they were told that they could chose between a variety of colors for the dots on the computer screen. The researcher explained that certain color combinations had been found to make dot counting easier (facilitating), made no difference, or made dot estimation more difficult (debilitating). Participants were allowed to select whether their next dot counting
encounter would occur under facilitating, neutral, or debilitating circumstances. Results indicated that only males selected the behavioral self-handicap of selecting debilitating color choices regardless of whether dot counting was indicative of social or intellectual ability (Dietrich, 1995). Kimble and Hirt (unpublished) argued that the use of the computer and the counting dots methodology during the evaluation could make the evaluation seem like an intellectual one. However, even when making the evaluation strictly social, Kimble and Hirt found that self-handicapping occurred most among males.

Ferrari and Tice (2000) conducted studies that focused upon the use of procrastination as a behavioral self-handicap for women and men. These researchers found that women will self-handicap utilizing procrastination as a strategy. However, their results are rare in comparison to most research.

Why is there such a great difference between women and men when engaging in these behaviors? Even when females do behaviorally self-handicap, they are in the minority in comparison to male subjects (Ferrari, 1991). Changing domains to a traditionally female domain such as social activity does not appear to make any difference in increasing the likelihood for females to self-handicap (Dietrich, 1995). Increasing self-threat also created no difference in self-handicapping behavior (Hirt et al., 2000). Shepperd and Arkin (1991) found that self-handicapping by giving advantages to a rival was performed primarily by males instead of females.

*Gender Differences in Perception of Self-handicapping Behavior*

Do males and females see self-handicappers the same way? Luginbuhl and Palmer (1991) wanted to see if self-handicapping was effective in reducing failure attributions to uninvolved observers. Participants watched a videotape of a hypothetical student named John
and evaluated that person's future performance on tests. The videotape showed a student trying to study before a big exam. In all conditions, a friend interrupts the student and tries to convince him to go to a movie. In the non self-handicapping condition, however, the tape is stopped and participants were told that the student decided to stay home and study. In the self-handicapping condition participants were shown that John decided to abandon studying to see the movie. Participants were then told John's final grade on the exam. The grade was either fifty-five, seventy five, or ninety-five out of 100 depending upon which condition the participant was assigned to. Participants then rated the student's ability on future exams. Participants rated John's overall ability as higher as well as predicted higher test scores in conditions where John received a poor grade when John self-handicapped. It appeared from the results that self-handicapping was an effective means of obscuring ability attribution.

Rhodewalt, Sanbonmatsu, Tschanz, Feick, and Waller (1995) found that participants rated a fictional person more highly if he offered an excuse for poor performance than if he offered none or was obviously under the influence of drugs. Participants were wary of discounting poor performance to lack of ability when rating the bogus male case study.

It should be noted that Rhodewalt et al.'s fictional person was male. It is possible that the reason women do not behaviorally self-handicap as often as men is that the technique does not work for them internally or to an outside audience. In all of the studies mentioned previously, women consistently rated their ability lower than men did. Women also attributed their success to luck rather than skill (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Hirt et al., 2000; Ferrari & Tice, 2000). This inability to take credit for success undermines private motivation for behavioral self-handicapping behavior. Audiences tend to discount female's successes by attributing them to luck (Swim & Sanna, 1996).
Swim and Sanna (1996) performed a meta-analysis upon studies that examined audience reactions to self-handicapping by men and women. Previous analysis of audience reactions studies indicated that low effort was attributed to men's bad performance, but not to women's. If a candidate was a woman and she had succeeded because of hard work, audiences assumed her success was more based upon luck than it was to skill in performance. Across the meta-analysis, the researchers noted that men were seen as more skilled on traditionally male tasks, including intelligence testing. On traditionally male tasks, females' successes were attributed more to luck than to skill.

*Advantages of Self-Handicapping*

Self-handicapping is considered a self-defeating behavior (Higgins et al., 1990). In a review of these failure-inducing strategies, Baumeister and Scher (1988) discuss self-defeating behavior as an attempt to fend off more unpleasant consequences. Self-defeating behaviors are not designed to harm the actor as much as to protect them from further pain and suffering. Self-handicapping can therefore be seen as a self-protective strategy. If a handicap is selected before an uncertain performance, the actor can preserve his or her belief that he or she is capable of success.

Self-handicapping assists the performer regardless of success or failure during a task. If the performer fails while utilizing self-handicaps, he or she casts doubt upon the validity of the test. When success occurs, the performer can attribute evidence of greater ability to him or herself because he or she managed to perform well against adversity. The authors of the original articles, Berglas and Jones, argue that self-handicapping occurs as a private form of self-protection. However, Arkin and Shepperd suggest that self-handicapping is something
performed for self-presentational concerns rather than to protect private self-image (Higgins et al., 1990)

A classic self-handicapping case cited by Berglas and Baumeister (1993) was that of the chess champion Deschapeilles. After becoming a regional champion, Deschapeilles began to self-handicap if he was unsure of success during a tournament. He would sacrifice a rook and a pawn to his opponent, thereby creating a disadvantage for himself. If he won, it would be because of greater ability because he had given himself a disadvantage. However, if he lost, it would be because of his sacrifice rather than because of his playing ability. In this respect self-handicapping utilizes Kelley's augmentation tendency, which is when people are perceived as showing even greater ability than expected by overcoming adverse circumstances (Berglas & Jones, 1978).

It is possible that self-handicapping can preserve intrinsic motivation for a task from one's terror of incompetence (Deppe & Harackiewicz, 1996). Rhodewalt and Davison (1986) were surprised to find that self-handicappers outperformed those who exerted effort. Rhodewalt and Davison argued that the self-handicappers managed to allay anxiety about their fears of failure and were therefore able to outperform the non self-handicapping participants. Deppe and Harackiewicz found evidence to support Rhodewalt and Davison’s arguments when they discovered self-handicappers were less vulnerable to failure feedback. Self-handicappers reported greater intrinsic motivation towards difficult tasks than non self-handicappers even when subjected to discouraging outcomes.

Factors that Lead to Self-handicapping

Berglas and Jones (1978) emphasized that self-handicapping was caused by non-contingent success feedback. In Berglas and Jones’s study, participants were told that they
received an intelligence test. Self-handicapping was a means for male participants to reduce anxiety about their intellectual ability. Berglas and Jones argued that a long history of uncertain success outcomes could make people more likely to use the self-handicapping technique, calling self-handicappers “victims of non-contingent success”.

The idea that being successful could cause self-destructive behavior seems counter-intuitive. However, in Berglas' (1986) book, *The Success Syndrome*, it is argued that success by itself can create great anxiety for those who achieve it. As one becomes more successful, the expectations of future behavior rise. If the person is unsure that he or she will succeed on these more difficult tasks, self-sabotaging may occur. Tests administered in self-handicapping studies have the potential to influence how a participant views him or herself. Hirt et al. (2000) found that self-handicapping did not occur on an important task if the task was not self-evaluative. Therefore, there must be something at stake in terms of self-evaluation in order for this technique to be employed.

*The Competition is Fierce*

Shepperd and Arkin (1991) wrote of a way in which people can self-handicap by giving an advantage to a rival and giving a disadvantage to oneself. Shepperd and Arkin referred to this method as "other-enhancement". Participants were told that they were competing against a rival in an intelligence test. Participants were given the opportunity to select music that would make the upcoming task more difficult or easier for the rival. When the rival was formidable, most participants selected the helpful music for the rival and debilitating music for themselves. However, if the rival was obviously going to lose to the participant, the participant would choose the debilitating music for the rival. The researchers speculated that participants wanted to give their rivals an excuse for poor performance.
Our society expects females to try to get along in groups and be nurturing (Kimble & Hirt, 1993). Males, on the other hand, are encouraged to be more competitive than females, especially in evaluative situations. There may be a higher relevance to self-esteem when males are placed in an evaluative situation against another than for females. Sports psychologist Gill observed males reacting more adversely to experimentally induced failure situations than females, even allowing themselves to cry (Gill, 1986). Kimble and Hirt (1993) suggest that the importance of “being the best” is emphasized so much that when males find out that they cannot be the best at everything, they begin self-protective strategies (Kimble & Hirt, 1993). Kimble, Kimble, and Croy (1998) found behavioral self-handicapping beginning among boys as early as the sixth grade.
**Self-Esteem and Self-Handicapping**

*Why low self-esteem is problematic.*

Greenberg et al. (1999, p. 105-6) propose that self-esteem serves as a structure that helps humanity deal with outside stressors. Greenberg et al. believe that self-esteem is related to terror management, a theory that argues "people are motivated to maintain a positive self-image because self-esteem protects them from anxiety".

Anxiety is an unpleasant state to be in (Greenberg et al., 1999). People who have low self-esteem tend to feel negative feelings more often than those with high self-esteem. Greenberg et al. wanted to know whether increasing self-esteem would reduce anxiety in participants. Greenberg et al. discovered that participants who had their self-esteem raised through positive feedback reported less anxiety when exposed to disturbing images than other participants.

Would having a high self-esteem protect people from engaging in self-destructive behaviors such as self-handicapping? Self-handicapping is an ego-defensive strategy against self-threat. If self-esteem is a buffer against threatening circumstances, it should be able to preserve the ego without having to resort to self-defeating behavior.

Kimble et al. (1998) were curious about the development of self-handicapping tendencies. They were also investigating how self-affirmation affected self-handicapping behavior. They suspected that increasing self-esteem through positive self-affirmation would reduce self-handicapping behavior. They suspected that children with low self-esteem would be more likely to self-handicap than those with high self-esteem.

Third and sixth graders participated in the study. Kimble et al. (1998) measured the amount of time the students spent practicing before an evaluation and compared results to
participants who had been reminded of their good qualities beforehand and participants who had not.

Results indicated that low self-esteem third graders practiced the least, whereas high self-esteem third graders applied themselves the most. There was a significant difference in the sixth grade conditions. If boys had been reminded of their self-esteem with the test beforehand, low self-esteem boys in the sixth grade were the most likely to self-handicap. On the other hand, high self-esteem boys were less likely to handicap if they were reminded of their good qualities through the self-esteem test. The results were reversed for those not reminded of their abilities. The authors suggest that the sixth grade high self-esteem boys were relieved of the need to self-handicap once their self was affirmed.

*What of those with high self-esteem?*

Is low self-esteem a determining factor in self-handicapping behavior? Berglas and Jones (1978) believed that people with low self-esteem would be more likely to self-handicap. However, empirical evidence does not always support this assumption. People with low self-esteem and people with high self-esteem self-handicap for different reasons. Low self-esteem participants may be driven by a desire to maintain a negative view of themselves (Baumeister, 1991) in order to maintain a consistent self-image. Low self-esteem participants may be driven by self-protective strategies by employing the technique (Tice & Baumeister, 1990). It may even be plausible to speculate that a low self-esteem person may self-handicap in order to obtain objective truth that he or she is actually better than he or she thinks they are! Evidence suggests that most people are motivated to have positive views of themselves (Baumeister, 1991), and it is possible that a low self-esteem person wishes to raise their self-esteem. Self-handicapping takes advantage of Kelley’s augmentation principle (Berglas & Jones, 1978). Remember, if one fails
while self-handicapping, the failure can be discounted to the handicapping rather than the level of ability of the participant. However, if one succeeds while self-handicapping, the ability must be seen as greater because the person prevails despite adversity.

Self-esteem appears to serve several functions. One theory of self-esteem suggests that it helps us to regulate the appearance of ourselves in other people's eyes. This theory is referred to as the sociometer hypothesis (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1999). This approach deals specifically with the idea that self-esteem works similarly to a monitor that allows one knowledge of whether he or she is being included or excluded from a group of people. Self-esteem is used by the person to allow him or her to adjust behavior to the current social situation.

Following this logic is the idea that self-esteem drops if one is being excluded from an important group (Leary et al., 1999). Once self-esteem drops, there is a motivation to make it rise again. Having a low self-esteem is a painful experience (Baumeister, 1991). The negative feeling will motivate the individual to alter his or her behavior. Should this change be successful in restoring former status, self-esteem will rise again (Leary et al., 1999). Leary et al. tested this theory by measuring feelings after rejection and found that negative feelings about self and rejection were highly correlated. Self-esteem rose when participants felt included or valued by a group. These results were maintained even when experimenters manipulated whether participants were rejected or accepted by sham informal groups experimentally created. Women took deliberate exclusion from the group the worst of all participants.

According to the sociometer hypothesis, self-esteem serves as a methodology to test whether one is getting along well with the group. Part of getting along is to convince other members of a group that you are valuable. Self-handicapping could be a method employed by those who want to be accepted who are unsure if he or she will succeed at a task. A person with
high self-esteem may be just as vulnerable to being concerned about how others think as a person with low self-esteem.

Kolditz and Arkin (1982) argue that self-handicapping serves as part of positive impression management. Using a similar format to Berglas and Jones' (1978) study, Kolditz and Arkin emphasized the experimenter's knowledge of the participants' choice. One half of the participants believed that the experimenter would know whether the facilitating or debilitating drug would be selected. The other half had anonymity stressed and believed the experimenter had no knowledge of the participants' drug choice. Results indicated that participants handicapped more when they knew the experimenter was watching.

Shepperd and Arkin (1989) obtained additional evidence to support this theory. Participants selected to behaviorally self-handicap whenever they were discouraged from guessing and when they knew their performance was to be monitored by an audience. When asked whether success on scales was because of luck or ability, males rated their successes as attributable to ability more often than females did.

Tice and Baumeister (1990) were interested in how differences in self-esteem would affect self-handicapping behavior in an impression management context. After answering self-esteem questionnaires, participants were asked to perform a physical task they had not previously been exposed to that would supposedly measure a non-verbal intelligence. They were given two minutes to practice and then told that they had performed extremely well. Participants were then given an opportunity to practice the task before an evaluation. Behavioral self-handicapping was counted as time spent not practicing. Tice and Baumeister found that low self-esteem participants withheld practice after being given a positive evaluation. High self-esteem participants withheld practice effort if they received no positive feedback before the evaluation.
A second experiment with public and private conditions confirmed previous results. Tice and Baumeister (1990) suggested that people with high self-esteem self-handicapped primarily to protect public esteem. People with low self-esteem self-handicap to protect private self-esteem.

*Self-Esteem security: a new factor*

Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, and Goldman (2000) argue that stability of self-esteem should be considered a separate variable. These researchers observe that self-esteem can change over time. Some people appear to have a stable self-image, good or bad. Others appear to have a wildly fluctuating self-esteem that can increase vulnerability to difficult situations.

According to the sociometer theory, self-esteem is inherently unstable (Leary et al., 1999). It is possible, however, that the amount of fluctuation in one's self-esteem is different for different people. One can feel bad about a specific part of themselves and still maintain self-esteem in other domains (Baumeister, 1991). Baumeister (1991) argues that most people desire their self-esteem to remain stable, and that their behavior reflects this desire. Some people, however, may have wider fluctuations in their self-esteem than others.

Those with unstable self-esteem are more concerned with evaluations of performance (Kernis et al., 2000). They are also more vulnerable to self-doubt when given negative evaluations and therefore may engage in more self-protective behaviors, which would suggest that those with self-esteem instability would be more likely to self-handicap.

Kernis et al. (2000) state that people's self-esteem certainty has an effect upon self-regulatory style. People with uncertain self-esteem tend to perform behaviors because it is expected of them. People with stable self-esteem, on the other hand, are more likely to perform behaviors because the behavior is more intrinsically worthwhile to them. Research performed by Kernis et al. found a correlation between people who lack stability in self-esteem and those who
lack self-concept clarity. It is possible that behavioral self-handicappers have less secure self-esteem than non-behavioral self-handicappers.

**Self-focus and Self-Handicapping**

Self-handicapping requires a certain amount of self-awareness (Higgins et al., 1990). When Kimble et al. (1998) tested younger children between the third grade and sixth grade for self-handicapping tendencies, they found the behavior occurring more frequently in the older children. Kimble et al. found that high self-esteem children decreased behavioral self-handicapping if they were reminded of their good qualities.

Kimble et al. (1998) credited their results to the fact that as we grow older, we become more aware of expectations and aware of our own personalities. Kimble and Hirt (unpublished) found that increasing self-focus through use of awareness of a one-way mirror and a writing task increased self-handicapping tendencies in male participants.

**Social Cognition and Self-Handicapping**

Berglas and Jones (1978) remarked that self-handicapping was related to Seligman's concept of "learned helplessness" in that participants do not feel they have control over a successful outcome. Because of their lack of belief in themselves, they employ a destructive technique to gain control.

Not all performers deliberately sabotage a challenge. Some deliberately rush towards it, even if they are uncertain of their ability. What factors lead to a learned helpless response or make someone persevere during a difficult task?

Dweck (1999) has been studying motivation towards challenging tasks throughout her career. She argues that perserverance during difficult tasks is influenced by epistemological beliefs about ability. She distinguishes between those who believe in innate ability and those
who believe that ability can be increased. She speculates that learned helplessness and maladaptive responses occur primarily in those who believe that ability is a fixed, innate trait. The type of goals people have help contribute to their mastery of difficult tasks. Types of goals influence the expectations and consequences of actions for the performer. Those who believe in innate ability tend to have performance goals (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). A performance goal is one in which one tries to succeed to maintain the ideal that he or she has positive ability. In this idealistic framework, one's ability is seen as enhanced if one outperforms a competitor. Failure implies that one simply does not have what it takes. Trying a new or challenging task is dangerous for those who hold performance goals. Because failure implies poor innate ability, to be challenged is dangerous to an entity theorist's self-esteem (Dweck, 1999). Elliott and Dweck argue that a performance goal sets a performer up for the learned helplessness response. If one cannot do something, it is because they are inherently deficient. If one lacks ability, what can be done to change that?

The other type of goal structure Dweck (1999) emphasizes comes from those who believe that ability can be cultivated. This type of goal is referred to as a learning goal. This type of goal indicates that "the individual is concerned with developing their ability over time and can be seen as posing the question, How can I best acquire this skill or master this task?" (Elliott & Dweck, 1988, pp. 5-6). Failure is not as shameful for those who have learning goals. Instead, failure is a barometer to use so one can choose a new strategy.

Belief Systems and Self-Handicapping

Rhodewalt (1994) tested whether performance or learning goals were involved with self-handicapping behavior. He first tested people using the self-handicapping scale. He asked participants to fill out the Janis-Field feelings of inadequacy self-esteem scale. Participants then
filled out a questionnaire concerning whether they felt that ability was innate or incremental. Finally, Rhodewalt measured goals using the Personal Goals in School Scales. This questionnaire studies performance goals and learning goals by allowing participants to select answers that reflect either belief system of achievement. Those who scored high on the self-handicapping scale tended to have low self-esteem. Self-handicapping behaviors were related to the belief that ability was innate. High self-esteem was related to the belief that ability could be improved with effort. Males tended to believe in innate ability theories more than females did.

Performance goals and self-esteem: are they interrelated?

Dweck (1999) feels that a high self-esteem structured upon performance goals is not likely to last long. Instead, she argues that performance goals set a person up for failure patterns that help instill low self-esteem. She argues that an incremental theory is far more adaptive, as it teaches children (and adults) to apply themselves to improve their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. Whereas many believe that a high self-esteem can be fostered by compliments upon ability and giving people tasks they can be successful in, Dweck feels that the strategy backfires by reinforcing the idea of innate ability. Instead, she encourages educators and parents to praise effort for tasks and challenges.

Dweck (1999) implies that a high self-esteem that is built upon global compliments is unstable. Ferrrari (1991) found that while women behaviorally handicap very rarely, those who do tend to suffer from “diffuse identity”. Ferrari’s definition of diffuse identity is almost identical to Kernis’ definition of instable self-esteem.

Ability Attributions and Level of Self-esteem

Do people with high and low self-esteem see ability the same way? Baumgardner and Levy (1988) performed a study that focused upon participants' beliefs about ability concerning a
fictitious person. The researchers used participants who had been measured as having high or low self-esteem. The researchers were curious about whether self-esteem levels would correlate with beliefs about whether effort increased ability. Pointing out Heider's theory that "ability and effort are viewed to be inversely related" (p. 429), the researchers proposed that recent evidence suggested that this belief system was false. Certain people tended to believe that the more effort expended indicated higher ability.

Participants were chosen after participants had completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem inventory. Participants were told that the study wished to examine "initial impression formation and memory about the behavior of persons" (Baumgardner & Levy, 1988, p. 430). Participants were asked to read a narrative that described the behavior of another person facing a challenging task. In one condition, the theoretical person withdrew effort before the test he was taking. In another, the person studied diligently. The final condition involved the person trying to exert effort but being interrupted with an unforeseen tragedy.

Participants were then told the person's score on the test. In one condition, he received an A minus. In the other, he received a D minus. Participants were asked to rate the person in the narrative using several Likert scales for beliefs about the person's ability and intelligence.

Results indicated that participants that had low scores on the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale rated the person as competent and intelligent only when the person had performed well on the test. Low self-esteem individuals rated the fictitious person as incompetent and unintelligent when he failed the test, especially with high effort expended.

High self-esteem people, on the other hand, rated the fictitious person differently. High self-esteem people rated the fictitious person well regardless of outcome if he had expended
effort. High self-esteem participants rated the person who was unable to prepare as more competent than the person who did not try intentionally (Baumgardner & Levy, 1988).

**Gender Differences in Attributional Beliefs**

If ability is innate, what could be gained from a challenge? To succeed is to merely show that one is good enough. To fail, however, suggests that one has something inherently wrong with him or herself.

Males are traditionally thought to be innately more competent than females in a variety of situations (Swim & Sanna, 1996), especially in regards to tasks involving intelligence or general athletic ability. A study found that teachers paid more positive attention to academic efforts of boys than of girls as well as praised boys for their intelligence more often than girls (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). Researchers discovered that African American girls did not receive the same kind of credit that was given to boys in their classroom. Although the work was of equitable quality, teachers credited the girls’ successes to hard work. The boys, however, were chastised for not trying hard enough (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation [AAUW], 2000). This implies that the teachers had higher expectations for the boys. The boys were automatically credited for higher intelligence, and therefore, higher aspirations merely on basis of their sex. Is it possible that males have to deal with Berglas and Jones’ (1978) dilemma of “victimization through non-contingent success feedback”?

**The Current Study**

In this study we examined how competitiveness (Gill, 1993), self-esteem level (Rosenberg, 1979), self-esteem security (Kimble, unpublished), self-handicapping scale score (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982), epistemological theories concerning ability (Dweck, 1999), performance goals vs. ego goals (Dweck, 1999), ego vs. task orientation (Duda & Nicholls,
1992), and sexist beliefs (Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995) are related to gender differences in the decision to self-handicap behaviorally. In addition, we assessed whether participants’ performance-related feelings during the examination would affect the decision to self-handicap behaviorally using a current feelings scale. This study is intended to be an exploration of gender differences in behavioral self-handicapping. Analysis will explore whether there are differences in motivation for using a self handicap: is the self-handicap there to protect private or public self-esteem?

Previous studies suggest that women are equally likely to have a high self-handicapping scale score as men, but they are statistically far less likely to behaviorally self-handicap (Kimble & Hirt, 1993). The reason for this discrepancy is the self-handicapping scale has questions about personality traits that orient towards a claimed self-handicap (Rhodewalt, 1990) which women are as likely to employ (Kimble & Hirt, 1993). One way to see differences in approaches to self-handicapping is to compare results for those who self-handicap behaviorally to those who have a high score on Jones and Rhodewalt’s (1982) self-handicapping scale. Analysis will be undertaken to verify the assumption that males are statistically more likely to select a behavioral self-handicap than females.

H1: Males will be statistically more likely to behaviorally self-handicap than females.

H2: Males will have significantly higher scores on the trait scales for ego orientation, performance goals, self-esteem, self-esteem insecurity, entity theory of intelligence, competitiveness, and sexism than females.

H3: Those who choose to behaviorally self-handicap will be significantly more likely to believe in an entity theory of intelligence, have significantly higher scores on the trait scales measuring
an orientation towards ego rather than task focus, a preference for performance goals, high self-esteem, self-esteem insecurity, and competitiveness.

H4: High scores on the self-handicapping scale will correlate with the trait scales measuring ego orientation instead of task orientation, preference for performance goals, an entity theory of intelligence, competitiveness, low self-esteem level, and self-esteem insecurity.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

The study took place in two parts. Participants \( N=371 \) in the first part of the study took part in a mass testing session. The mass testing session is offered each semester as an opportunity to administer various surveys from the Psychology department. Psychology students who attend Introductory Psychology are required to have research credit, and this credit can be partially earned by filling out the surveys presented in the mass testing session. Some participants did not choose to fill out every question or every scale, making the numbers for some analysis less than 371. Two-hundred-and-sixty-four of the participants were female and one-hundred-and-seven were male. Participants were between seventeen and twenty-two years of age. Ethnic information for participants was unavailable.

101 participants were selected from those who filled out surveys in the first part of the study. Recruitment was accomplished by calling random names on the phone list of those who had completed the surveys. In addition, a flyer advertised to those who had completed the surveys that the study was available. Many participants were self-selected because they signed themselves up for participation on the flyer sheet available in the Psychology highway. One participant signed up who was not on the original survey takers list. Fifty-one females and fifty males were included in the second session.
Materials

*Dweck's Beliefs About the Origins of Intelligence Scale* (Dweck, 1999; Appendix A)

The first scale examined participants’ epistemological beliefs about intellectual ability. Dweck created a scale that tested whether participants believed that intelligence was an innate, fixed quality (referred to as the entity theory) or was something that could be improved with effort (incremental theory) (Dweck, 1999). The questionnaire uses a six point Likert scale with 1 standing for the statement “strongly agree” and six standing for “strongly disagree”. Statements are presented to the participant who selects a number to indicate approval or disapproval of the sentiment. There are eight statements presented, with half of the statements indicating an incremental intelligence theory and half of the statements indicating an entity theory. Statements include sentences such as “You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you can’t do much to change it” or “You can always substantially change how intelligent you are”. Dweck has tested the external validity of her beliefs about intelligence through several studies in which she requested for those who took the test to explain their answers (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). If those taking the test had entity theories about intelligence, their explanations reflected this belief. In contrast, Dweck found that those who disagreed with entity theories had explanations that revealed an incremental theory of intelligence. Dweck et al. found that retests showed high test-retest reliability (r=.82, N=50) (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). The internal reliability of implicit intelligence theory tests had alpha ratings from .94 to .98. The belief that intelligence is innate correlated highly with beliefs of innate personality, with an $R^2$ value of .78 (Dweck et al., & 1995).
Competitiveness Scale

Gill’s competitiveness scale has a high test-retest reliability of .89 (Gill, 1993; Appendix B). The competitiveness measure contains a five point Likert scale with the number 1 equivalent to strongly agree and the number 5 equivalent to strongly disagree. Eleven statements are included in this scale. The statements include “I thrive on competition” “I am a competitive person” “I try my hardest to win” and similar statements about competitiveness which participants can choose a number indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement. To test the validity of the scale, Gill compared student’s answers to Spence and Hendrick’s Work and Family Orientation Instrument for Motivation. Additional samples of participants were taken from high schools and compared with Martens’ Sports Competition Anxiety Test. The answers from the questionnaires correlated highly with the answers of the Sports Competition Anxiety Test and the Work and Family Orientation Instrument.

Goal Orientation Scale

An additional scale by Duda and Nichols (Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Appendix C) analyzed whether participants were more concerned with focusing upon a task during a challenge or whether they were emphasizing how they would appear in comparison to others during the performance. This scale starts by requesting for participants to think “I feel really successful when”. A five point Likert scale is presented, with the number 1 equivalent to strongly agree and 5 indicating strongly disagree. Sixteen statements are then presented for participants to rate the amount each statement would make him or her feel successful. Statements include task orientation questions such as (I feel really successful when)“I work really hard” and “I get a new idea about how things work”. Ego-oriented statements are included such as (I feel really successful when) “Others get things wrong and I don’t” or “I’m the smartest”. Duda and
Nicholls subjected their goal orientation test to factor analysis. The goal orientation tests had alphas corresponding to four poles, two of which were used in this study: Ego Orientation and Task Orientation. The alphas were both .89.

**Performance Goal Vs. Ego Goal Scale**

Duda and Nicholls’s (1992) scale is similar to Dweck’s (Dweck, 1999: Appendix D) scale measuring performance goals against ego goals. This scale has four questions. Three of the four items include a six-point Likert scale with 1 meaning “Strongly agree” and 6 indicating “Strongly disagree”. The first statement is “If I knew I wasn’t going to do well at a task, I probably wouldn’t do it even if I might learn a lot from it (strong agreement would indicate a performance goal). The final statement is “If I had to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose (circle one) “good grade” or “being challenged”. Circling “being challenged” in this statement would indicate a learning goal.

**Self-Esteem Security Scale**

To measure self-esteem security, Kimble crafted a scale (Kimble, unpublished; Appendix E) fashioned from some of Rosenberg’s (1979) self-esteem items that assessed reactions to criticism and fluctuations in self-esteem. This scale has eight statements that participants can agree or disagree with using a five point Likert scale. The number 1 indicates “not at all like me” whereas the number 5 is equivalent to “very much like me”. Statements that indicate high self-esteem security “I feel that nothing, or almost nothing, can change the opinion I currently hold of myself” are available for participants to agree or disagree with. Likewise, statements that indicate high self-esteem insecurity “My opinion of myself tends to change a good deal” are available for participants to consider. Kimble tested his scale on 260 college students and found positive correlations with self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1979), r = .50, and assertiveness (Rathus,
The self-esteem security scale was inversely correlated with public self-consciousness, $r = -0.29$, social anxiety, $r = -0.40$, and total self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975) $r = -0.32$. Significant correlations were found between self-esteem security and how participants rated themselves on social ability, $r = 0.20$ as well as how participants positively related their feelings about their appearance, $r = 0.18$. The self-esteem security scale was not related to how participants rated their intelligence, creativity or athletic ability (Pelham & Swann, 1989). Self-esteem security is almost identical to the idea presented by Kernis, Cornell, Sun, and Berry (1993) of self-esteem stability. Kernis et al. bases the measure of self-esteem stability on variations of answers to Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale, which is administered several times throughout a semester. Self-esteem security is rated by the participants at one time.

Self-Handicapping Scale

Jones & Rhodewalt’s (1982) self-handicapping scale (Appendix F) has often been used to measure tendencies toward self-handicapping behavior. The scale has a reasonable internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha, $r (503) = 0.79$, and a high test-retest reliability for one month $r (90) = 0.74$ (Rhodewalt, 1990). Twenty-five statements are included for participants to agree or disagree with the sentence. A six point Likert scale is employed, with 0 indicating “disagree very much” and 5 indicating “agree very much”. Statements that indicate self-handicapping tendencies are included such as “When I do something wrong, my first impulse is to blame the circumstances”. Some items are included to indicate non self-handicapping tendencies, such as “I always try to do my best, no matter what”.

Ten-Item Self Esteem Scale

The ten-item self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1979; Appendix G) test has a high test-retest reliability, with results ranging from 0.82 to 0.88. Cronbach’s alpha is in the range of 0.77 to 0.88 for different
studies (www.bsos.umd.edu/socy/rosenberg.html). The scale has ten statements that ask for participants to agree or disagree using a five point Likert scale. The number 1 is equivalent to "not at all like me" and the number five is "very much like me". Statements such as "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" are included to indicate high self-esteem and statements such as "I wish I could have more respect for myself" are included to indicate low self-esteem.

**Modern Sexism Scale**

The Modern Sexism Scale created by Swim et al. (1995; Appendix H) was fashioned after the Modern Racism Scale. This scale was included to explore whether sexist beliefs were related to decisions to behaviorally self-handicap. My reasoning for using this scale was that for a male to assume he was automatically superior to someone because of gender indicated a sort of non-contingent success because males do not earn their superiority by sex. This scale uses a seven point Likert scale with the number 1 meaning "Not at all" and number five meaning "very much". Participants are asked to rate the truth of each statement with a number on the Likert scale. The eight statements include sentiments such as "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States" and "On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally". High agreement with such statements would indicate modern sexism. Other statements, such as "It is easy to understand the anger of women’s groups in America" indicate a realization of inequity. A high agreement with this statement would display a tendency against modern sexism. To test the construct validity of the scale, Swim et al. (1995) asked participants to answer questions that would confirm sexist beliefs. Participants were asked to choose between an equally qualified male or female senator. Respondents were asked about their beliefs concerning the biological abilities of males and females, and their perception of discrimination. Finally, participants were asked to elaborate upon what was behind job segregation. Using
Pearson correlations for statistical analysis, Swim et al. found that answers to the scale were significantly correlated with answers about these subjects, $\beta = .34$ for voting preferences, $\beta = -.43$ for biological explanations of gender differences, $\beta = .24$ for beliefs about discrimination, and $\beta = .22$ for explanations of job segregation.

**Scoring**

Most of the scores on the personality test were scored in a similar fashion. Higher scores on self-esteem, self-esteem security, self-handicapping, sexism, and competitiveness indicated higher levels of that particular trait (i.e. higher score on self-esteem meant high self-esteem). A higher score on the entity vs. incremental theory of intelligence scale indicated participants’ endorsement of entity theories of intelligence was greater than their endorsement of an incremental theory of intelligence. In a similar fashion, the ego-task orientation scale was scored so that a higher score meant a higher ego orientation. A higher score on the performance vs. learning goal scale revealed a preference for performance goals. A mean was taken of each scale and used as a variable rather than using sums or totals of the scale.

Decisional self-handicapping was denoted with a higher number indicating greater self-handicapping behavior on a 1 to 4 scale with 1 (green, two dots) as least self-handicapping and 4 (red, two dots) as most self-handicapping. Any score over two indicated the selection of a harmful tape. Although the scale is ordinal, it is treated as an interval variable because this is how Shepperd and Arkin (1989) have traditionally treated the variable of tape choice.

**Procedure**

The first part of the study involved the mass testing session in which 371 introductory psychology participants filled out surveys including the self-esteem security scale (Kimble, adapted from Rosenberg, 1979), self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1979), self-handicapping scale
(Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982), and Gill's Competitiveness scale (Gill, 1993). To test to see if there were differences in types of goals, these participants filled out Dweck’s performance vs. learning goal scale (Dweck, 1999), and Duda and Nicholls’s goal-orientation vs. ego orientation scale (Duda & Nicholls, 1992). Dweck’s beliefs about the origins of intelligence scale (Dweck, 1999) was given to participants to measure whether participants believed intelligence was innate or an incremental quality.

Participants in the second session were presented with an informed consent sheet (Appendix I) and the researcher explained that participants could stop at any time. The researcher also told participants that she was available for any questions the participant had concerning the experiment.

A methodology similar to Leary and Shepperd’s (1986) procedure in which participants chose helpful noise tapes or harmful noise tapes to listen to while performing a difficult task was utilized. Participants were told that the study concerned the effect of noise on test-taking abilities. The tapes offered could help or harm performance. Participants were told that they were to be tested for a specific type of cognitive performance without noise, then they would be tested with noise to see if any differences occurred.

The specific cognitive test was referred to as an “Integrative Orientation Test”. The researcher informed participants that “integrative orientation” assessed an unique intelligence quality that predicts success in future endeavors in career and relationships.

Participants were told that the “pre-test” was only ten minutes long. Participants were left alone in a cubicle with the pretest. The pretest was designed to give non-contingent success. The aim of the test was for participants to believe that they had successfully answered the questions without really understanding how they had done the task. To create the illusion for
success without a reason for success, half of the questions lacked the correct multiple choice answer. The ten-minute test was crafted from the Logic problems of the LSAT (Robinson & Talia, 2001; Appendix J). The problems with correct solutions were intermixed equally with the problems without correct solutions to prevent participants from guessing that the problems were tampered with. Multiple-choice answers were available for participants to select at so that participants could feel as if they had solved the problems even if the participant was not sure whether the answer was correct. In the instructions for the test, the researcher emphasized that “Integrative Orientation” was a “very intuitive” quality. The researcher told the participant that whenever he or she got frustrated or confused, he or she should just guess by selecting an available answer. The researcher requested for the participant to fill out answers as quickly as possible, and for the participant to guess if he or she was unsure of an answer.

After ten minutes passed, the researcher took the test from the participant so that she could “grade” the test. The researcher returned to tell the participant how he or she performed on the task. The researcher explained to every participant that he or she had done exceptionally well on the test. This procedure hopefully created non-contingent success criteria, which is considered necessary for behavioral self-handicapping to occur (Berglas & Jones, 1978). The researcher then informed the participant that the noise condition was next. The researcher looked flustered and “confessed” to the participant that she had forgotten to assign a noise variable. Because of her oversight, the participant was able to select which noise condition he or she preferred. After reiterating how the test diagnosed “integrative orientation”, an intelligence quality that was associated with high success in career and relationships, participants were presented with four tapes. The researcher told the participant that the green label tapes contained facilitating noise that had been shown to help with exams with the green tape with two dots
being the most helpful and the green tape with one dot being somewhat helpful. Participants were told that the red label tapes have debilitating noise that previously has been shown to hinder performance with the red tape with two dots having the worst effect and the tape with one dot having a negative effect that is not as severe as the two dot tape. Before being allowed to select a tape, participants were asked if he or she was colorblind. If the participant said yes, the experimenter pointed out which tape was which so that the participant was capable of making an informed decision. Participants were asked to select which tape they would prefer to use. After the participant selected the tape, the researcher recorded his or her choice as well as any comment he or she made about his or her decision of noise type. The decision to select a harmful tape was the primary measure of behavioral self-handicapping.

The researcher took the tapes away so that she could “prepare the tape” for the participant. The researcher requested for the participant to fill out a “current feelings” scale (Appendix K) to indicate how the participant felt at the time. The “current feelings” scale has a number of statements about the emotions participants feel concerning the rest of the test that participants could agree or disagree with using a Likert scale of one to seven, with one meaning “not at all” and seven indicating “very much”.

Once this feeling worksheet was completed, the researcher came to collect the worksheet. The researcher apologized to the participant and said that she “was doing a favor” for another person in the department who “forgot to get a survey into mass testing on time”. The researcher requested that the participant to fill out a final survey. This survey was the Modern Sexism Scale (see Appendix H) by Swim et al. (1995), which had not been collected during group testing.

After participants completed the Modern Sexism Scale the researcher informed the participant that he or she did not have to take the final post-test with the noise. The researcher
debriefed the participant (Appendix L), requesting that the participant not divulge details of the study to anyone in the participant pool. The participant was thanked, given participant credit, and excused.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results section will be organized as follows: first, the results will examine the behavioral self-handicapping component of the study, beginning with whether differences in gender exist. Second, the results section will present Pearson correlations of the personality factors measured by scales during the mass testing session and compare those scores to the decision to behaviorally self-handicap. Third, the results sections will focus upon the current feeling questions administered to the one-hundred-and-one participants and analyze which factors were most relevant to the choice to self-handicap behaviorally. The results section will look at results engendered by the original survey takers. Pearson correlations will examine what personality characteristics are associated with trait self-handicapping, a term that refers to personality characteristics measured by Jones and Rhodewalt’s (1982) self-handicapping scale. Finally, factors that underlie the self-handicapping scale will be analyzed.

Results For the Behavioral Component of Study

*Gender Differences in Behavioral Self-handicapping*

Traditionally, a one-way between groups analysis of variance is performed to determine whether or not there is a significant difference between males and females in self-handicapping behavior. The ANOVA results indicated that males selected behavioral self-handicapping significantly more often than females, \( F(1, 99) = 7.45, p = .001 \), female \( M = 2.16 \) male \( M = 2.80 \). To double-check the results, the non-parametric chi-square test of significance was performed. Results for the chi-square also revealed a significant relationship between
gender and decisional self-handicapping, $\chi^2(3) = 11.03$, $p < .012$. Figure 1 displays the relationship between gender and behavioral self-handicapping.

The main goal of the study was to have further understanding of gender differences in behavioral self-handicapping. One-way ANOVAS were employed to test for significant differences between men and women on the trait scales to illuminate gender differences. Men ($M = 3.87$) answered significantly higher on the competitiveness scale than women ($M = 3.56$) did, $F(1, 367) = 8.36$, $p < .01$. Males ($M = 2.56$) tended to select ego orientation over task focus on Duda and Nicholls’s task vs. ego orientation scale, whereas females ($M = 2.44$) were more concerned about task orientation, $F(1, 363) = 4.01$, $p = .04$. Men ($M = 3.15$) reported significantly higher self-esteem security than women ($M = 2.83$), $F(1, 367) = 8.36$, $p < .01$.

To find immediate factors that differed between the sexes, we examined answers on the ten “Current Feelings” questions for gender differences. Males were significantly more likely to strongly agree with the statement “I am confident I will perform well”, Men $M = 4.48$, Women $M = 3.82$, $F(1,99) = 8.98$, $p = .03$. Women were significantly more likely to agree heavily with the statement “I want to do well”, Men $M = 5.82$, Women $M = 6.39$, $F(1,99) = 7.75$, $p = .06$. No other significant differences were found with answers on the other Current Feeling Statements.

**Pearson Correlations with Decisional Self-handicapping**

Pearson correlations were performed with the entire group of participants between tape choice, all of the scales utilized, and each of the current feeling questions. Because it has been
Figure 1: Differences between males and females in behavioral self-handicapping
argued that the Bonferroni correction is too conservative and increases the probability of type II errors (Cohen, 2001), separate corrections were made for the trait surveys and the current feeling questions. The Bonferroni correction for the trait survey set the significance level to .006. Significance levels for answers to the Current feeling questions were set to .005. All correlations are summarized on Table 1.

Correlations between the decision to behaviorally self-handicap and scores on Dweck's (1999) Entity vs. Incremental Theories of Intelligence scale failed to reach significance. Participants who scored high on Gill's (1993) competitiveness scale were significantly more likely to select a self-handicapping tape. Correlations for scores on Dweck's (1999) performance vs. goal scale and the selection of a self-handicapping tape failed to reach significance. Scores on the Ego vs. Task (Duda & Nicholls, 1992) scale were not significantly correlated to the decision to behaviorally self-handicap. No significant relationship was found between self-esteem scores on the Rosenberg (2000) scale and the decision to behaviorally self-handicap. The decision to choose a harmful tape was not significantly correlated with scores on Kimble's (unpublished) self-esteem security scale. The relationship between scores on the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim et al., 1995) and the decision to behaviorally self-handicap did not reach significance. Correlations on the scores on the self-handicapping scale failed to reach significance with the decision to behaviorally self-handicap.

Current Feelings Scale and Decisional Self-Handicapping

The relationship between participants who disagreed strongly with the statement “I am concerned with how others will regard my performance and the decision to self-handicap was
Table 1: Correlations between Scales and Decisional Self-handicapping

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Entity vs. Incremental Theories of Intelligence</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Ego vs. Task Orientation</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Performance Goals vs. Learning Goals</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) Self-Esteem Score</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Self-Esteem Security</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) Modern Sexism Scale Score</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) <strong>Competitiveness</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Self-Handicapping Trait</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) Current Feelings “I am confident I will perform well”</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) Current Feelings “I am uncertain about how I will do”</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) Current Feelings “It is important to me that I do well”</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.) Current Feelings “I would be proud if I did well”</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.) <strong>Current Feelings “I am concerned how others will regard my performance”</strong></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.) Current Feelings “I want to do well”</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.) Current Feelings “I set high standards for my performance”</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.) Current Feelings “I expect to do poorly”</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.) Current Feelings “I will be disappointed in myself if I don’t do well”</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.) Current Feelings “I feel good about myself right now”</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
significant. Correlations of the relationship between the other nine Current Feelings statements failed to reach significance with the decision to select a self-handicapping tape during performance.

*Stepwise Regression on Factors Related to Selection of Handicapping Tape Choice*

A goal in the study was to find out which factors contributed most to behavioral self-handicapping. A stepwise regression was performed to find out which factors contributed most in the decision to self-handicap. The predictor variables included were gender, competitiveness, self-esteem, self-esteem security, ego orientation versus task orientation, fixed versus incremental beliefs about intelligence, sexism, and Current Feelings questions.

The regression analysis showed that only competitiveness and gender significantly predicted behavioral self-handicapping in this study. Competitiveness was the most important predictor, $R = .29$, $F(1, 97) = 8.43$, $p = .005$, std. error $= .14$, $β = .29$, $t = 2.90$. Disappointed in self was the second predictor variable, $R = .479$, $F(2, 93) = 9.56$, $p < .01$ $β = -.301$, $t = -3.14$, $p = .002$. Gender was the third most important predictor. $R = .48$, $F(3, 92) = 9.24$, $p < .001$, $β = -.68$, $t = -2.70$, std. error $= .25$, $p < .008$. Gender had a negative relationship to behavioral self-handicapping. The stepwise regression confirmed earlier results stating males behaviorally self-handicapped more often than females.

Competitiveness appears to be the main factor that relates with behavioral self-handicapping. Because the study seeks to understand the relationship between gender and behavioral self-handicapping, further analysis was undertaken to uncover whether competitiveness was a mediator variable or a moderator variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). A stepwise regression revealed that gender is the most important variable when predicting self-handicapping. A one-way ANOVA indicated that males were significantly more likely to select
a behavioral self-handicapping tape than females. Additional analysis discovered that males were significantly more likely to have a high competitiveness score than females. To find out whether competitiveness was a mediating variable for gender and behavioral self-handicapping, an ANCOVA was performed. If competitiveness was a mediating variable, using competitiveness as the covariate should change the relationship between gender and behavioral self-handicapping so that it is no longer significant. Results indicated that competitiveness did not meet the conditions for being a mediating variable, Gender $F(1,97) = 5.280, p = .024$. These results show that differences in competitiveness scores do not explain behavioral self-handicapping differences in men and women.

Is competitiveness a moderating variable? In order for competitiveness to be a moderating variable a regression analysis needs to reveal a significant gender-competitiveness interaction effect while the variables gender and competitiveness are held constant. This action was performed by entering the gender variable and the competitiveness variable in the first step of the regression, then by entering gender * competitiveness. The regression analysis confirmed that competitiveness was a moderator variable with the interaction of gender and competitiveness a significant predictor for behavioral self-handicapping, $R = .48, F(3, 96) = 9.71, p < .001, \beta = -1.37, t (99) = 3.56, p = .001$. In order to see what the difference competitiveness made for gender in behavioral self-handicapping, stepwise regressions were performed for men and women separately. The analysis for men showed competitiveness was the most important predictor of behavioral self-handicapping, $R = .40, F(1, 45) = 8.42, p = .006, \beta = .40, t (46) = 2.39, p = .006$. The stepwise regression for women showed that competitiveness had no significant relationship with behavioral self-handicapping, $r(51) = .059, p = .340$. A stepwise regression for women that included all of the personality trait variables and current feelings...
statements showed no factors in this study as significant for predicting behavioral self-handicapping.

Current Feelings Responses as Predictors of Decisional Self-Handicapping

Current feelings responses were analyzed using factorial and regression analyses. By looking at the ten current feelings questions it was hoped that the emotions recorded directly after selecting the tape that could help or hinder performance could help reveal motivations in the decision making process. A principal components analysis with varimax rotation on the ten items uncovered three major factors within the current feelings scale. These results replicated a factor analysis by Hirt et al. (2000). The factor analysis on the “Current Feelings” questions accounted for 61.71% of the total variance. Factors were chosen using standards that set important items at above .4 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The Eigenvalues were above 1. Factor 1 makes up 22.14% of the variance, factor 2 comprises 21.00%, and factor 3 accounts for 18.57%. The analysis is illustrated on Table 2.

Factor 1 of the analysis has the strongest positive relationship with the statements “I expect to do poorly on this test”, “I am uncertain about how well I will do” as well as a negative relationship with “I am confident that I will do well”. This factor was referred to as “Concern with failure” because it features the same three items as Hirt et al.’s Factor 2 by the same name.

Factor 2 is most strongly associated with the statements “I am concerned about how others might regard my performance”, “I will be disappointed with myself if I perform poorly” and “It is important to me that I do well on this test”. This factor was labeled Social importance that resembles the name Hirt et al. gave to their Factor 1 in their analysis. Factor 3 is most strongly connected to the statements “I want to do as well as I possibly can”, “I would be proud
Table 2: Factor Loadings of Current Feelings Statements with Concern with Failure (Factor 1), Social Importance (Factor 2), and Standards (Factor 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Feelings Statement</th>
<th>Concern With Failure</th>
<th>Social Importance</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed in self</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect poorly</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>-.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High standards</td>
<td>-.395</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to do well</td>
<td>-.113</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned how others regard</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would be proud if do well</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important do well</td>
<td>-.354</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain how I will do</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>-.314</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident perform well</td>
<td>-.639</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>22.14</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>18.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Rotation converged in 5 iterations
if I did well on this test”, and “I set high standards for my own performance” and was called Standards which reflects the factor’s name in Hirt et al.’s study.

A stepwise regression on the dependent variable decisional self-handicapping was performed with the three factors as variables. Results indicated that only factor 2, social importance, was significant in predicting behavioral self-handicapping. A regression with Factor 2, $R = .24$, $F(1, 98) = 6.04$, $\beta = -.24$, $t = -2.46$, $p = .016$. In keeping with the other regressions of this study, we performed separate regressions on each gender. A stepwise regression with men’s data found only the Factor 2 Social Importance variable was significant, Factor 2, $R = -.38$, $R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 47) = 7.87$, $\beta = -.38$, $t = -2.81$, $p = .007$. The stepwise regression using women’s data revealed no factor that significantly predicted behavioral self-handicapping.

**Correlations of Scores on Personality Scales with Self-Handicapping Scale**

Pearson correlations were performed on the 370 participants’ responses on the scales and compared with the self-handicapping scale. Results are listed in table 3. All N’s for the correlations between personality traits and the self-handicapping scale were from 366 to 370. The modern sexism scale was only administered to participants who undertook the second half of the study, so the N is 99. To prevent familywise error, a Bonferroni correction was performed on the eight analyses, which set the significance level to .006.

No significant correlations were found between the score on the self-handicapping scale and scores on Dweck's Entity vs. Incremental Theories of Intelligence scale. Correlations between the scores on the competitiveness scale and scores on the self-handicapping scale did not reach significance. Significant correlations between goal focus and scores on the self-handicapping scale were found. Participants who selected ego goals on Duda and Nicholls’s
Table 3: Correlations Between Self-Handicapping Scale and Predictors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Entity vs. Incremental Theories of Intelligence</td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) <strong>Ego vs. Task Orientation</strong></td>
<td>(366)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) <strong>Performance Goals vs. Learning Goals</strong></td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) <strong>Self-Esteem Score</strong></td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) <strong>Self-Esteem Security</strong></td>
<td>(370)</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) Modern Sexism Scale Score</td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) <strong>Good Grade Vs. Challenge</strong></td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Competitiveness</td>
<td>(370)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Current Feelings “I am confident I will perform well”</td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) Current Feelings “I am uncertain about how I will do”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) Current Feelings “It is important to me that I do well”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) Current Feelings “I would be proud if I did well”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.) Current Feelings “I am concerned how others will regard my performance”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.) Current Feelings “I want to do well”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.) <strong>Current Feelings “I set high standards for my performance”</strong></td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.) Current Feelings “I expect to do poorly”</td>
<td>(99)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.) Current Feelings “I will be disappointed in myself if I don’t do well”</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.) Current Feelings “I feel good about myself right now</td>
<td>(369)</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(1992) scale were more likely to have a high self-handicapping score. Similarly, significant differences in participants who selected performance goals on Dweck's (1999) goal orientation scale suggested they had a higher self-handicapping score than those who selected learning goals. Participants who selected a "good grade" over a "challenging course" were significantly more likely to have a slightly higher self-handicapping score. Significant correlations were found between self-esteem levels and scores on the self-handicapping scale. Participants who reported low self-esteem on the Rosenberg (2000) scale were more likely to have a high self-handicapping scale score. The relationship between scores on the Self-esteem security scale and the self-handicapping scale was also found to be significant. The more secure participants self-esteem reported upon Kimble's scale, the lower their self-handicapping score. There was no significant relationship between scores on the Modern Sexism Scale (1995) and scores on the self-handicapping scale.

**Correlations with Current Feelings Responses**

The current feelings scale contained questions that asked participants how they felt after working through the "integrative orientation" test and being told that they had performed well. Pearson Correlations were performed with a Bonferroni correction set at .005. All N's were between 99 and 101.

Participants who strongly agreed with the statement "I set high standards for my performance" were significantly less likely to have a high reported self-handicapping score. Results revealed that agreement or disagreement with the other nine questions of the "Current feelings" scale failed to reach significance. Statements that dealt with self-presentational concerns came closest to significance. For example, participants who agreed strongly with the statement "I am concerned how others will regard my performance" were close to significant
with the correction. Answers to all other “Current Feelings” questions failed to be significant. Table 3 summarizes all correlations with the self-handicapping scale.

*Factor analysis of the Self-Handicapping scale*

A factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the Self-Handicapping Scale originally developed by Jones and Rhodewalt (1982) and that was reprinted in Rhodewalt (1990). The first factor comprised 15.36% of the variance in the scale and had an eigenvalue of 3.84. Factor 2 accounted for 10.517% of the variance in the scale and had an eigenvalue of 2.63. The analysis is illustrated in table 4 and the questions in the self-handicapping scale are shown in figure 2.

Factor 1 had the highest relationships with statement 25, “Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult” and statement 16, “I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way”, which inspired the label Emotional Distraction. Factor 2 had the strongest affiliation with statement 5, “I always try to do my best, no matter what”, statement 3, “I tend to overprepare when I have any kind of exam or “performance”. These statements deal with effort expended, prompting the label Behavior Tendencies for factor 2. Regressional analysis found that neither of these factors were significantly related to decisional self-handicapping. A marginally significant relationship existed for factor 1, Emotional Distraction and decisional self-handicapping, $r(98) = -.186, p = .065$. A separate ANOVA on gender found that women had significantly higher scores on Emotional Distraction than men $F(1, 361) = 15.061, p < .001$, Male $M = -.316$, Female $M = 1.31$. No gender differences occurred with factor 2, Behavioral Tendencies. A regression analysis found that neither of these factors were significantly related to decisional self-handicapping.
Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix Factor Loadings of Self-Handicapping Scale items with the Two Primary Factors, Emotional Distraction and Behavior Tendencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Emotional Distraction</th>
<th>Behavior Tendencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Blame circumstances when do wrong</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tend to put things off until last moment</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tend to overprepare</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Feel under the weather more often</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Always try to do best no matter what</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make sure have preparation</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tend to get anxious before exam</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>-.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Am easily distracted</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>-.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Try not to get involved so will not hurt</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Admire for doing best not potential</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Do better if tried harder</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Prefer small pleasures now to large later</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hate to be anything but at my best</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Someday I might get it all together</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sometimes like being ill</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Would do better if ignore emotions</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>-.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When do poorly remind of skills in other</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>-.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I tend to rationalize when do bad</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I think I have bad luck in evaluations</td>
<td>.570</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Rather not take harmful drug during test</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Overindulge in food and drink more</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Try to get sleep night before test</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Never let emotions interfere</td>
<td>-.562</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. When get anxious do better</td>
<td>-.110</td>
<td>-.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Get depressed so everything easy is hard</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalues: 3.84, 2.63

%: 15.36, 10.52

No gender differences occurred with factor 2, Behavioral Tendencies.

*Stepwise regression of the self-handicapping scale.*

Rhodewalt (1994) used a stepwise regression on trait self-handicapping to assess relationships between trait self-handicapping scores and belief and personality traits. This study employed the same methodology with competitiveness, self-esteem, self-esteem security, ego orientation versus task orientation, fixed versus incremental beliefs about intelligence, and sexism as predictor variables for scores on the Jones and Rhodewalt (1982) self-handicapping scale. As was revealed in the previous sections, a significant negative relationship existed between self-esteem and self-esteem security and trait self-handicapping. Performance goals and ego orientation were directly correlated with high self-handicapping scale scores ($p \leq .001$).

The stepwise regression revealed that self-esteem $R = -.42$, $F(1, 94) = 20.26$, $p < .001$. $\beta = -.42$, $t = -4.50$, $p < .001$ was the most important predictor of trait self-handicapping. The selection of performance goals over learning goals was the next most important predictor, $R = .51$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .51$, $t = 3.12$, $p = .002$.

Rhodewalt (1994) discovered that entity theories of intelligence were positively correlated with trait self-handicapping. This analysis found that while the relationship of entity versus incremental beliefs in intelligence and trait self-handicapping was significant, the relationship was only marginally significant, $r(367) = .091$, $p = .041$. The relationship between entity beliefs and trait self-handicapping was not statistically significant in predicting trait scores in the regression. A regression analysis revealed important relationships between high self esteem and preference of learning goals $r(367) = -.259$, $p < .001$ as well as a relationship
between high self-esteem and incremental beliefs of intelligence, \( r(367) = -.174, p < .001 \). It should be noted that none of these factors were statistically significant in predicting decisional self-handicapping.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

Results from this study support findings that find males behaviorally handicap more often than females. The methodology used in this study was similar in format to the original self-handicapping study by Berglas and Jones (1978). The straightforward method of selecting a helpful or harmful tape should have made participants’ intentions clearer. The test given to participants had the potential to influence how participants felt about themselves; it measured personal qualities considered “necessary for success in career and relationships”. Participants were given non-contingent success through being told they answered all questions correctly although half of the questions did not have a correct answer choice. Non-contingent success is a factor that Berglas and Jones (1978) felt was a necessary condition for self-handicapping to take place.

Personal characteristics were measured before the participants were given the opportunity to self-handicap. By administering the personality scales before participants were tested for behavioral self-handicapping strategies, answers by participants were not affected by the experimental session itself. The strategy of having two experimental sessions had the added advantage of allowing the study to compare results between trait self-handicapping measured by results on the Jones and Rhodewalt Self-handicapping scale (1982) and results obtained at the time participants were given an opportunity to behaviorally self-handicap. Comments made after the choice of a tape were recorded. While the majority of the comments were a reiteration of the tape choice, the remaining comments supported the idea that participants were selecting a self-
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handicapping strategy. No personal qualities other than competitiveness that were measured in the study were useful in predicting decisional self-handicapping behavior. Contrary to expectations, beliefs about innate ability of intelligence were irrelevant to the choice to select a handicapping tape. Orientation towards performance goals or ego focus was not significant for predicting behavioral self-handicapping outcomes. Neither level of self-esteem nor self-esteem security were useful in predicting who would choose to self-handicap behaviorally.

*Discrepancies between Behavioral Self-handicapping and Trait Self-Handicapping*

Scores on the self-handicapping scale were not useful in predicting who would choose a self-handicap. Traits that were relevant in predicting the self-handicapping score were not relevant in predicting who would behaviorally self-handicap.

Results suggest that someone who scores high on the self-handicapping scale may have personality characteristics that predispose them towards self-handicapping. The self-handicapping scale measures tendencies towards claimed self-handicaps as well as behavioral self-handicaps. The decisional self-handicapping, on the other hand, is a direct decision to self-handicap. It’s a behavioral method.

*Protecting against failure by discounting test’s self-importance*

The factor analysis of the Current Feelings scale indicated that the Social Importance factor was the only reliable predictor of decisional self-handicapping, and analysis of men and women’s data revealed that social importance was only important in predicting men’s selection of a behavioral self-handicapping strategy. Correlational analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between Current Feelings item “I am concerned about how others might regard my performance” and preference for decisional self-handicapping. A stepwise regression for men
found that agreement with the statement “I would be proud if I do well”, which was marginally significant to predicting decisional self-handicapping, was the second largest predictor of men’s self-handicapping behavior. These results suggest that men select behavioral self-handicapping as a method to protect private self-esteem, which is what Berglas and Jones (1978) argued self-handicapping was for. These results conflict with the finding that competitiveness was the only significant predictor of behavioral self-handicapping be the most significant predictor of behavioral self-handicapping. High competitiveness scores indicate strong agreement with statements such as “I thrive on competition” and “I want to be the best every time I compete” which indicate an outward awareness of performance against others.

Significant direct correlations existed between participants who disagreed strongly with the statement “I would be disappointed in myself if I did not do well” and those who used decisional self-handicapping. Participants who selected to self-handicap behaviorally tended to strongly disagree with the statements “I am concerned with how others might regard my performance” and “It is important to me that I do well on this test”. The current feelings survey was given to participants right after they were given an opportunity to select a self-handicapping tape. Men who behaviorally self-handicapped may have deliberately tried to make the test irrelevant to their sense of self. No correlations were found between current feelings questions and behavioral self-handicapping in women.

*What Factors Influence Gender Differences in Decisional Self-handicapping?*

Why are men more likely than women to behaviorally self-handicap? The only personal quality measured besides gender that predicted decisional self-handicapping was competitiveness. Competitiveness is often thought of as a trait that encourages excellence in challenging situations. However, this study suggests that there is a downside to competitive
behavior because it predicts behavioral self-handicapping. Men are more vulnerable to self-handicapping behavior during competition than women. Why? Roberts found that women’s self-evaluations were more sensitive to comments made by an outside source evaluating them. Roberts (1991) argued that males were more likely to view outside evaluations from a competitive standpoint and therefore discount the evaluation to protect self-esteem. Roberts suggested that women tend to use evaluations as a method to find out more about themselves, whereas men are more likely to view outside evaluations as a threat.

Gender is a moderator variable between competitiveness and behavioral self-handicapping. The regression for women revealed that competitiveness was not a factor in women’s decision to behaviorally self-handicap. Competitive women do not tend to select this self-destructive strategy.

Impression management and self-handicapping.

No gender differences were found with self-handicapping scale scores. Data from the trait self-handicapping scale suggests that trait self-handicapping is related to concerns about impression management. Swim and Sanna (1996) argued that in many studies audiences tended to discount women’s success by claiming it was because of luck rather than ability. If trait self-handicappers are looking to impress audiences and the trait self-handicapper is a competitive female who is concerned about how she will appear to an audience who will judge her, she probably suspects that behavioral self-handicapping is not a valid way to improve her reputation. Luginbuhl and Palmer (1991) found that women were less likely to accept behavioral self-handicapping as a valid technique to obscure the link between performance and ability. The behavioral self-handicappers, on the other hand, were not concerned about how others viewed them.
Results Found for Trait Self-Handicapping

Scores on Jones and Rhodewalt’s (1982) self-handicapping scale were not a significant predictor of who would choose to self-handicap behaviorally. The self-handicapping scale measures self-handicapping as a tendency personality trait rather than directly through a behavioral decision. Men and women are equally likely to have a high score on this scale, which has questions measuring behavioral self-handicapping and claimed self-handicapping. Hirt et al. (1991) found that women were equally likely to select a claimed self-handicap. A claimed self-handicap is more costly in the beginning for protecting private self-esteem because the performer must admit to personal weaknesses in advance in order to take advantage of the strategy (Hirt et al., 1991).

Results indicated that many personal factors correlate significantly with trait self-handicapping. In this study trait self-handicappers tended to have low, unstable self-esteem. Trait self-handicappers were significantly more likely to believe that ability was an innate, fixed quality rather than something that could be increased with effort. The fact that a high trait self-handicapping score correlated with low self-esteem as well as an entity theory of intelligence supported arguments by Baumgardner and Levy (1988) that those with high self-esteem valued effort over performance. Rhodewalt (1994) found significant correlations between entity theories of intelligence and high self-handicapping scores.

Impression Management and Trait Self-Handicapping

Trait self-handicappers had a strong preference for ego orientation. Trait self-handicappers were statistically more likely to select performance goals over learning goals in evaluative situations. Those who were trait self-handicappers were more likely to prefer to get a good grade over being challenged in a class. Significant correlations between high scores
favoring performance goals or ego orientation during tasks suggest a strong desire to perform well in front of others. This particular result (that high trait self-handicappers are significantly more likely to have low, unstable self-esteem and that they are concerned with how others view them) disagrees with results that Baumeister and Tice (2000) found. Baumeister and Tice discovered that people with low self-esteem self-handicapped for different reasons than those with high self-esteem. People with high self-esteem self-handicapped if they were in a situation in which they were to be evaluated in front of an audience, whereas those with low self-esteem self-handicapped to protect private self-esteem. Our study suggested that it was those with low self-esteem who were likely to have higher trait self-handicapping. However, Baumeister and Tice (2000) employed a direct behavioral measure similar to our own rather than depending upon the scale to measure personality traits. Indeed, we found not only that men were significantly more likely to behaviorally self-handicap but that men were significantly more likely to have high self-esteem and high self-esteem security scores.

Results from this portion of the study suggest that trait self-handicappers select self-handicapping as a strategy for different reasons than behavioral self-handicappers. Trait self-handicappers appear to be more concerned with impression management issues. Behavioral self-handicappers, on the other hand, are more focused upon private self-esteem.

Weaknesses in Current Study

The amount of acting performed by the researcher and the beforehand knowledge that participants were in a psychology study may have given too many cues to participants. Deceptive methodologies are always at risk because the deception may not be convincing enough. However, the author notes that many participants admitted during debriefing that they were completely taken in. The methodology of creating problems that were impossible to
answer correctly may have tipped off some participants, for those with extremely strong logic skills may have realized that the correct answer was not included. The time limit given for answering questions and the researcher’s encouragement to guess during times of confusion should have alleviated this possibility.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study suggests further research should look at competitiveness in males as a personality trait that is an underlying factor in behavioral self-handicapping. Possible implications about the difference in motivation when using behavioral vs. trait based self-handicapping should be examined. Are there distinct differences in motivation between those who behaviorally self-handicap and those who claim a self-handicap? Audience’s perceptions of males and females behaviorally self-handicapping should be compared. Interviews of people who self-handicap should be conducted to measure how males and females think audiences perceive them so that further light can be shed on internal motivations.
APPENDIX A

Dweck’s (1999) entity vs. incremental theories of intelligence scale

This questionnaire has been designed to investigate ideas about intelligence. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your ideas.

Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by writing the number that corresponds to your opinion in the space next to each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Mostly Agree</td>
<td>Mostly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___ 1. You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you can’t really do much to change it.
___ 2. Your intelligence is something about you that you can’t change very much.
___ 3. No matter who you are, you can significantly change your intelligence level.
___ 4. To be honest, you can’t really change how intelligent you are.
___ 5. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.
___ 6. You can learn new things, but you can’t really change your basic intelligence.
___ 7. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
___ 8. You can change even your basic intelligence level considerably.
Please mark each of these statements about you by indicating your agreement or disagreement to each of them on the following scale:

1 = Strongly agree
2 = Agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

____ I am a competitive person.
____ I try my hardest to win.
____ I am a determined competitor.
____ I want to be the best every time I compete.
____ I thrive on competition.
____ My goal is to be the best performer possible.
____ I enjoy competing against others.
____ I want to be successful in school, sports, and other activities.
____ I look forward to test my skills in competition.
____ I perform my best when I am competing against an opponent.
____ I have played in organized sports almost every season from elementary school through high school.
APPENDIX C

Task and Ego Orientation Scale (Duda & Nicholls, 1992)

Please mark each of these statements about you starting with “I feel really successful when” by indicating your agreement or disagreement to each of them on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Agree
2 = Agree
3 = Neutral
4 = Disagree
5 = Strongly disagree

I feel really successful when...

___ I know more than other people.
___ I work really hard.
___ I have the highest test scores.
___ Something I learn makes me want to find out more.
___ Others get things wrong and I don’t.
___ I’m the only one who can answer questions.
___ I get a new idea about how things work.
___ I’m the smartest.
___ I learn something interesting.
I beat others.

I solve a problem by working hard.

I do my very best.

I can do better than my friends.

What I learn really makes sense.

Others can’t do as well as me.

Something I learn makes me think about things.
APPENDIX D

Dweck’s (1999) performance goal vs. challenge scale

1.) If I knew I wasn’t going to do well at a task, I probably wouldn’t do it even if I might learn a lot from it.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Agree Mostly Mostly Disagree Strongly
Agree Agree Disagree Disagree

2.) Although I hate to admit it, I sometimes would rather do well in a class than learn a lot.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Agree Mostly Mostly Disagree Strongly
Agree Agree Disagree Disagree

3.) It’s much more important for me to learn things in my classes than it is to get the best grades.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Agree Mostly Mostly Disagree Strongly
Agree Agree Disagree Disagree

4.) If I had to choose between getting a good grade and being challenged in class, I would choose...(Circle one)

“good grade” “being challenged”
APPENDIX E

Self-Esteem Security Measure (Kimble, Unpublished)

Reactions to Feedback

On the lines below, indicate the degree to which each statement represents your personal reactions or feelings. Marking 5 would indicate that the statement is definitely true of your personal reactions. Marking 1 would indicate that the statement is definitely untrue of your reactions. Responses of 2, 3, or 4 represent the reactions on the scale below.

1 = not at all like me
2 = somewhat unlike me
3 = neither like nor unlike me
4 = somewhat like me
5 = very much like me

1. My opinion of myself tends to change a good deal.
2. On one day I have one opinion of myself and on another day I have a different opinion.
3. I have noticed that my ideas about myself seem to change very quickly.
4. Some days I have a very good opinion of myself; other days I have a very poor opinion of myself.
5. I feel that nothing, or almost nothing, can change the opinion I currently hold of myself.
6. I am extremely sensitive to criticism.
7. Criticism or scolding hurts me terribly.
8. I feel very disturbed when anyone laughs at me or blames me for something I have done wrong.
APPENDIX F

Self-Handicapping Scale (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982)

Please indicate (by writing a number in the blank before each item) the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements as a description of the kind of person you think you are most of the time. Use the following scale:

0 = disagree very much
1 = disagree pretty much
2 = disagree a little
3 = agree a little
4 = agree pretty much
5 = agree very much

___1. When I do something wrong, my first impulse is to blame the circumstances.

___2. I tend to put things off to the last moment.

___3. I tend to overprepare when I have any kind of exam or “performance”.

___4. I suppose I feel “under the weather” more often than most people.

___5. I always try to do my best, no matter what.

___6. Before I sign up for a course or engage in any important activity, I make sure I have the proper preparation or background.

___7. I tend to get very anxious before an exam or “performance”.

___8. I am easily distracted by noises or my own creative thoughts when I try to read.

___9. I try not to get too intensely involved in competitive activities so it won’t hurt too much if
I lose or do poorly.

___ 10. I would rather be respected for doing my best than admired for my potential.

___ 11. I would do a lot better if I tried harder.

___ 12. I prefer the small pleasures in the present to the larger pleasures in the dim future.

___ 13. I generally hate to be in any condition but “at my best”.

___ 14. Someday I might “get it all together.”

___ 15. I sometimes enjoy being mildly ill for a day or two because it takes off the pressure.

___ 16. I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way.

___ 17. When I do poorly at one kind of thing, I often console myself by remembering I am good at other things.

___ 18. I admit that I am tempted to rationalize when I don’t live up to others’ expectations.

___ 19. I often think I have more than my share of bad luck in sports, card games, and other measures of talent.

___ 20. I would rather not take any drug that interfered with my ability to think clearly and do the right thing.

___ 21. I overindulge in food and drink more often than I should.

___ 22. When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible the night before.

___ 23. I never let emotional problems in one part of my life interfere with things in my life.

___ 24. Usually, when I get anxious about doing well, I end up doing better.

___ 25. Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult.
APPENDIX G

Rosenberg’s (1979) Self-esteem Scale

Personal Reactions

On the items below, indicate the degree to which each statement represents your personal reactions or feelings. Marking 5 would indicate that the statement is definitely true of your personal reactions. Marking 1 would indicate that the statement is definitely untrue of your reactions. Responses of 2, 3, or 4 represent the reactions on the scale below.

1 = not at all like me
2 = somewhat like me
3 = neither like nor unlike me
4 = somewhat like me
5 = very much like me

1. I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.
APPENDIX H

Modern Sexism Scale (Swim et al., 1995)

Please respond to each of the following questions by indicating in the blank next to each question what your current feelings according to the labeled one to seven scale indicated below

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all very much

1. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States.
2. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.
3. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television.
4. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.
5. Society has reached the point where women and men have opportunities for achievement.
6. It is easy to understand the anger of women’s groups in America.
7. It is easy to understand why women’s groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women’s opportunities.
8. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women’s actual experiences.
APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

EXPERIMENT TITLE: NOISE, NOISE, NOISE

INVESTIGATOR: Julienne Bryant

FACULTY SUPERVISOR: Charles Kimble

DESCRIPTION AND DURATION OF EXPERIMENT:
This study will be approximately 45-50 minutes long. You will be taking a test that measures integrative orientation with and without noise that may help or hinder performance. You will also answer a questionnaire requested by the Psychology department.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
All records of your participation will remain confidential and your name will not appear in any of the results. Your name and your responses will be kept separately to protect the anonymity and privacy of your responses.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE:
I have voluntarily decided to participate in this experiment. Questions I have about this experiment, the procedures involved, and my participation have been answered. I understand that I am entitled to terminate my participation at any time without any penalty.

__________________________   __________________________
Signature of participant       Date

If you have questions about any aspect of this study or the results, please contact Julienne Bryant at 228-4911 or Dr. Charles Kimble, Department of Psychology, 229-2167, 319 St. Joseph's Hall.
The following questions are similar to the integrative orientation test questions that you will be answering. Please try to answer all questions as quickly possible. If you are unsure of a question, guess: we are interested in the powers of intuition as well as deduction.

Questions 1-2 are based on the following:

A florist is arranging eight flowers—A, B, C, F, G, J, K, and L—in the shape of a circle as shown:

```
     1
    8 2
   7 3
  6 4
 5
```

The following is known about the arrangement of the flowers:

A, B, and C are lilies; F and G are mums; J, K, and L are irises
The lilies must all be next to one another
The irises must all be next to each other
No lily can be next to an iris
Flower 5 is F
If F is next to J, then F cannot also be next to C.

1. Which one of the following flowers could be flower 3?
   a. L
   b. K
   c. J
   d. F
   e. C
2. Each one of the following statements must be true EXCEPT
   a.) Flower 1 is a lily
   b.) Flower 3 is a lily
   c.) Flower 7 is an iris
   d.) Flower 4 is a lily
   e.) Flower 8 is an iris

The following information is necessary to answer questions 3-4:

A bakery is making exactly three birthday cakes: A, B, and C. Each cake is to be composed of
two different layers, a top layer and a bottom layer, consistent with the following guidelines:

Each layer is exactly one of the following flavors:
Vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, or lemon
For each cake, the flavor of the top layer is different from that of the bottom layer.
Of the three cakes, no two bottom layers are the same flavor.
Of the three cakes, no two bottom layers are the same flavor.
Exactly one top layer is strawberry.
In cake C, either the top layer or the bottom layer, but not both, is vanilla.
The top layer of cake B is chocolate.
None of the bottom layers is chocolate.

3. If the top layer of cake C is strawberry, then which one of the following statements
   must be true?
   a. The top layer of cake A is vanilla.
   b. The top layer of cake A is lemon
   c. The bottom layer of cake A is strawberry.
   d. The bottom layer of cake B is lemon.
   e. The bottom layer of cake C is vanilla.

4. If the bottom layer of cake C is lemon, then each of the following statements must be true EXCEPT:
   f. One top layer is vanilla.
   g. One layer of cake A is strawberry.
   h. One layer of cake B is strawberry.
   i. Two of the six layers are strawberry.

GO TO NEXT TEST PAGE
The following information is needed for questions 5-6:

An independent automobile magazine is trying to determine the four best-selling automobiles from among J, K, L, M, N, P. The information that follows is available:

There are no ties among the cars.
Each car is either a sports car or a luxury car, but not both.
Two of the six cars are imported and four are domestic.
Both imported cars are among the four best-sellers, exactly one of which is a luxury car.
Cars J and L sold better than car M, and car M sold better than cars K and N.
Cars J and L are sports cars.
Cars M and P are luxury cars.

5. Which of the following cars must be a domestic car?
   j. Car J
   k. Car L
   l. Car M
   m. Car N
   n. Car P

6. If car K is imported, which of the following can be false?
   o. Car J is domestic.
   p. Car L is domestic.
   q. Car K is the fourth best-seller
   r. Car K is a sports car.

The following information is for questions 7-8

In a certain computer language, an acceptable sequence of five words forms a command. A command must meet the following requirements:
Each word must contain at least five letters, no more than two of which can be vowels (a, e, i, o, u).
A word may not begin with c, o, or y
The first letters of the five words of a command must be in consecutive alphabetical order

7. The last letter in a command CANNOT begin with the letter
   s. J
   b.) N
   c.) R
   d.) T
   e.) U

GO TO NEXT TEST PAGE
8. If "xenon" is the last word in a command, it is possible for the first word in that command to be
   a.) tailor
   b.) talk
   c.) treacle
   d.) tale

The following information is necessary to answer questions 9-10:

In a four-floor college dormitory, there are exactly three student resident advisors—Ruiz, Smith, and Turner—who each have graduate or undergraduate status. They are assigned to floors according to the following restrictions:
   Each floor of the dormitory can have only one resident advisor.
   Ruiz is assigned to the fourth floor.
   Smith has graduate status.
   Smith is assigned to a floor above Turner.
   If there is a resident advisor on the third floor, then that advisor is of the same status as the resident advisor on the fourth floor.
   The resident advisors are not all of the same status.

9. Which one of the following statements must be true?
   (a.) Ruiz and Smith are both the same status.
   (b.) Ruiz and Turner are both the same status.
   (c.) Smith and Turner are both the same status.
   (d.) Either Ruiz or Turner or both have undergraduate status.

10. Which one of the following CANNOT be true?
    (e.) There is an advisor with graduate status who lives on the fourth floor.
    (f.) There is an advisor with graduate status who lives on the third floor.
    (g.) There is an advisor with undergraduate status who lives on the fourth floor.
    (h.) There is an advisor with undergraduate status who lives on the second floor.
## APPENDIX K

**Current feelings**

Please respond to each of the following questions by indicating in the blank next to each question what your current feelings according to the labeled one to seven scale indicated below

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  
Not at all  very much

1. ___ I am feeling good about myself right now.
2. ___ I will be disappointed with myself if I perform poorly.
3. ___ I expect to do poorly on this test.
4. ___ I set high standards for my own performance.
5. ___ I want to do as well as I possibly can.
6. ___ I am concerned about how others might regard my performance.
7. ___ I would be proud if I did well on this test.
8. ___ It is important to me that I do well on this test.
9. ___ I am uncertain of how well I will do.
10. ___ I am confident that I will perform well.
APPENDIX L

Debriefing

You have just participated in an experiment that explores gender differences in behavioral self-handicapping. Behavioral self-handicapping involves a strategic placing of oneself at a disadvantage before an evaluation or test that may threaten self-esteem (Kimble, Kimble, & Croy, 1998). The main idea behind behavioral self-handicapping is that through placing oneself at a disadvantage, the behavioral self-handicapper renders the test of him or herself invalid. Behavioral self-handicapping is a self-protective strategy. The majority of studies performed in the U.S. have noted a gender difference in self-handicapping: males are far more likely to use this method of self-protection than females are. Self-handicapping is considered maladaptive, so males are harming themselves more often than females in evaluative situations.

Most of the questions of your test were unsolvable. Multiple-choice answers were offered to you so that you could feel like you solved the problem. After answering your questions, you were told that you scored higher than anyone had ever seen before. The experimenter was trying to instill a feeling of non-contingent success in you—namely, that you had succeeded on the test without knowing why. This is a condition behind behavioral self-handicapping. After you performed these practice problems, you were asked to select a tape that would either help or harm your performance. Selecting a harmful tape would be a behavioral self-handicapping strategy.

You were selected from a pool of students that had participated in a mass testing session. During this session, you filled out several surveys. One of those surveys explored your beliefs about the nature of intelligence. The survey asked you whether you thought ability was innate or could be increased through hard work. I hypothesized that self-handicappers were more likely to believe that ability was innate. You were also tested for self-esteem level during this mass testing session, as well as the stability of your self-esteem. I hypothesized that someone whose self-esteem fluctuates widely would be more likely to utilize this technique. You also filled out some surveys that measured your competitiveness and beliefs about sexism to see if this in any way contributed to self-handicapping behavior.

I wanted to reassure you that we are not testing you personally in any way. All aspects of this study will be kept confidential, and your answers will be entered anonymously with everyone else's.

Due to the nature of the study, please do not divulge any details to other students. If you knew the nature of the study, you would have behaved differently than you did without knowledge of the experiment, rendering the results of the study invalid. Thank you for taking the time to participate.
If you'd like to read more about self-handicapping, I recommend the following journal articles:


BIBLIOGRAPHY


