

Student Work

5-1-1985

An attributional analysis of goal setting, acceptance, and performance outcome on supervisor's evaluations

Janet J. Car

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

Recommended Citation

Car, Janet J., "An attributional analysis of goal setting, acceptance, and performance outcome on supervisor's evaluations" (1985).
Student Work. 1531.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/1531>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by
DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student
Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For
more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



AN ATTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF GOAL SETTING, ACCEPTANCE, AND
PERFORMANCE OUTCOME ON SUPERVISORS' EVALUATIONS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Psychology
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Janet J. Car
May 1985

UMI Number: EP73471

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP73471

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

Name	Department
<i>Robert L. DeWitt</i>	CBA
<i>Wayne J. Harmon</i>	Psychology
<i>Walter J. Cella</i>	Psychology

James M. Thomas
Chairman

April 24, 1975
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
ABSTRACT	vi
 Chapter	
I	
INTRODUCTION	1
Goal Setting and Performance	1
Application of Goal Setting in Organizations	4
Attribution, Goal Setting, and Performance Evaluation	9
Theory and Research Concerning Causal Attribution	11
Dependent Variables and Hypotheses	16
II	
METHOD	20
Subjects	20
Procedure	22
Goal Setting Manipulation	23
Performance Outcome Manipulation	24
Dependent Variables	25
III	
RESULTS	29
Manipulation Checks	29
Tests of Hypotheses	30
Dossett-Greenberg Comparisons	47
IV	
DISCUSSION	53
Attributional Effects	53
Unpredicted Results	58
REFERENCES	62
APPENDIX A--Scripts	68
APPENDIX B--Consent Form, Questionnaires, and Demographic Variables	73
APPENDIX C--ANOVA Tables	80

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Demographic Characteristics	21
2	Condition Means and Standard Deviations of Summed Effectiveness Items/ MANOVA of Effectiveness Items	31
3	Condition Means and Standard Deviations of Summed Goal Commitment Items/ MANOVA of Goal Commitment Items	34
4	Results for Luck Using a Single Item Measure/Analysis of Variance	37
5	Condition Means and Standard Deviations of Summed Ability Items/MANOVA of Ability Items	40
6	Condition Means and Standard Deviations of Summed Goal Difficulty Items/ MANOVA of Goal Difficulty Items	42
7	Condition Means and Standard Deviations of Summed Effort Items/MANOVA of Effort Items	45
8	Pre- and Post-Goal Difficulty and Goal Performance Measure as a Function of Performance Outcome	49
9	Summary of Results Across Success and Failure Conditions for Comparison with Dossett and Greenberg Single Items	50
10	Summary of Results for Success and Failure Conditions Using Multiple Item Measures	52
1-5	Appendix C--ANOVA Tables	80

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Effectiveness	32
2	Goal Setting Conditions	35
3	Luck	38
4	Ability	41
5	Goal Difficulty	44
6	Effort	46

ABSTRACT

Previous research investigated the effect of goal setting on supervisors' evaluations of employee performance and the causes attributed to that performance. The results demonstrated that attributions for performance were more affected by success versus failure in the assigned than in the participative or self-set condition. It was hypothesized that a possible exception to this relationship might occur when the goal was not accepted by the employee. This 3 x 2 x 2 factorial design investigated the impact of goal acceptance on ratings of task performance and attributions concerning that performance.

The overriding determinant of attributions regarding the employee was whether or not the goal was met. For instance, whether the employee succeeded appeared to be the overriding determinant in perception of goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, and effort in both the accept and reject conditions. In addition, the accept/reject manipulation revealed some other important implications for supervisory performance appraisals and causal attribution ratings. When the employee failed in meeting the goal, supervisors (subjects) rated the employee who accepted the goal as performing better than the employee who failed but rejected the goal.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Specific goal setting, the portrayal of task goals, and frequent feedback are powerful determinants of performance. Campbell, Daft, and Hulin (1983), however, suggest it is not enough for managers/officers/administrators to have specific goals in their minds. New technologies should be developed for facilitating the formulating of specific goals, for portraying them visually, for providing feedback efficiently, and for dealing with dysfunctional side effects that might occur. This paper will discuss the role of goals and goal setting in organizations as they affect the perception of employee motivation and performance. Steers and Porter (1979) suggested that goal setting in organizations is receiving increased attention because managers are attempting to find ways to maximize the return on investment from limited resources. Thus, goals and goal setting provide a way in which resources can be allocated with rationality. Before analyzing this role, we should perhaps first consider what is meant by the concept of goals.

Goal Setting and Performance

The Goal Concept

Traditionally, there have been two definitional approaches to goals: (1) goals were statements of where the individual or organization wanted to be at some future time (Etzioni, 1964; Vroom, 1960); and (2) goals were seen as constraints placed on present and

future behavior as a result of past and present decisions and commitments (Cyert & March, 1963; Simon, 1964). Although the literature on goals has generally treated these approaches as separate and distinct (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Steers, 1977), Steers and Porter (1979) suggested that they are more complementary than mutually exclusive. They envisioned the goal concept as a dynamic process by which individuals and organizations determine their future objectives within certain known limitations. However, once these objectives have been set, they seem to rule out the possibility of pursuing other potential goals because of the limit of resources. As a result, goal setting becomes a process of allocating resources such as manpower, money, and time. Thus, viewing goal setting as a continual decision and reevaluation process subsumes both of the definitional approaches discussed above.

Functions of Goals

Once goals have been formulated, they serve several functions for the goal-setter--to guide and direct behavior, to serve as a standard against which judgments can be made, to serve as a source of legitimacy, to affect the structure of the organization, and to provide significant insight into the underlying motives of individuals and organizations (Steers, 1977). It is the judgment standard aspect of goal setting that is of greatest interest in the present research.

First, goals guide and direct behavior by focusing attention and effort in specific directions and providing a rationale for organizing resources (Cascio, 1982; Steers, 1977). Second, goals provide a standard against which judgments can be made as to the relative

effectiveness and efficiency with which goals are met. Third, goals provide a source of legitimacy, justifying activities and the use of resources necessary to pursue them. Fourth, goals affect the structure of the organization--the activities, practices, and technological processes necessary for goal attainment; and they can cause restrictions on the activities of the individuals as well as the acquisition and distribution of resources. Thus, social phenomena such as communication patterns, authority and power relations, division of labor, and status orderings can be directly affected. Fifth, goals provide insight into the underlying motives, character, and behavior of both individuals and organizations. In this sense, goals are objectives the goal-setter feels are worthy of pursuit.

Overview

In the sections that follow, the nature of goal setting processes in organizations will be examined in detail, beginning with the model proposed by Locke and his associates--a model addressing the impact of personal goals on various activities. In addition, several experiments which are largely consistent with Locke's theoretical formulations will be reviewed. Locke's model is compared with other theories, and several unique features are found. In general, strong support is found for the contention that clear, concise goals provide an effective means of enhancing employee performance. Self-serving biases that may occur in performance evaluation will be addressed, as well as the role of attribution processes in performance appraisal. Finally, a study by Dossett and Greenberg (1981) will be examined; they analyzed the role of goal setting, not only in the context of

employee performance, but also as it relates to other issues of organizational effectiveness. Using an attributional analysis, the available research evidence on goal setting is examined to see how goals influence the cognitive processes and perceptions leading up to the decision to produce.

Application of Goal Setting in Organizations

Goals and Intentions

Traditionally, expectancy models of the motivational process have suggested that the task to be performed is an important intervening link between effort or choice behavior and the outcomes desired by the individual (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). According to cognitive models, individuals have intentions about what they will do when faced with certain task requirements; and these intentions influence the choices they make among task content and the effort they expend toward performance goals within tasks. Campbell, Daft, and Hulin (1983) found that although goal setting is labeled as a cognitive area of investigation, as yet there have been no systematic attempts to find out how individuals process information about goals. When are goals recognized as goals? Along what parameters do individuals evaluate goals?

Locke's (1968) theory of goal setting suggests the relationship between conscious goals or intentions and task performance. The basic premise is that actions are regulated by the individual's conscious intentions. In this theory, a goal is defined as what the individual is consciously trying to do. In addition, the theory suggests that an

individual's goals mediate how performance is affected by knowledge of results (performance feedback), participation in decision making, and competition. Goals that are assigned to an individual by a supervisor have an effect on behavior only to the extent that they are consciously accepted by the individual (McCormick & Ilgen, 1980; Muchinsky, 1983). Locke (1968) stated:

It is not enough to know that an order or request was made; one has to know whether or not the individual heard it and understood it, how he appraised it, and what he decided to do about it before its effects on his behavior can be predicted and explained. (p. 174).

Locke's (1968) theory is based on a series of controlled laboratory experiments with college students who performed simple tasks for short periods of time. Latham and Yukl (1975) find it questionable whether something so simple as setting specific hard goals can increase the performance of employees in organizational settings where experimental demands are absent and acceptance of goals is not as easily obtained. It is thus important to review research on the application of goal setting in organizations, to evaluate the practical feasibility of goal setting, and to evaluate Locke's theory.

Specific Goals Versus Generalized or No Goals

An earlier field study by Lawrence and Smith (1955) provided information on the effects of employee participation in decision making and goal setting. Because a participative goal setting condition was compared with a condition in which work problems and company policy were discussed without any explicit goal setting, the

study was interpreted as an assessment of the effects of goal setting. It was concluded that employees were equally satisfied in both conditions, but production increased more in the goal setting condition than in the condition when no goal was set (Landy, Barnes-Farrell, & Cleveland, 1980; Landy, Barnes, & Murphy, 1978).

A correlational study by Burke and Wilcox (1969) investigated the effects of goal setting during the appraisal interview. A questionnaire was used to obtain data from a sample of nonmanagerial female employees. It was concluded that employee perception of the extent to which an employee and the supervisor set mutual goals was correlated with the employee's self-reported desire to improve on performance ($r = .45$) and the self-ratings of actual performance improvement ($r = .29$).

Because goal acceptance is a necessary condition in Locke's theory, researchers have tried to identify factors that determine whether employees will accept harder goals. Some of the studies reviewed in this section found that variables which moderated the effects of goal difficulty also influenced goal acceptance. These variables included the employee's perception that the goal is reasonable, and the perceived contingency between goal attainment and the expected outcomes. More difficult goals were likely to be perceived as challenging rather than impossible if the employee had a high degree of self-assurance and had previously had more successes than failures in goal attainment.

Assigned Versus Participative Goal Setting

Locke's (1968) theory suggests that goals mediate the effects of employee participation in decision making. The theory is not directly concerned with the manner in which goals are set--although the most appropriate manner of setting goals is an important question. As a result, the consequences of subordinate participation in decision making have been the subject of considerable research in the leadership and management literature. According to a classical management theory by Massie (1965), it is the leader's responsibility to assign goals and ensure that they are attained. Humanistic organization theories suggested by Likert (1967) and McGregor (1960) allow for considerable subordinate participation in decision making, and participation is believed to increase acceptance of the decision and commitment to implement it. Contingency theories conclude that participation is effective in some situations but not in others (Lowin, 1968; Morse, 1970; Tannenbaum, 1958; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; Yukl, 1971). Leadership research on the effects of employee participation in decision making supports the contingency approach.

Several studies assessed the effects of different amounts of subordinate participation in goal setting. French, Kay, and Meyer (1966) compared assigned and participative goal setting during performance appraisal interviews with lower-level managers. Measures were taken of perceived participation of the managers, observer judgments of the amount of participation during the appraisal interview, and the managers' perception of the usual amount of participation they previously had been allowed. Perception of the

usual amount of participation (measured prior to the appraisal interview) was related positively to acceptance of job goals. Yet, goal acceptance and goal attainment were not related significantly to the other participation measures and were not affected by the goal setting manipulation.

Steers and Porter (1979) suggested that a number of limitations of this study make it difficult to reach any clear conclusions: The participation manipulation was not always successful, the participation treatment was confounded with the usual level of participation between the supervisor and the subordinates, and no objective performance measures were obtained.

Despite these problems and the scarcity of significant differences, Steers and Porter reached the following conclusions: (1) subordinates who received a high participation level in the performance interview achieved a greater percentage of their improvement goals; (2) employees who usually worked under high participation levels performed best on goals they set for themselves, and employees who usually worked under low participation levels performed best on goals their supervisor assigned to them.

Moderating Concerns

Steers and Porter (1979) suggest that perhaps the greatest deficiency of Locke's theory is the failure to specify the determinants of goal acceptance and goal commitment. Other investigators have used expectancy theory concepts to explain how goal acceptance is determined. Studies by Dachler and Mobley (1973) and Steers (1977) found that goal acceptance and performance were predictable from

measures of an employee's expectancy that effort will lead to goal attainment, the expectancy that goal attainment will lead to various outcomes, and the subjective values assigned to those outcomes.

Goal setting programs were found to be effective over an extended period of time in a variety of organizations, at both the managerial and nonmanagerial levels. Both assigned goals and participative goal setting were effective. In conclusion, the laboratory and field research on goal setting has provided support for parts of Locke's theory and has shown the practical feasibility of goal setting programs.

Attribution, Goal Setting, and Performance Evaluation

Dossett and Greenberg (1981) suggested that the effect of process variables on performance appraisal in the context of goal setting has not been addressed. In addition, these authors suggested that a supervisor's performance appraisal of an employee may be affected by information obtained during the goal setting process. Although their study examined performance appraisal in the context of the goal setting process, it raised the question of whether goal setting makes the performance appraisal process easier or more accurate. The inferences that supervisors must make about an employee can lead to many of the sources of bias discussed by Cooper (1981) and Feldman (1981).

Cognitive Obstacles to Rating Accuracy

Halo error is considered by Cooper (1981) to be one of the most pervasive errors affecting performance appraisal. The halo effect refers to a tendency to rate an employee similarly across traits in

accordance with an overall or global impression of favorability or unfavorability. Cooper suggests the following sources of halo: undersampling, engulfing, insufficient concreteness, and insufficient rater motivation and knowledge. The first error, undersampling, reflects a common rating situation in which the rater is given an insufficient sample of the ratee's behavior; because of this, there is a greater reliance on inferences about how categories covary, and these inferences may be inaccurate. Engulfing refers to the tendency to be affected either by an overall impression of an employee or by a single, salient feature in ratings on other factors. Insufficient concreteness refers to the rating scales; greater halo occurs when rating factors are abstract and insufficiently defined. Behaviorally anchored rating scales were suggested by Smith and Kendall (1963) to reduce this error with specific and concrete scales.

Additional research by Feldman (1981) found that raters constructed cognitive schemata and prototypes that guided their perceptual searching and organizing. Prototypes refer to a form of abstract image that summarizes the major tendencies of a category (Rosch et al., 1976). Schemata are similar to prototypes but more complex; they exist for events, causal relationships, and categories of people or things (Fiske, 1974). These cognitive schemata or prototypes can guide raters in searching the environment; however, these guides can provide a limited view of events. Information shared during goal setting may activate such schemata and thus affect performance attributions and ratings.

Perception and the schemata that form the basis for selecting, attending to, and organizing that which is perceived can be influenced by the rater's expectations; Ittelson and Kilpatrick (1951) state that raters form their reality on the basis of the information available and the way that it is interpreted. Cooper (1981) suggested that raters encode information by selectively attending to some behaviors while ignoring others, stressing the importance of frame of reference in the perception and evaluation of employees. In summary, the rater's cognitive schemata can guide the rater through the search process suggesting that raters may be set to attend to and encode behaviors that are consistent with their cognitive schemata.

While the Feldman and Cooper articles have suggested important cognitive process variables underlying performance appraisal, attribution theorists have also discussed issues of relevance. Although supervisors stand as observers of employee performance, they are generally not uninterested bystanders. Therefore, concerns have been raised about the self-serving biases that may occur in performance evaluation and the general role of attribution processes in performance appraisal.

Theory and Research Concerning Causal Attributions

Perceptions of task success and failure affect the degree to which an observer attributes task performance to internal causes-- the individual's effort and ability--or to external causes-- task difficulty and luck (Weiner, 1972; Weiner, 1974; Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest, & Rosenbaum, 1971; Weiner, Heckhausen, Meyer, &

Cook, 1972; Weiner & Kukla, 1970). These causal attributions may have implications for the justification used by the organization to reinforce success or failure and the resulting alteration of the individual's instrumentalities. For instance, an individual's task success or failure may be attributed either to ability or to effort. If an individual fails, the people in the organization who control external rewards may attribute the failure to a lack of ability rather than effort. In addition, in a business organization, when failure is attributed to a lack of ability rather than effort it may result in a dismissal; whereas failure due to a lack of effort (in the presence of high ability) may put the burden of responsibility on the organization and cause the management to wonder where it went wrong and how it could improve the motivation of capable employees (Nord, 1976; Robbins, 1979).

Research by Miller and Ross (1975) suggested an information processing explanation for self-serving attributional biases. They suggested that individuals intend and expect success more than failure. Furthermore, they claim that people are more likely to make internal self-attributions for expected outcomes and external self-attributions for unexpected outcomes. It is not clear that supervisors' expectations and attributions would follow the same pattern. Whether an employee accepts or rejects a goal may or may not affect expectations and attributions made by the supervisor. For example, when an employee accepts a goal, success would be an expected outcome, and both the employee and supervisor should make internal attributions if success occurs. If the employee accepts the goal but

fails (an unexpected outcome), the employee should make external attributions, but it is not clear what the supervisor will do. Many studies have documented the "fundamental attribution error" (Harvey et al., 1980; Wong & Weiner, 1981) which would predict an internal attribution by the supervisor even though the outcome (failure) was not expected. On the other hand, if the employee rejects the goal, success would be an unexpected outcome for the employee and yield an external attribution. Again, it is not clear that the supervisor's attributions would be the same as the employee's. If the supervisor believes the goal is attainable, success would be expected and failure unexpected regardless of the employee's acceptance or rejection reaction. Therefore, if the position of Miller and Ross can be extended to an observer, internal attributions are most likely for success, while external attributions are most likely for employee failure. On the other hand, if the supervisor reacts to employee rejection of the goal, failure would be expected and success unexpected; the supervisor should make internal attributions for employee failure and external attributions for employee success. All of this is further complicated by the degree of involvement by the supervisor in setting the goal. As degree of involvement increases, the hedonic relevance (Jones & Davis, 1965; Jones & Gerard, 1967) of the employee's performance increases. Therefore, self-serving biases by the supervisor may affect attributions and performance ratings.

Dossett and Greenberg (1981) considered the effect of goal setting on supervisors' evaluations of employees' performance as a

function of various goal setting methods under conditions of task success or failure. They concluded that "attributional distortions" were greater in the assigned than in the participative or self-set conditions, i.e., employee success or failure had a greater impact on performance attributions in the assigned goal condition. However, Dossett and Greenberg did not address questions concerning individuals accepting the goals they were assigned. Perhaps answers to such questions are needed before wide-scale implementation of supervision by goal setting is carried out (Campbell, Daft, & Hulin, 1983).

The degree of involvement a supervisor has in setting a goal increases from self-set, through participative, to assigned goal setting procedures. As a supervisor's influence increases in setting the goal, the success or failure of the employee in meeting the goal can have increasingly positive or negative consequences for the supervisor. Consequently, an employee's performance evaluation may be differentially affected as a function of the type of goal setting process (especially if the employee failed to meet the goal). The failure may be seen as a threat to the supervisor's self-esteem causing a defensive attribution to avoid that threat. Therefore, in the present study it is hypothesized that an employee's performance evaluation will be affected by an interaction between the performance outcome (success or failure), the manner in which the goal was set (self-set, participative, or assigned), and whether the goal was accepted or rejected. Specifically, it is anticipated that supervisors' causal attributions of performance and the performance evaluation for a failing employee will be affected more in an assigned

goal setting condition than in either participative or self-set conditions. It is expected that the greatest effects will appear in the assigned/reject/fail condition. However, the size of the effects will also vary across dependent variables.

Finally, Dossett and Greenberg (1981) found that the most potent determinant of a supervisor's evaluation of an employee's performance was whether or not the set goal was successfully achieved. The procedure utilized in setting the goal appeared to be important when evaluators were assessing the causes of an employee's performance, but not when they evaluated the employee's overall effectiveness. In the present study, half the "supervisors" will be informed that the employee succeeded, while half will be informed that the employee failed. This is hypothesized to affect the supervisor's attributions of the causes of the worker's performance as well as their overall performance evaluation rating. It is expected that attributions would be differentially affected by success/failure, goal acceptance/rejection, and amount of goal setting participation. Thus, it is expected that the data will support the findings of Jones and Davis (1965) and Jones and Gerard (1967) suggesting that the hedonic relevance of an outcome acts to affect an observer's causal attributions.

The present study will also examine the effects of different types of goal setting procedures on an employee's performance evaluation. Subjects will be shown one of several videotapes of a supervisor and an employee setting a performance goal. After receiving information about the employee's success or failure in

meeting the goal, the subjects will assume the role of the supervisor and evaluate the employee's performance. Attribution research by Bem (1972) has demonstrated that role players make the same attributions as those of an actual participant. This should allow role players to participate in the goal setting conditions: participative, assigned, or self-set. Although there is no explicit evidence to support Bem's theory, Dossett and Greenberg (1981) made this assumption in their research. Consequently, this assumption is also used in this present study. Each of these goal setting conditions will be combined with the employee either accepting or rejecting the goal and either succeeding or failing to meet the goal. Sex of both supervisor and employee is constant (female) in order to avoid effects due to the sex variable. It is expected that the subject will attribute success to internal factors such as high effort, goal commitment, and ability. In a similar way, it is expected that external factors such as luck and goal difficulty will be blamed for failure.

Dependent Variables and Hypotheses

Drawing upon the previous discussion, a number of general hypothesis were proposed.

Effectiveness

Two hypotheses were proposed for the effectiveness ratings. First, it was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for the success versus failure manipulation. Second, there would also be an interaction for the accept/reject x success/failure conditions. In the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, the overriding determinant of

the employee's overall performance effectiveness was whether or not the goal was met. If the employee rejects the goal, another source of information is provided to the rater concerning the employee; it is expected this negative information will magnify the effect of failure and lead to even lower effectiveness ratings in all three goal setting variations.

Goal Commitment

It was hypothesized that the goal commitment variable would show a three-way interaction between success/fail, accept/reject, and goal setting variations. It was expected that goal commitment would be high in all goal setting and accept/reject conditions as long as the employee was successful. Consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, and with the theory of Jones and Davis (1965), failure by the employee was expected to produce significantly lower attributions of goal commitment in all goal setting conditions, but the effects of failure were expected to increase as the hedonic relevance of the employee's performance increased. Furthermore, rejection of the goal by the employee should provide added support for an internal attribution by the supervisor; therefore, it was expected that the lowest goal commitment attribution would occur in the assigned, reject, failure condition.

Luck

Concerning the luck variable, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant three-way interaction between success/failure x accept/reject x goal setting condition. Consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, it was expected that there would not be

large differences in luck attributions across the self-set, participative, and assigned conditions when the employee was successful. However, in the failure condition, a significant decrease in the luck attribution was expected in the assigned condition. This would be consistent with the contention by Weiner et al. (1971) that luck is an external factor and not used by an observer to explain failures by others. Further, this decrease was expected to be greatest in the accept condition because failure after rejecting a goal should not be attributed to bad luck--it could be attributed to an internal cause, the goal rejection itself.

Ability

For the ability variable, a significant three-way interaction was hypothesized between the success/failure x accept/reject x goal setting manipulations. It was expected that ability ratings would be high in all goal setting and accept/reject conditions as long as the employee was successful. Consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, the accept condition would produce significantly lower ability ratings for the failure group; the effects of failure were expected to increase as hedonic relevance of the employee's performance increased, and the largest difference should occur in the assigned goal condition.

Goal Difficulty

Concerning the goal difficulty variable, a significant three-way interaction was hypothesized between accept/reject x success/failure x goal setting variables. Similar to the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, goal difficulty was held constant; consequently, the results

should depend on the success/failure outcome. Again, the success/failure differences would be largest in the reject condition, providing additional support for an internal attribution by the supervisor. The largest effect was expected in the assigned goal condition.

Effort

On the effort variable, a significant interaction was hypothesized between accept/reject x success/failure x goal setting manipulations. As in the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, large differences between success and failure conditions were expected only in the accept condition, and failure by the employee was expected to produce significantly lower attributions of effort in all goal setting conditions. However, it was expected that the reject condition would produce significantly lower effort ratings for the failure group with the largest difference occurring in the assigned goal condition, adding further support for an internal attribution by the supervisor.

Chapter II

METHOD

Subjects

The participants were 120 undergraduate students attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Both the subjects and the confederates were females in order to avoid interactions between sex of supervisor and subordinate. In exchange for their participation in the experiment, subjects received extra credit in their respective courses. Subjects were randomly assigned to the 12 treatment conditions.

The ranges and means of demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. Considerable diversity was evident on each dimension. For instance, there were 82% single, 8% married, and 10% divorced. There were 9% Black, 88% Caucasian, 2% Oriental, and 1% Hispanic. In addition, 9% of the students were planning a career with their company, 87% of the students were not planning a career with their company, and 4% of the students were undecided about a career with their company. In the sample, 28% reported holding supervisory positions, and 72% reported not holding supervisory positions. The sample included 48% blue-collar workers and 52% white-collar workers. There were 2% union members and 98% nonunion members. There were similar percentages in all cells.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Range	Mean
Age	18-46	22.69
Number of dependents	0-5	.40
Months worked	3-240	66.78
Months present company	2-144	29.60
Months present position	1-120	26.99
Months as supervisor	1-84	23.94
Hours per week worked	8-70	26.08

Procedure

Groups ranging from one to four subjects at a time were shown a videotape of an employee and supervisor discussing the employee's six-month evaluation and setting goals for the next six months. Videotape (rather than a live supervisor-employee interaction) was used to control goal difficulty and any unique performer factors that could bias the results. The feedback instrument was a behavioral observation scale (BOS), and the supervisor suggested ways in which the employee should improve on two dimensions (Latham & Wexley, 1982). Following the videotape, the subjects completed a questionnaire assessing their impressions of the employee, the supervisor, and the discussion between them. The first questionnaire occurred before the success/failure feedback was given. This questionnaire also provided the means to check that all the variables and manipulations were in order.

The employee's performance for the next six months was manipulated in a written statement provided with the performance evaluation questionnaire. After subjects were given the performance feedback, they completed another questionnaire, this time playing the role of the supervisor.

The subjects were given instructions that the questionnaire was to be used for appraising the performance of the employee they had just viewed. When the subjects completed this questionnaire, they were debriefed and dismissed.

Goal Setting Manipulation

Three versions of the goal setting videotape were produced. All tapes were identical except for the parts pertaining to the goal setting, and acceptance manipulations. Subjects were assigned to the various conditions randomly. In all conditions the level of the goals was always the same; 30% of time calling customers and 80% of the productivity standard. See Appendix A for the various scripts. The participative condition script is presented below as an example.

Group 1: Participative Goal

In the first tape the employee initially set a goal which was upgraded by the supervisor and was either accepted or rejected by the employee. In addition, the employee either succeeded or failed to reach the goal. The script for this condition read as follows:

Supervisor: "Hi (name), how are you today?"

Worker: "I'm fine, thanks, how are you?"

Supervisor: "Great! (pause) As you probably know, I called you in today to discuss your performance. As a result of the training program you've just completed, I feel it's appropriate to set some goals for the next six months. I want you to concentrate most on the time you spend calling your customers (pause) and on your sales volume. Do you have any suggestions?" (shows scale to employee)

Worker: "I think I should be able to spend 25% of my time calling my customers without my sales volume dropping below 80% of standard."

Supervisor: "That's a little too low, I want to set your goal at 30% for calling customers. That should not be too difficult; most of

our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly."

Worker: "That sounds reasonable to me."

Supervisor: "Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

In the rejection condition, the last lines in this interaction read as follows:

Worker: "That still seems too high for me. I don't think that's a reasonable goal. I am afraid my sales volume will drop below 80% if I have to spend too much time calling customers."

Supervisor: "Well, why don't you leave it at 30% and see how things work. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

Performance Outcome Manipulation

The employee's performance for the ensuing six months was manipulated in a written statement as follows: Subjects in the success condition read, "During the following six months, the employee's performance was observed to average 30% of time calling customers with an average sales volume of 80%. The employee, therefore, succeeded in reaching the goals established six months ago." Subjects in the failure condition read, "During the following six months, the employee's performance was observed to average 25% of time calling customers with an average sales volume of 80%."

The employee, therefore, failed to reach the goals established six months ago."

Dependent Variables

Two separate sets of dependent measures were assessed after the goal setting videotape was shown to the subjects. After the goal setting tape, the subjects were asked to complete a first questionnaire (Appendix B) containing the following items for comparison with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study: (a) "Compared to the supervisor, how much influence did the employee have in setting the customer calling goal?" (none--extreme amount); (b) "How committed do you think the employee is to attaining the customer calling goal?" (very uncommitted--very committed); (c) "How difficult do you think it will be for the employee to achieve the customer calling goal?" (very easy--very difficult); (d) "How strongly do you think the employee accepts the customer calling goal?" (very weakly--very strongly). Each item included a 7-point rating scale. These questions also served as manipulation checks. Although the scale anchors were reversed on some items to prevent subjects from just marking either the right or left answer for all questions, the positive answer was always the correct answer. All subjects' data were used in the statistical analysis with the following exceptions: Two people were dropped because their answers indicated that they obviously misunderstood the instructions, and another 8 subjects were replaced because they participated twice in the experiment.

After all subjects were given the performance feedback indicating whether the employee succeeded or failed to meet the calling goal, they assumed the role of the supervisor and rated the employee on a series of 7-point scales, again similar to the ones used by Dossett and Greenberg (1981; see Appendix B). These included the extent to which: (a) the employee succeeded/failed in meeting the calling goal; (b) the employee was very uncommitted/very committed to meeting the calling goal; (c) the customer calling performance was due to bad luck/good luck; (d) the customer calling performance was due to lack of ability/high ability; (e) the customer calling performance was due to a hard goal/an easy goal; (f) the customer calling performance was due to lack of effort/high effort; (g) the goal was strongly accepted/strongly rejected; and (h) the customer calling overall performance was very poor/excellent.

Effectiveness

In the present study more than one item was used to measure the six dependent variables used by Dossett and Greenberg (1981). Effectiveness was defined by Items 1 and 8 (Questionnaire II, Appendix B) which were designed to assess overall performance as either being successful or unsuccessful. These items were grouped together because in the Dossett and Greenberg study, the overriding determinant of the employee's overall performance effectiveness was whether or not the goal was met.

Goal Commitment

This variable, which is a measure of the subjects' perception of the employee's motivation to perform the task, was defined by

Items 2, 9, 12, 14, and 15. Webster (1978) defines commitment as an agreement or pledge to do something. The American Heritage Dictionary (1973) states that commitment has the widest application and means to pledge or obligate oneself to a task. Item 12 dealing with intention strongly implies a fixed resolution or determination to carry out the proposed task. The word specific in Item 9 has a synonym--intended for. Some synonyms for thought mentioned in Item 14 are intent, purpose, expectation, hope, and anticipation. Thus, these items should be related and, like the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, be dependent upon the success or failure of the outcome.

Luck

Although this factor was designed to measure external factors beyond the control of either the supervisor or the employee, the name luck was used for comparison with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study. Items 3 and 17 were conceptually designed to measure this. It was hoped perhaps the subjects would think the employee was lucky to have an interesting goal and unlucky to have a boring goal.

Ability

This item was defined by Items 4 and 21. Ability and value are related by the word quality. Ability implies qualities that enable an employee to accomplish something. Value is a quality considered essential and worthwhile. As a result, an employee rated high in ability should be rated as a highly valued employee.

Goal Difficulty

This variable was defined by Items 5, 11, and 13. All three items measured the subjects' perception of how difficult or easy the goal would be for the employee.

Effort

Items 6, 10, 16, and 18 define this variable. Item 6 measures effort directly. Item 10 measures effort in terms of something done through exertion. Items 16 and 18 deal with the basis or motive for putting forth the effort. Item 16 suggests a reason for working toward the goal is the basis or motive for the effort. Item 18 suggests value or usefulness as the basis or motive for putting forth effort. Consequently, these items were expected to be related.

It should be noted that questions have been raised concerning the possibility that attributions are an artifact of research methods calling for structured attribution responses (Harvey et al., 1980; Wong & Weiner, 1981). Critics have called for free-response approaches, but Elig and Frieze (1979) found that open-ended, free-response measures produced poor reliability and validity.

Chapter III

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

Degree of Participation

The data supported the assertion by Dossett and Greenberg (1981) that the three goal setting conditions can be placed on a continuum measuring the extent to which the employee had influence in setting the goal. Goal setting conditions affected subjects' ratings of the employee's influence in setting the goal, $F(2, 117) = 1725.92$, $p < .001$. Analysis of the influence manipulation check (Item 3 of Questionnaire I) indicated that employees who set their own goals were seen as having the most influence ($M = 6.9$), followed by participative ($M = 4.0$), and the assigned goal setting conditions ($M = 1.0$).

Acceptance/Rejection of Goal

An analysis of the acceptance/rejection manipulation check (Item 6 of Questionnaire I) indicated that the means in the accept ($M = 6.95$) and reject ($M = 1.00$) conditions were significantly different, $F(1, 118) = 43973.63$, $p < .001$.

Success/Failure of Goal

Similarly, an analysis of the success/failure manipulation check (Item 1 of Questionnaire II) indicated that the means in the success ($M = 6.50$) and failure ($M = 1.75$) conditions were also significantly different, $F(1, 118) = 1020.72$, $p < .001$.

Tests of Hypotheses

Effectiveness

The two questionnaire items assessing this variable were subjected to a MANOVA. Table 2 shows that the predicted main effect for success/failure was quite significant, $F(2, 107) = 1112.88$, $p < .001$. In fact, this was the sole determinant of the effectiveness rating accounting for nearly all the variance ($\omega^2 = .91$). Examination of the univariate analysis indicated that both items produced a significant F . Figure 1 indicates that the failing employee in all goal setting conditions was judged to be significantly less effective. Contrary to predictions, however, there was no significant interaction between the success/failure and accept/reject manipulations, $F(2, 107) = 2.32$, $p < .103$. Instead, the accept/reject main effect was significant, $F(2, 107) = 56.65$, $p < .001$; the failing employee in the reject condition received the lowest effectiveness ratings in all goal setting conditions, as expected, but the magnitude of the success/failure effect was not altered by the accept/reject manipulation. This appears to be due to the lower effectiveness ratings given to the employee who succeeded in the goal rejection condition. Further support for these results can be found in the ANOVA in Table 1 of Appendix C, which reports results for the summed univariate analysis of the effectiveness items. Consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, the overriding determinant of the employee's overall performance effectiveness was whether or not the goal was met. Perhaps by rejecting the goal another source of information was provided to the subjects which magnified the effect of

Table 2
 Condition Means and Standard Deviations of
 Summed Effectiveness Items

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	6.80	.35	6.80	.34	6.60	.51
Fail	2.30	.35	2.20	.48	2.10	.66
Reject						
Succeed	5.75	.86	5.80	.42	5.85	.58
Fail	1.30	.48	1.20	.33	1.55	.55

MANOVA of Effectiveness Items

	Wilks Lambda	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
GS x A/R x S/F	.99	4,214	.34	.850
A/R x S/F	.96	2,107	2.32	.103
GS x S/F	.99	4,214	.23	.920
GS x A/R	.97	4,214	.94	.439
Success/Fail (S/F)	.05	2,107	1112.88	.001
Accept/Reject (A/R)	.49	2,107	56.65	.001
Goal Set (GS)	.99	4,214	.37	.832

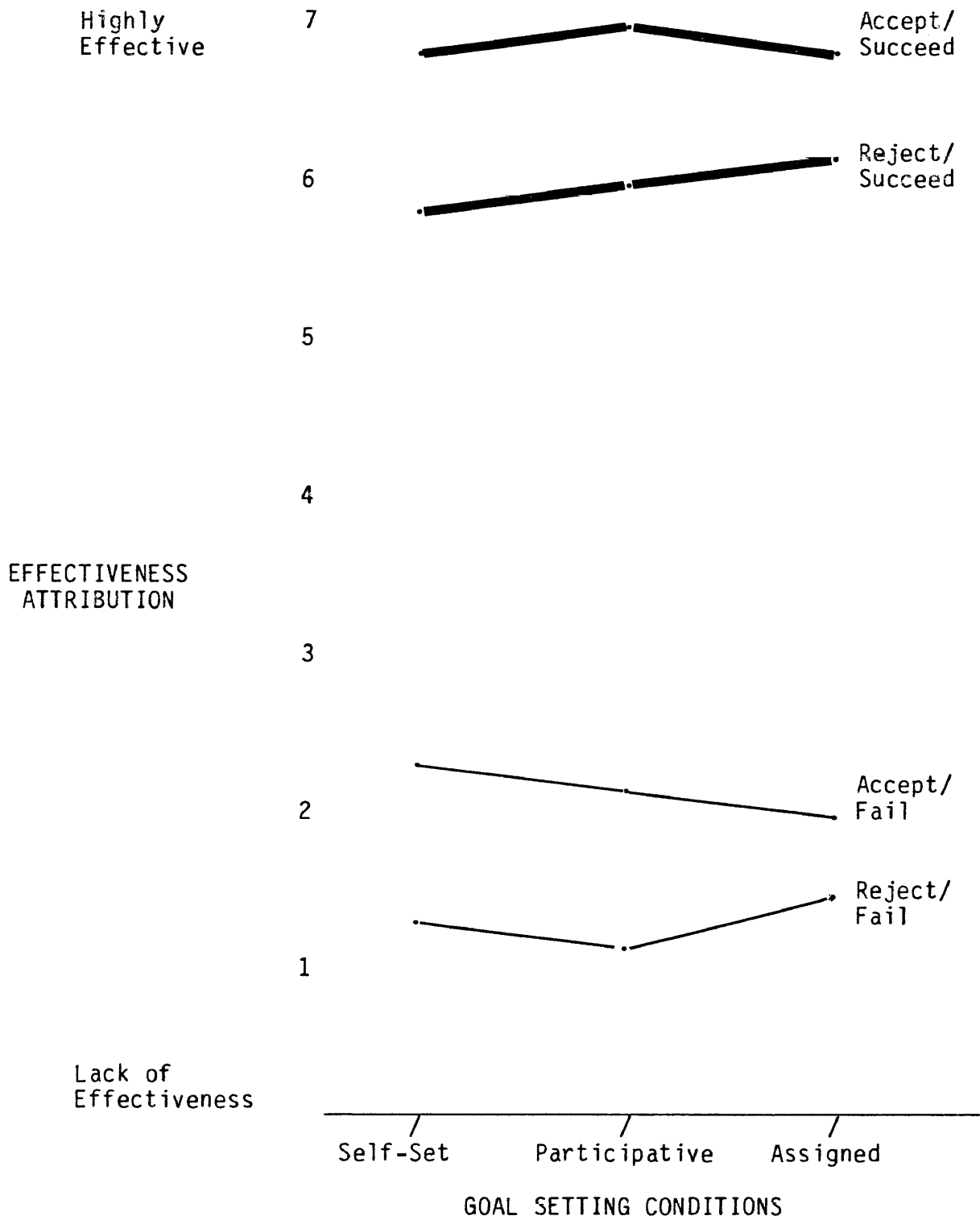


Figure 1. Effectiveness.

failure and lead to even lower effectiveness ratings in all three goal setting variations.

Goal Commitment

This variable was measured by responses to Items 2, 9, 12, 14, and 15 in Questionnaire II. The MANOVA results shown in Table 3 indicate that the predicted three-way interaction is significant, $F(10, 208) = 22.70, p < .001$. Analysis of the univariate results indicates that the F_s for all of the items were significant. Again, success versus failure in all manipulations was the largest determinant of goal commitment ratings, accounting for the majority of variance ($\omega^2 = .54$). Although dramatic differences in commitment due to success or failure were not expected in the accept conditions, Tukey A multiple comparisons indicated that differences were significant in all three goal setting conditions. Figure 2 indicates the largest effects occurred in the participative and assigned conditions as the means in Table 3 show. As expected, failure in all three goal setting conditions produced significantly lower commitment ratings, and the effects were largest in the rejection condition involving assigned goal setting. The multiple comparison analysis indicated that the mean in the assigned, reject, failure cell was significantly lower than means in all other cells. Further evidence for these results are presented in the ANOVA (Table 2 of Appendix C), which was produced by summing across the items. Consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, and with the theory of Jones and Davis (1965), the effects of failure increased as the hedonic relevance of the employee's performance increased. Furthermore, it

Table 3

Condition Means and Standard Deviations of
Summed Goal Commitment Items

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	6.80	.13	6.88	.10	4.38	.38
Fail	5.10	.11	4.80	.40	2.00	.27
Reject						
Succeed	4.50	.49	6.80	2.81	6.08	.22
Fail	3.00	.21	2.80	.25	1.18	.18

MANOVA of Goal Commitment Items

	Wilks Lambda	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
GS x A/R x S/F	.22	10,208	22.70	.001
A/R x S/F	.33	5,104	43.03	.001
GS x S/F	.17	10,208	29.45	.001
GS x A/R	.08	10,208	51.03	.001
Success/Fail (S/F)	.03	5,104	672.53	.001
Accept/Reject (A/R)	.18	5,104	94.29	.001
Goal Set (GS)	.06	10,208	63.28	.001

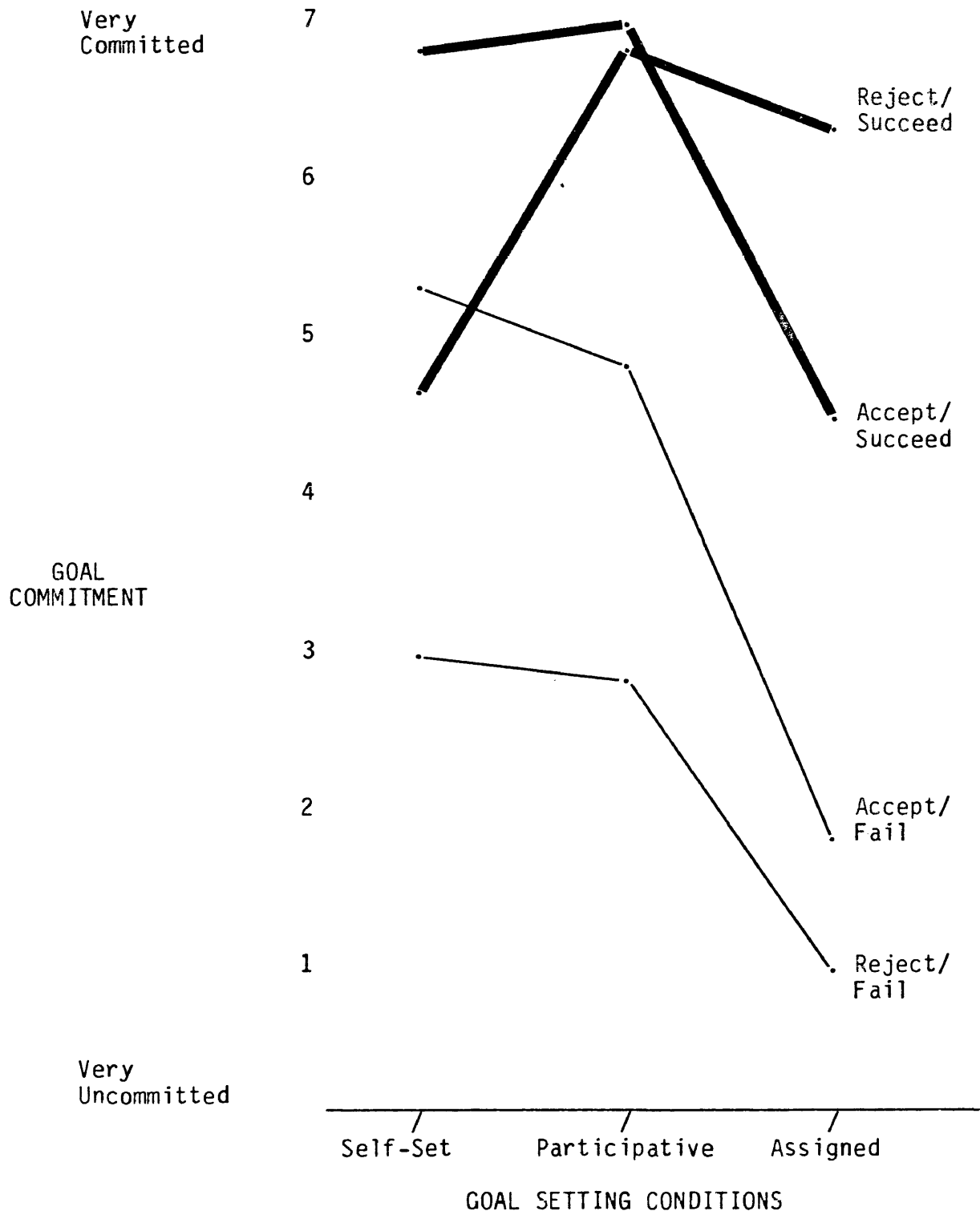


Figure 2. Goal Setting Conditions.

appears that rejection of the goal by the employee added support for an internal attribution by the supervisor.

Luck

Although this variable was originally defined by Items 3 and 17, the univariate analysis and multivariate analysis of these two items indicated somewhat different patterns of significance. Thus, it was concluded that Item 3, the original item in the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, would be the sole item reported. Table 4 shows that the predicted three-way interaction was significant, $F(2, 108) = 3.36$, $p < .04$. Analysis of the simple effects produce general support for the specific expectations stated in the hypothesis. In addition, the success versus failure goal conditions accounted for the largest proportion of variance ($\omega^2 = .58$) for all manipulations. Although large differences in ratings of luck were not expected in the success condition, Tukey A multiple comparisons indicated that differences were significant between the self-set and assigned conditions for both the accept and reject conditions as the means in Table 4 show. Figure 3 indicates that failure in all three goal setting conditions produced significantly lower ratings on the luck variable, and the effects were largest in the accept condition involving assigned goal setting. The multiple comparison analysis indicated that the mean in the assigned, accept, failure cell was significantly lower than means in all other cells. These results are consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) and Weiner et al. (1971) contention that luck is an external factor and not used by an observer to explain failures by others. In addition, the moderating effect of rejecting the goal was

Table 4
Results for Luck Using a Single Item Measure

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	5.00	1.05	5.30	.95	6.00	.67
Fail	4.50	.53	4.00	.67	1.10	.21
Reject						
Succeed	5.50	1.08	6.50	.53	6.30	.42
Fail	5.00	1.15	4.50	.53	3.00	1.15

Analysis of Variance

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	63.73	.001	.52
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	13.71	.001	.05
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	31.59	.001	.06
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	195.90	.001	.41
2-Way Interactions	5	21.68	.001	.22
GS x A/R	2	1.79	.173	.03
GS x S/F	2	52.26	.001	.21
A/R x S/F	1	.30	.583	.00
3-Way Interactions	1	3.36	.038	.01
GS x A/R x S/F	2	3.36	.038	.01
Explained	11	33.64	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			

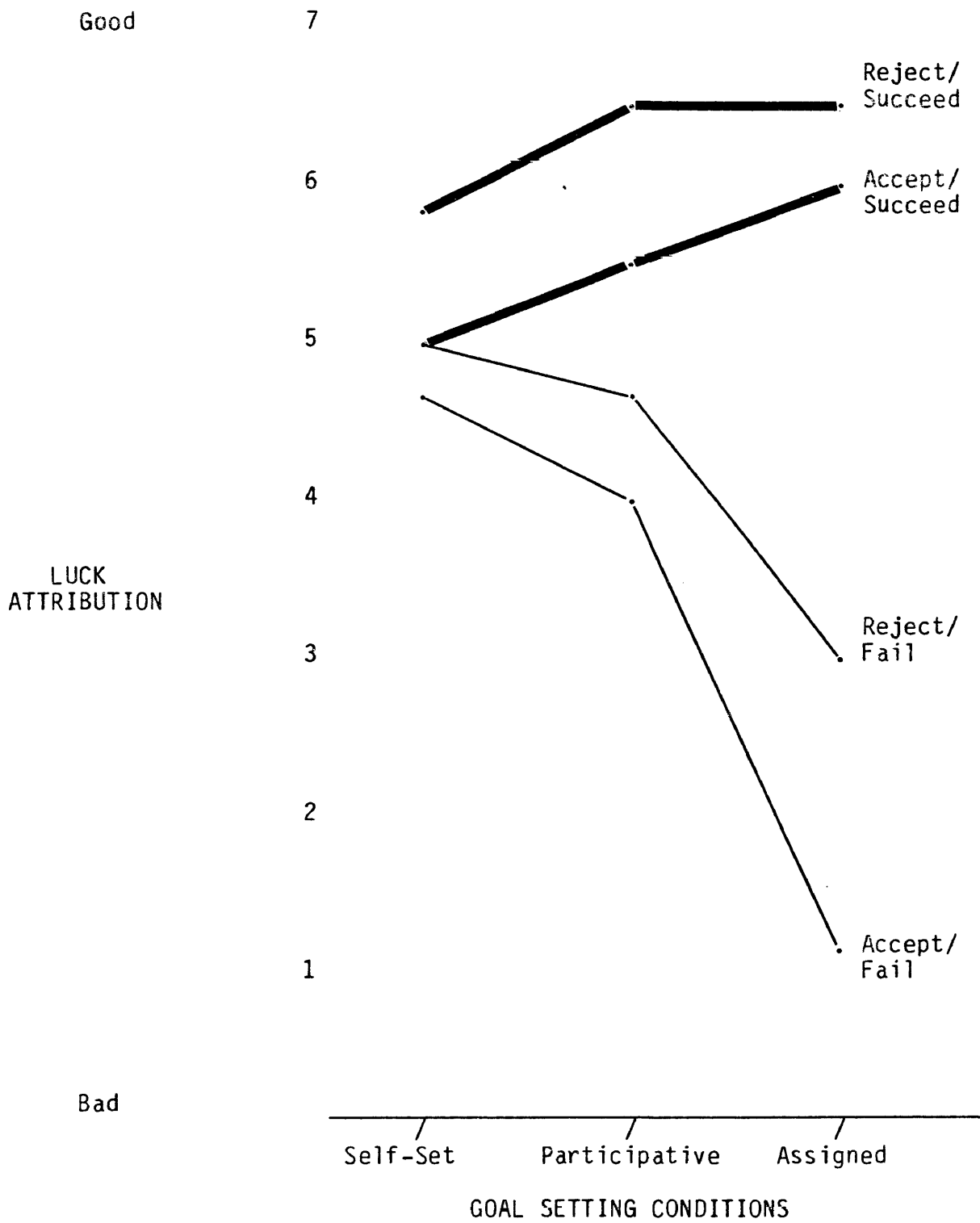


Figure 3. Luck.

supported; it is possible that the goal rejection itself was considered an internal attribution.

Ability

This variable was defined by Items 4 and 21 in Questionnaire II. The MANOVA results shown in Table 5 indicate that the three-way interaction was significant, $F(2, 214) = 3.49$, $p < .009$, and analysis of the univariate results indicate that the F for each of the items was significant. In addition, the specific expectations stated in the hypothesis were also supported through the ANOVA results presented in Table 3, Appendix C. Furthermore, success versus failure was the major determinant in perceptions of ability, accounting for the largest proportion of variance ($\omega^2 = .58$) in all manipulations. Although large differences in ability were not expected in the success condition, Tukey A multiple correlations indicated that the differences were significant between the self-set and assigned conditions for both the accept and reject conditions as the means in Table 5 show. Contrary to predictions based on the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, however, there was not a consistently significant decrease in the accept/failure conditions across the self-set, participative, and assigned conditions. Figure 4 shows that while the failing employee in the accept condition received the lowest ability rating in the assigned condition (as expected), a decrease did not occur between the self-set and participative conditions.

Goal Difficulty

This variable was measured by responses to Items 5, 11, and 13, in Questionnaire II. The MANOVA results shown in Table 6 indicate that

Table 5
 Condition Means and Standard Deviations of
 Summed Ability Items

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	4.75	.42	5.90	.57	6.90	.21
Fail	3.50	.25	4.50	.24	1.25	.26
Reject						
Succeed	5.00	.53	6.00	.67	6.75	.26
Fail	4.25	.63	4.00	.63	1.50	.41

MANOVA of Ability Items

	Wilks Lambda	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
GS x A/R x S/F	.88	4,214	3.49	.009
A/R x S/F	.99	2,107	.42	.655
GS x S/F	.16	4,214	81.09	.001
GS x A/R	.85	4,214	4.50	.002
Success/Fail (S/F)	.09	2,107	515.22	.001
Accept/Reject (A/R)	.92	2,107	4.92	.009
Goal Set (GS)	.49	4,214	23.12	.001

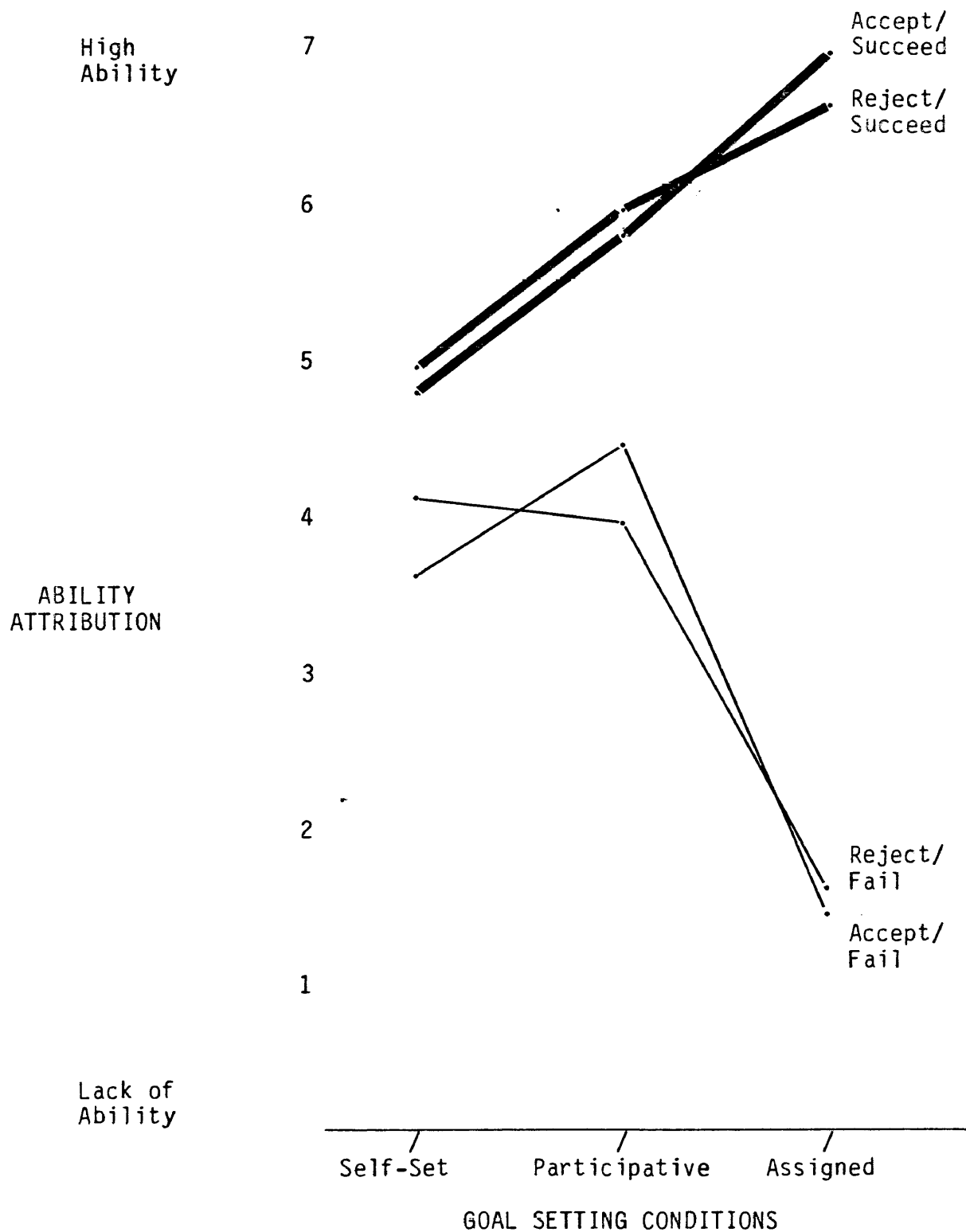


Figure 4. Ability.

Table 6
 Condition Means and Standard Deviations of
 Summed Goal Difficulty Items

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	4.43	.39	5.00	.54	6.50	.32
Fail	3.67	.27	3.67	.52	5.50	.39
Reject						
Succeed	4.00	.38	6.00	.22	6.90	.23
Fail	3.20	.45	2.00	.44	1.10	.16

MANOVA of Goal Difficulty Items

	Wilks Lambda	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>
GS x A/R x S/F	.34	6,212	25.46	.001
A/R x S/F	.24	3,106	113.31	.001
GS x S/F	.28	6,212	30.92	.001
GS x A/R	.45	6,212	17.12	.001
Success/Fail (S/F)	.09	3,106	378.90	.001
Accept/Reject (A/R)	.36	3,106	62.37	.001
Goal Set (GS)	.32	6,212	27.05	.001

the predicted three-way interaction is significant, $F(6, 212) = 25.46$, $p < .001$, and the univariate analyses indicate that the F for each of the items was significant. Further support for these results comes from the ANOVA on the average across all items as Table 4 of Appendix C shows. Once again, the success versus failure in all manipulations accounted for the largest proportion of variance ($\omega^2 = .44$) in goal difficulty ratings. As predicted and consistent with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, the success/failure differences were largest in the reject condition, and the largest distortion occurred in the assigned goal condition as the means in Figure 5 show. The Tukey A multiple comparison analysis indicated that the mean in the assigned, reject, failure cell was significantly lower than means in all other cells.

Effort

This variable was measured by responses to Items 6, 10, 16, and 18, in Questionnaire II. The MANOVA results shown in Table 7 indicate that the predicted three-way interaction is significant, $F(8, 210) = 4.62$, $p < .001$. In addition, univariate analyses indicate that the F tests for all of the items were significant. Moreover, the success versus failure in all manipulations was the largest determinant of effort ratings, accounting for the largest proportion of variance ($\omega^2 = .74$). As predicted and similar to the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, large differences between success and failure conditions were found in the accept condition as the means in Figure 6 show. Although large differences between success and failure conditions were not expected in the reject condition, Tukey A multiple

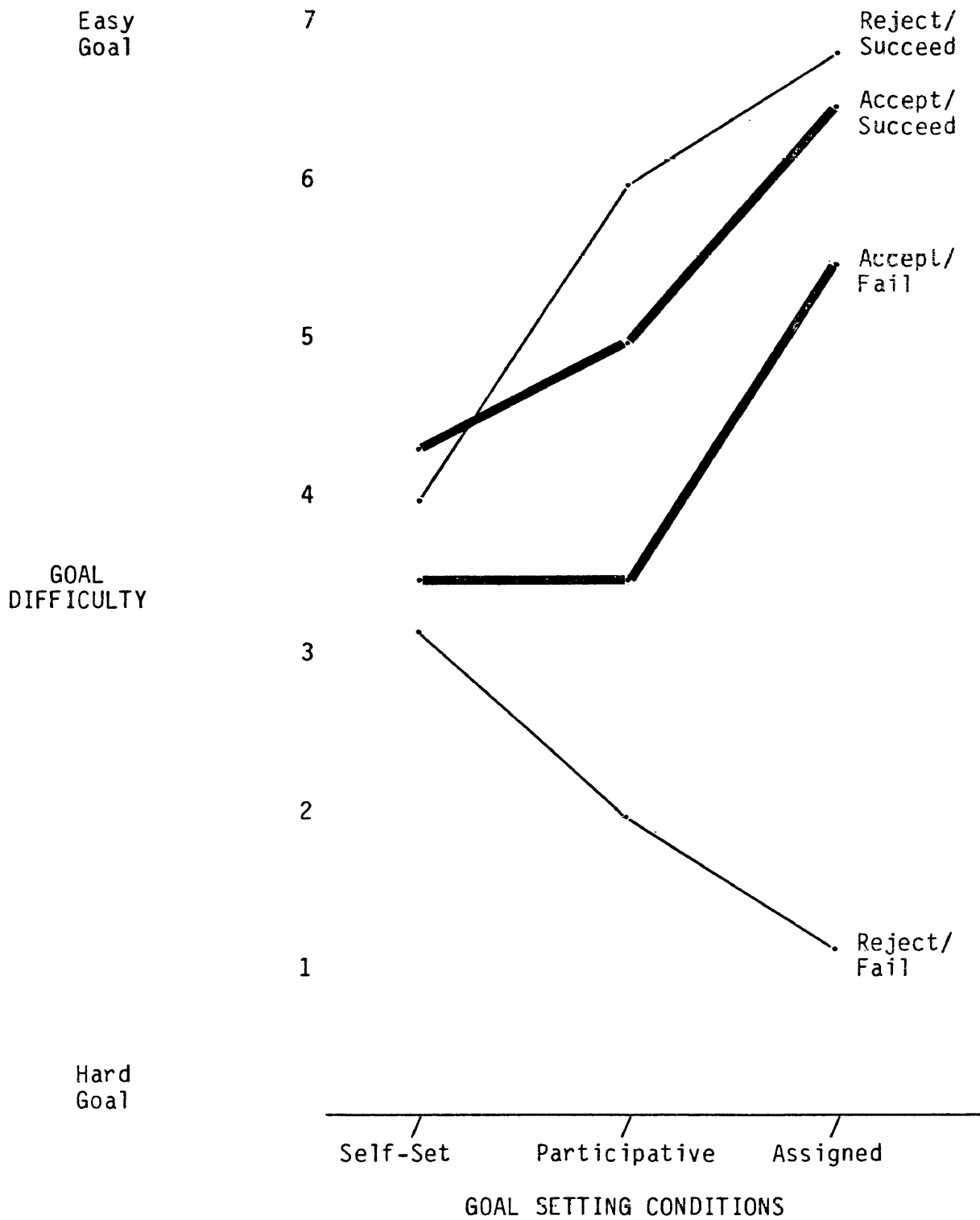


Figure 5. Goal Difficulty.

Table 7
 Condition Means and Standard Deviations of
 Summed Effort Items

	Self-Set		Participative		Assigned	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Accept						
Succeed	5.00	.60	6.00	.42	6.68	.33
Fail	4.00	.33	3.00	.33	1.33	.29
Reject						
Succeed	6.73	.25	6.65	.32	6.53	.52
Fail	4.50	.26	3.50	.24	1.98	.36

MANOVA of Effort Items

	Wilks Lambda	df	F	Significance of F
GS x A/R x S/F	.72	8,210	4.62	.001
A/R x S/F	.98	4,105	.57	.006
GS x S/F	.19	8,210	33.97	.001
GS x A/R	.79	8,210	3.35	.001
Success/Fail (S/F)	.04	4,105	613.04	.001
Accept/Reject (A/R)	.51	4,105	25.33	.001
Goal Set (GS)	.41	8,210	14.66	.001

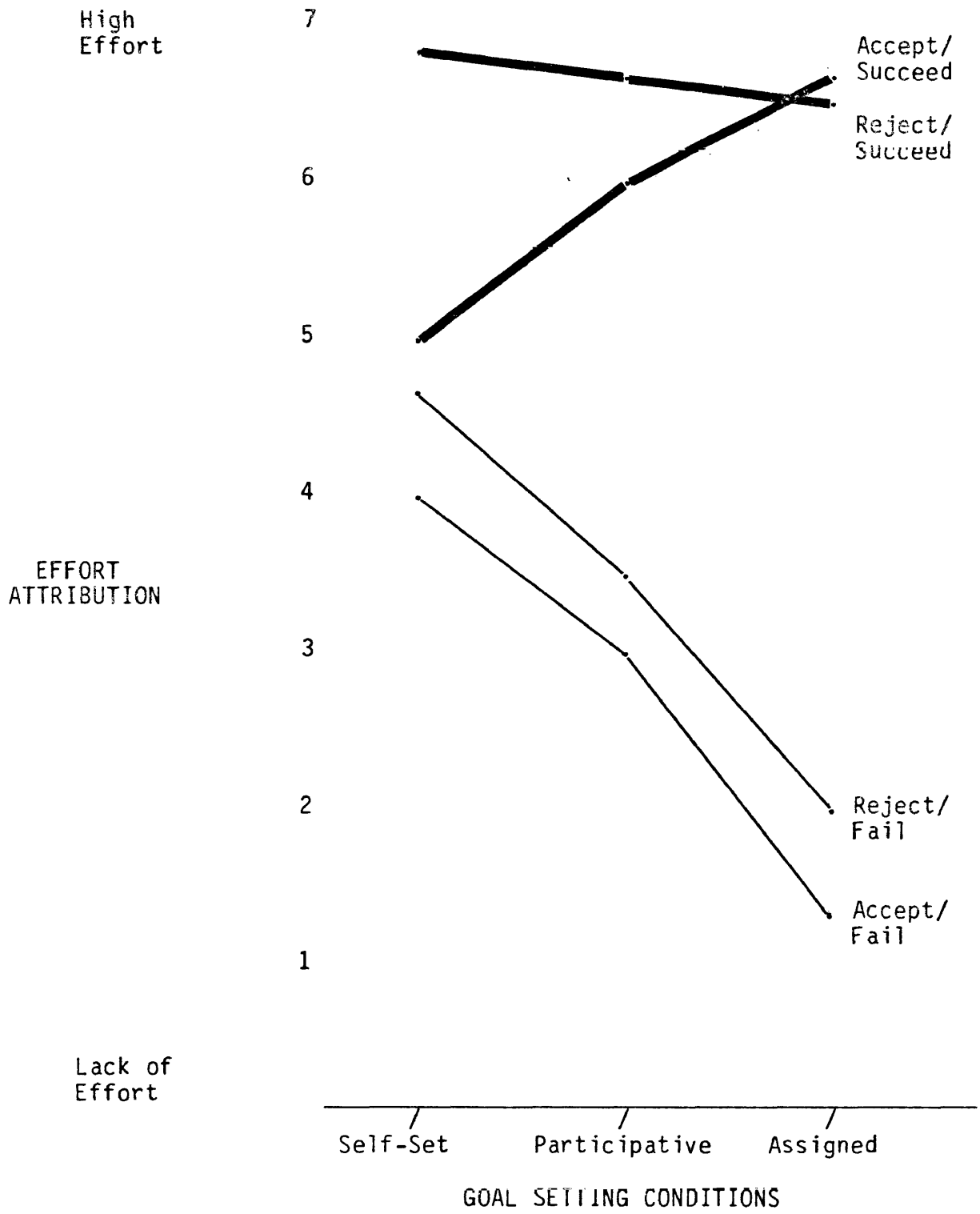


Figure 6. Effort.

comparisons indicated that these differences were significant. As predicted, failure in all three goal setting conditions produced significantly lower effort ratings, and the effects were largest in the reject condition involving assigned goal setting. Although effort ratings were not expected to decrease as amount of participation in setting the goal decreased in the accept condition, multiple comparisons indicated that these differences were significant. Further support for these results can be found in the ANOVA based on the average score across all items. Results of this ANOVA appear in Table 5 of Appendix C.

Dossett-Greenberg Comparisons

For comparison with the results obtained by Dossett and Greenberg (1981), the perceived goal commitment of the employee was measured before and after the performance manipulation. Dossett and Greenberg only looked at premeasures on goal commitment. They found there was no significant difference before the manipulation. However, postoutcome goal commitment differed significantly between success and failure conditions, $t(78) = 7.80$, $p < .001$. Their data showed that in the success condition, postoutcome goal commitment increased significantly from the preoutcome measure, $t(78) = 3.16$, $p < .01$, and in the failure condition postoutcome goal commitment decreased significantly, $t(78) = 5.59$, $p < .001$. In the present study, in addition to goal commitment, a question was included concerning goal difficulty, before and after the performance manipulation. There were no significant differences in any goal setting condition between

Table 8

Pre- and Post-Goal Difficulty and Goal Performance Measure
as a Function of Performance Outcome

Before Manipulation						
Dependent Variable	Success		Failure		<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
Goal Commitment	5.22	2.37	5.23	2.25	.024	.791
Goal Difficulty	3.72	2.01	3.97	1.89	.696	.500
After Manipulation						
Dependent Variable	Success		Failure		<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD		
Goal Commitment	6.07	1.02	3.92	1.79	8.02	.001
Goal Difficulty	5.45	1.31	3.37	1.61	7.85	.001

subjects assigned to success versus failure conditions on either of these variables before the success/failure manipulation. Refer to Table 8 for these results. The t tests demonstrate, for example, that success or failure in meeting the goal significantly affected subjects' evaluation of the employee's goal commitment. Similar to the finding of Dossett and Greenberg (1981), there was no significant difference before the manipulation; however, goal commitment ratings differed significantly between success and failure conditions, $t(118) = 8.02, p < .001$. After learning of the employee's success, attributions of goal commitment increased significantly compared to the premeasure, $t(118) = 2.53, p < .02$; in the failure condition, goal commitment decreased significantly, $t(118) = 3.50, p < .002$. In a similar way, success or failure in meeting the goal significantly affected subjects' evaluation of goal difficulty. There was no significant difference before the manipulation; however, goal difficulty ratings differed significantly between success and failure conditions, $t(118) = 7.85, p < .001$. In the success condition, the postoutcome mean increased significantly from the preoutcome mean, $t(118) = 5.60, p < .005$, indicating that the goal was seen as less difficult. In the failure condition, the postoutcome mean decreased significantly from the preoutcome mean, $t(118) = 5.93, p < .001$, indicating that the goal was seen as more difficult.

For direct comparison with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, effort, and overall performance were also analyzed as separate single items. Table 9, summarizing these results, shows that the success/fail manipulation

Table 9

Summary of Results Across Success and Failure Conditions
for Comparison with Dossett and Greenberg Single Items

Dependent Variable	Success		Failure		<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Goal Commitment	6.07	1.02	3.92	1.79	1,118	64.85	.001
Luck	5.81	1.01	3.70	1.50	1,118	81.93	.001
Ability	5.86	1.07	3.25	1.47	1,118	124.82	.001
Goal Difficulty	5.45	1.29	3.35	1.59	1,118	61.76	.001
Effort	6.22	.98	3.03	1.29	1,118	232.77	.001
Overall Performance	6.38	.78	1.93	.97	1,118	762.66	.001

had a significant effect on subjects' attributions of the employee's performance and the performance rating. Similar to the Dossett and Greenberg results, the successful employee's outcome was attributed significantly more to good luck, an easy goal, high effort, and high ability than was the unsuccessful employee's outcome. In addition, the successful employee was given higher ratings on overall performance and goal commitment than was the failing employee.

In the present study, more than one item was used to measure the five of the six dependent variables. The attempt to measure luck with more than one item was not successful. Table 10 shows that the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) effects were all replicated with these multiple item indices. Attributions were significantly affected by the success/failure manipulation in the present study.

Table 10

Summary of Results for Success and Failure Conditions
Using Multiple Item Measures

Dependent Variable	Success		Failure		df	F	sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Effectiveness	6.27	.70	1.78	.68	1,118	1265.28	.001
Goal Commitment	5.91	1.11	3.15	1.44	1,118	138.18	.001
Luck*	5.81	1.01	3.70	1.50	1,118	81.93	.001
Ability	5.88	.93	3.17	1.38	1,118	160.76	.001
Goal Difficulty	5.47	1.13	3.19	1.45	1,118	92.42	.001
Effort	6.26	.74	3.05	1.15	1,118	329.42	.001

*Uses only the single item.

Chapter IV

DISCUSSION

Attributional Effects

The results clearly support the predictions that the subjects' ratings of the employee's effectiveness, and attributions of goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, and effort would be differentially affected by goal setting conditions, performance outcomes, and whether the goal was accepted or rejected. The results suggest that when the goal was self-set by the employee, the perceived causes for success and failure were less affected by various manipulations than when the goal was set participatively or was assigned by a supervisor. Supporting the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, success or failure effects on the ratings of effectiveness and attributions as to goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, and effort increased as the supervisors' influence in setting the goal increased. This was magnified by the accept/reject manipulation. With increasingly more supervisory influence in setting the goal, as in the participative and assigned goal setting conditions, subjects gave higher effectiveness ratings, and attributed higher goal commitment, more good luck, higher ability, and greater effort, but less goal difficulty, to the successful employee. Unsuccessful employees received lower effectiveness ratings, lower attributions of ability and effort, greater bad luck, and more goal difficulty. This effect was especially noticeable in the assigned/reject goal setting condition for effectiveness, goal

commitment, and goal difficulty; in this condition the supervisor was completely responsible for the goal.

These data also support the findings of Jones and Davis (1965) that ratings of effectiveness and attributions concerning the employee's goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, and effort increased as goal setting conditions increased in hedonic relevance for the supervisor. Similar to the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) results, differences across goal setting conditions for ratings of effectiveness, goal commitment, and goal difficulty were strong for failing employees and even stronger when the goal was also rejected. In the assigned condition, the employee's failure was blamed most on lack of goal commitment, ability, and effort. Thus, failure of the employee to meet the assigned goal was attributed to internal factors; however, failure was also attributed to bad luck and to a hard goal (in the goal rejection condition). Internal and external attributions were not clearly separated. In addition, the lack of significant differences in Questionnaire I, and the significant differences in Questionnaire II in goal commitment and goal difficulty ratings between success and failure conditions suggests that the performance outcome significantly effected the ratings.

It is also relevant to evaluate the results of the present study with consideration of Cooper's (1981) sources of halo: undersampling, insufficient concreteness, insufficient rater motivation and knowledge, an engulfing. Undersampling of the employee's behavior may have been a problem because the subjects never had an opportunity to view actual employee performance. Therefore, the raters were asked to make

judgments about abstract items based on reported outcomes rather than observed behavior; they may have been relying on inferences which were not accurate and which were overly influenced by the outcome information. Due to the vague and abstract nature of the measurement instrument in this study, insufficient concreteness may also account for the impact of the success/fail effect on many of the manipulations; but these effects may well occur when performance ratings call for trait attributions similar to those used in this study. Although the students were asked to play the role of the employee's supervisor, there was no way of knowing how committed to the role or motivated they actually were. Perhaps the subjects were less committed than actual supervisors would be, which might account for some of the strong main effects between manipulations. Engulfing may have also been operating because of general impressions the subject formed due to the success versus failure outcome, and the accept versus reject manipulations. As noted above, the rater had little other information to use.

Feldman (1981) suggested that raters construct cognitive schemata and prototypes that guide their search often providing a limited view of events. Perhaps the raters in this study had an unconscious prototype for a failing employee, or for an employee that rejects a goal. If such accept/succeed or reject/fail prototypes were activated, this might account for the finding that the success conditions were not drastically affected by the manipulations; the raters may have been set to attend to and encode behaviors, and attribute causes consistent with their cognitive schemata regarding

success or failure. No direct information regarding such prototypes or schemata was collected during this study.

Results provide mixed support for extending the Miller and Ross (1975) information processing approach to observer attributions. Expected outcomes (accept/succeed and reject/fail) should have led to internal attributions. Results tend to confirm that prediction--higher effort, ability, and goal commitment attributions occurred in the accept/succeed conditions, while low ability, effort, and goal commitment attributions were made in the reject/fail conditions. These results were clearest in the assigned goal condition, although goal commitment attributions were lower than expected for the accept/succeed cases in that condition. Unfortunately, when unexpected results occurred (accept/failure and reject/succeed), internal attributions occurred in the same pattern--success produced higher attributions of effort, ability, and goal commitment, while failure produced attributions of low ability, effort, and goal commitment. Again, these results were clearest in the assigned goal condition. External attributions were also not clearly supportive of Miller and Ross. Success resulted in attributions to good luck regardless of the expected or unexpected nature of the outcomes. Amount of good luck was somewhat higher in the unexpected reject/succeed condition. Attributions to goal difficulty produced an unusual pattern of results. Unexpected outcomes should have produced "easy goal" attributions in the reject/succeed conditions and "difficult goal" attributions in the accept/fail conditions. But this pattern did not appear. The goal was perceived to be easier in the

accept/fail condition than it was in the reject/succeed condition. When expected outcomes occurred, success produced "easy goal" attributions and failure produced "hard goal" attributions. Again, these results were clearest in the assigned goal condition.

It appears that success or failure in assigned goal conditions produced the most differentiated set of attributions; whether the employee's performance was expected or unexpected had little to do with the internal versus external attribution patterns.

Attributional results in this study are consistent with other attribution theory and research. Weiner et al. (1971) suggested that ability and effort are internal attributions, and task difficulty and luck are external. Similar to the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study, actual goal difficulty remained constant in this study; as a result, subjects should attribute the cause of performance to ability and effort rather than other factors. However, the success/failure effects were largest in the reject conditions, and in the assigned goal conditions. The multiple comparison analysis indicated that the means in the assigned, reject, failure cell were significantly lower than means in nearly all other cells.

Although Weiner et al. (1971) expect the luck versus internal factors contrast, there seems to be a problem with using luck as a dependent variable. The problem is that an external attribution should involve luck or chance while an internal attribution should involve ability or effort--but a good luck/bad luck scale does not allow the subject to contrast chance versus internal factors. Whether

performance is attributed to good or bad luck is determined by success or failure--as the results clearly show.

Unpredicted Results

The overriding determinant of attributions regarding the employee was whether or not the goal was met. For instance, whether the employee succeeded appeared to be the overriding determinant in perception of goal commitment, luck, ability, goal difficulty, and effort in both the accept and reject conditions. Although little difference across goal setting conditions was expected for ability, large differences were found in both the accept and reject conditions. Perhaps the success result facilitated attributions of higher internal motivational and ability states. Subjects taking the role of supervisor may have been persuaded that the successful employee must be a good employee overall and the failing employee an overall bad employee. Thus, being successful may have provided a positive halo effect for the subjects (supervisors) when they evaluated the employee's performance.

The accept/reject manipulation revealed some other important implications for supervisory performance appraisals and causal attribution ratings. The results supported the predictions that, within the goal setting condition, supervisor ratings would be affected by whether the employee accepted or rejected the goal. When the employee failed in meeting the goal, supervisors (subjects) rated the employee who accepted the goal as performing better than the employee who failed but rejected the goal. The present data suggest

that whether a goal is accepted or rejected by an employee may play a significant role in supervisors' attributions and perhaps performance appraisal ratings. For instance, failure in all three goal setting conditions produced significantly lower goal commitment ratings, and the effects were largest in the reject condition involving assigned goal setting. In all three goal setting conditions, failure produced significantly lower ratings on the luck variable, but in this case the effects were largest in the accept condition involving an assigned goal. The expected significant decrease in ability attribution as supervisory involvement increased actually occurred in the reject/failure condition rather than the accept/failure condition. The success/failure differences for goal difficulty were smallest in the accept condition, and, although the results were similar, the means were lower for the failure conditions. The accept condition produced significantly lower effort ratings for the failure group with the largest difference occurring in the assigned goal condition; this was expected only in the reject condition.

Consequently, in this study, employee acceptance of the goal may have facilitated attributions of higher internal motivational and ability states even before information regarding the performance outcome was provided. As a result, subjects taking the role of the supervisor may have been persuaded that the employee must be an overall good employee because the goal was readily accepted as being reasonable. On the other hand, an employee finding the supervisor's goal to be unreasonable may have prompted the inference that the employee must be an overall poor employee because the goal was

rejected. Thus, the employee's acceptance of the goal may have also provided a positive halo effect for the subjects when they evaluated the employee's performance. The employee who accepted the goal received a higher performance rating and more positive causal attributions for the performance.

These findings have implications for goal setting and performance appraisal literature. The results suggest that when the goal is self-set by the employee, the perceived causes for success/failure are less clearly internal or external than when goals are set participatively or are simply assigned by a supervisor. Similarly, the effects of success or failure attribution are magnified by acceptance or rejection of the goal, especially when goals are assigned. Thus, if goals must be set participatively or assigned, the supervisors should be made aware of the effects this can have on ratings they make. A training program as suggested by Steers and Porter (1979) may be effective in this regard. Further research is needed to understand the process variables involved in the interaction between manner of goal setting, employee acceptance/rejection, and appraisal of performance.

In conclusion, research on goal setting has provided support for Locke's (1968) theory and has demonstrated the practicality of goal setting programs as a means of improving employee performance. However, research is needed for further validation and elaboration of the theory. Prior research findings suggest how goals can effect organizational effectiveness as a whole; but the present study, along with the Dossett and Greenberg (1981) study suggest that the goal

setting strategy may affect performance appraisals and supervisory attributions. These effects could have a negative impact on supervisor-employee relationships.

REFERENCES

- The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. (W. Morris, Ed.). (1973). New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Bem, D. (1972). Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (pp. 1-62). New York: Academic Press.
- Burke, R. J., & Wilcox, D. S. (1969). Characteristics of effective employee performance reviews and developmental interviews. Personnel Psychology, 22, 291-305.
- Campbell, J. P., Daft, R. L., & Hulin, C. L. (1983). What to study: Generating and developing research questions. Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications.
- Campbell, J. P., & Pritchard, R. D. (1976). Motivation theory in industrial and organizational psychology. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology (pp. 63-130). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Cascio, W. F. (1982). Applied psychology in personnel management. Reston, VA: Reston.
- Cooper, W. H. (1981). Ubiquitous halo. Psychological Bulletin, 90, 218-244.
- Cyert, R. M., & March, J. G. (1963). A behavioral theory of the firm. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Dachler, H. P., & Mobley, W. H. (1973). Construct validation of an instrumentality-expectancy-task-goal model of work motivation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 58, 397-418.

- Dossett, D. L., & Greenberg, C. I. (1981). Goal setting and performance evaluation: An attributional analysis. Academy of Management Journal, 24, 767-779.
- Elig, T. W., & Frieze, L. H. (1979). Measuring causal attributions for success and failure. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37, 621-634.
- Etzioni, A. (1964). Modern organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Feldman, J. M. (1981). Beyond attribution theory: Cognitive processes in performance appraisal. Journal of Applied Psychology, 66, 127-148.
- Fiske, D. W. (1974). The limits for the conventional science of personality. Journal of Personality, 42, 1-11.
- French, J. P., Kay, E., & Meyer, H. H. (1966). Participation and the appraisal system. Human Relations, 19, 3-19.
- Harvey, J. H., Yarkin, K. L., Lightner, J. M., & Town, J. P. (1980). Unsolicited attribution and recall of interpersonal events. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 551-568.
- Ittelson, W. H., & Kilpatrick, R. (1951). Experiments in perception. Scientific American, 185, 50-55.
- Jones, E. E., & Davis, K. E. (1965). From acts to dispositions: The attribution process in person perception. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (pp. 219-266). New York: Academic Press.
- Jones, E. E., & Gerard, H. G. (1967). Foundations of social psychology. New York: Wiley & Sons.

- Landy, F. J., Barnes-Farrell, J., & Cleveland, J. N. (1980). Perceived fairness and accuracy of performance evaluation: A follow-up. Journal of Applied Psychology, 65, 355-356.
- Landy, F. J., Barnes, J. L., & Murphy, K. R. (1978). Correlates of perceived fairness and accuracy of performance evaluation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 68, 751-754.
- Latham, G. P., & Wexley, K. N. (1982). Increasing productivity through performance appraisal. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Latham, G. P., & Yukl, G. A. (1975). A review of research on the application of goal setting in organizations. Academy of Management Journal, 18, 824-845.
- Lawrence, L. C., & Smith, P. C. (1955). Group decision and employee participation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 39, 334-337.
- Likert, R. (1967). The human organization. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Locke, E. A. (1968). Toward a theory of task performance and incentives. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 3, 157-189.
- Lowin, A. (1968). Participative decision-making: A model, literature critique and prescription for research. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 3, 68-106.
- Massie, J. L. (1965). Management theory. In J. G. March (Ed.), Handbook of organizations (pp. 69-70). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- McCormick, E. J., & Ilgen, D. R. (1980). Industrial psychology (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- McGregor, D. (1960). The human side of enterprise. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Miller, D. T., & Ross, M. (1975). Self-serving biases in the attribution of causality: Fact or fiction? Psychological Bulletin, 82, 213-225.
- Morse, J. H., & Lorsch, J. W. (1970). Beyond theory Y. Harvard Business Review, 48, 61-68.
- Muchinsky, P. M. (1983). Psychology applied to work: An introduction to industrial and organizational psychology. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.
- Nord, W. R. (Ed.). (1976). Concepts and controversy in organizational behavior (2nd ed.). Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear.
- Porter, L. W., Lawler, E. E., III, & Hackman, J. R. (1975). Behavior in organizations. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Robbins, S. P. (1979). Organizational behavior: Concepts and controversies. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rosch, E., Mervis, C. B., Gray, W. D., Johnson, D. M., & Boyes-Braem, P. (1976). Basic objects in natural categories. Cognitive Psychology, 8, 382-439.
- Simon, H. A. (1964). On the concept of organizational goal. Administrative Science Quarterly, 9, 1-22.
- Smith, P. C., & Kendall, L. M. (1963). Retranslation of expectations: An approach to the construction of unambiguous anchors for rating scales. Journal of Applied Psychology, 47, 149-155.
- Steers, R. M. (1977). Organizational effectiveness: A behavioral view. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear.

- Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). Motivation and work behavior. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Tannenbaum, R., & Schmidt, W. (1958). How to choose a leadership pattern. Harvard Business Review, 36, 95-101.
- Vroom, V. H. (1960). The effects of attitudes on perception of organizational goals. Human Relations, 13, 229-240.
- Vroom, V. H., & Yetton, P. (1973). Leadership and decision-making. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Websters Dictionary. (1978). Philippines: G. & C Merriam.
- Weiner, B. (1972). Theories of motivation: From mechanism to cognition. Chicago: Markham.
- Weiner, B. (1974). An attributional interpretation of expectancy-value theory. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology (pp. 106-107). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Weiner, B., Frieze, I., Kukla, A., Reed, L., Rest, S., & Rosenbaum, S. (1971). Perceiving causes for success and failure. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- Weiner, B., Heckhausen, H., Meyer, W. U., & Cook, R. E. (1972). Causal ascriptions and achievement motivation: A conceptual analysis of effort and reanalysis of locus of control. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 21, 239-248.
- Weiner, B., & Kukla, A. (1970). An attributional analysis of achievement motivation. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 15, 1-20.

- Wong, P. T. P., & Weiner, B. (1981). When people ask "why" questions, the heuristics of attributional search. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40, 650-663.
- Yukl, G. A. (1971). Toward a behavioral theory of leadership. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 6, 414-440.

Appendix A
Scripts

SCRIPTS

Group 1: Participative Goal

In the first tape, the employee initially set a goal which was upgraded by the supervisor and was either accepted or rejected by the employee. In addition, the employee either succeeded or failed to reach the goal. The script for this condition read as follows:

Supervisor: "Hi (name), how are you today?"

Worker: "I'm fine, thanks, how are you?"

Supervisor: "Great! (pause) As you probably know, I called you in today to discuss your performance. As a result of the training program you've just completed, I feel it's appropriate to set some goals for the next six months. I want you to concentrate most on the time you spend calling your customers (pause) and on your sales volume. Do you have any suggestions?" (shows scale to employee)

Worker: "I think I should be able to spend 25% of my time calling my customers without my sales volume dropping below 80% of standard."

Supervisor: "That's a little too low, I want to set your goal at 30% for calling customers. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly."

Worker: "That sounds reasonable to me."

Supervisor: "Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

In the rejection condition, the last lines in this interaction read as follows:

Worker: "That still seems too high for me. I don't think that's a reasonable goal. I am afraid my sales volume will drop below 80% if I have to spend too much time calling customers."

Supervisor: "Well, why don't you leave it at 30% and see how things work. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

Group 2: Self-set Goal

In the second tape, the employee set a goal which was accepted by the supervisor and either accepted or rejected by the employee. In addition, the employee either succeeded or failed the goal. The interaction proceeded as follows:

Supervisor: "Hi (name), how are you today?"

Worker: "I'm fine, thanks, how are you?"

Supervisor: "Great! (pause) As you probably know, I called you in today to discuss your performance. As a result of the training program you've just completed, I feel it's appropriate to set some goals for the next six months. I want you to concentrate most on the time you spend calling customers (pause) and on your sales volume. Do you have any suggestions?" (shows scale to employee)

Worker: "I think I should be able to spend 30% of my time calling my customers without my sales volume dropping below 80% of standard."

Supervisor: "That sounds reasonable to me. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

In the reject condition, the interaction ended as follows:

Worker: "However, I really don't want to set a firm customer calling goal because if my sales volume begins to drop unexpectedly I would want to work to raise it immediately and let the calling goal slide. So I only see these as tentative goals."

Supervisor: "Well, why don't you leave it at 30% and see how things work. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

Group 3: Assigned Goal

In the third tape, the supervisor assigned the goal which was either accepted or rejected by the employee. In addition, the employee either succeeded or failed the goal. The interaction proceeded as follows:

Supervisor: "Hi (name), how are you today?"

Worker: "I'm fine, thanks, how are you?"

Supervisor: "Great! (pause) As you probably know, I called you in today to discuss your performance. As a result of the training program you've just completed, I feel it's appropriate to set some goals for the next six months. I want you to concentrate most on the time you spend calling customers (pause) and on your sales volume--

you should be spending 30% of your time calling customers while maintaining your sales volume at 80% of standard."

Worker: "That sounds reasonable to me."

Supervisor: "Good, that should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ."
(fade out)

In the reject condition, the interaction ended as follows:

Worker: "That sounds too high for me. I don't think that's a reasonable goal. I'm afraid my sales volume will drop if I have to spend 30% of my time calling my customers."

Supervisor: "Well, why don't you leave it at 30% and see how things work. That should not be too difficult; most of our employees right out of training are able to meet these goals pretty regularly. Here are your ratings on the other job dimensions . . ." (fade out)

Appendix B

Consent Form, Questionnaires, and Demographic Variables

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study of goal setting. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to view a videotape. At the conclusion of the experimental session, the investigator will describe the purpose of the study and the anticipated findings. At this time, you will have an opportunity to discuss these issues with the investigator.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your name will not be associated in any way with the information you provide.

No significant risks are involved in this research beyond those of everyday life. The benefits for participation in this research are simply those of having an opportunity to see how a research project of this type is conducted, and to possibly learn something about an area of current research interest in psychology. We cannot promise you that you will receive any benefits other than those discussed here. Should you decide to participate in this study, your participation will satisfy one of several options available to you for obtaining extra course credit in your psychology course, as described to you by your instructor. However, you do have the option of performing alternate activities for such credit should you choose not to participate.

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your relationship with the University of Nebraska, nor your participation in any of your classes in psychology. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time. If you have any questions, please ask the investigator now. If you have any questions later, the investigator may be reached at the phone listed below.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

Date

Participant's Signature

Investigator's Signature

Janet Car
554-2580
Department of Psychology

QUESTIONNAIRE I

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

Instructions: The following statements are concerned with your opinions and views concerning the videotape. Please record all responses in the blank spaces provided. In order to protect your confidentiality, your name will not appear on this survey. In addition, all acquired data will be analyzed for relationships with no concern for individual responses. Thank you for your participation in this survey.

1. How was the employee's goal set?
 Participative set goal (employer asked for suggestions and discussed goals)
 Self-set goal (employee set own goal)
 Assigned goal (employer assigned goal with no discussion)

2. Did the employee find the goal?
 Reasonable (accepted goal)
 Unreasonable (rejected goal)

3. Compared to the supervisor, how much influence did the employee have in setting the customer calling goal?
 none _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ extreme amount

4. How committed do you think the employee is to attaining the customer calling goal?
 very uncommitted _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ very committed

5. How difficult do you think it will be for the employee to achieve the customer calling goal?
 very easy _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ very difficult

6. How strongly do you think the employee accepts the customer calling goal?
 very weakly _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ very strongly

QUESTIONNAIRE II

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

Instructions: The following statements are concerned with your opinions and views concerning the employee. Please record all responses in the blank spaces provided. .

FOR EXAMPLE: If you feel the supervisor was moderately friendly, please mark the box as shown below.

The supervisor
was friendly.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The supervisor
was not friendly.

1. The employee
succeeded in
meeting the
calling goal.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The employee
failed to meet
the calling goal.

2. The employee was
very uncommitted
to meeting the
calling goal.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The employee was
very committed to
meeting the
calling goal.

3. The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
bad luck.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
good luck.

4. The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
lack of ability.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
high ability.

5. The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
a hard goal.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
an easy goal.

6. The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
lack of effort.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The customer
calling perfor-
mance was due to
high effort.

7. The goal was
strongly
accepted.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The goal was
strongly
rejected.

8. The customer
calling overall
performance was
very poor.

___:___:___:___:___:___:___

The customer
calling overall
performance was
excellent.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| 9. The employee set a specific goal for the task. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee did not set a specific goal for the task. |
| 10. The employee tried hard to meet the assigned goal. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee did not try hard to meet the assigned goal. |
| 11. The employee found the goal set by the employer very difficult. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee found the goal set by the employer very easy. |
| 12. It was the employee's intention to meet the set goal. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | It was not the employee's intention to meet the set goal. |
| 13. The goal set by the supervisor was very hard. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The goal set by the supervisor was very easy. |
| 14. The employee had in mind a specific goal while she worked. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee did not have in mind a specific goal while she worked. |
| 15. The employee thought of the set goal as her own when working. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee did not think of the set goal as her own when working. |
| 16. There was a good reason for working toward the goal. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | There was not a good reason for working toward the goal. |
| 17. The goal was boring. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The goal was interesting. |
| 18. Meeting the goal would be valuable to the employee. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | Meeting the goal would not be valuable to the employee. |

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| 19. The supervisor knows how to handle the employee. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The supervisor does not know how to handle the employee. |
| 20. The employee respects the supervisor. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee does not respect the supervisor. |
| 21. The employee's value is recognized by the supervisor. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The employee's value is not recognized by the supervisor. |
| 22. The supervisor listens to suggestions. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The supervisor does not listen to suggestions. |
| 23. The goal is unfair. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The goal is fair. |
| 24. The supervisor set a reasonable goal. | _: _: _: _: _: _: _: | The supervisor set an unreasonable goal. |

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your marital status:
Single____ Married____ Divorced____ Widowed____
3. Number of dependents _____
4. How many years have you worked? _____
5. How many years with your present company? _____
6. How many years at your present position? _____
7. Have you ever held a supervisory position? _____
If yes, for how long? _____
8. What company do you work for? _____
9. What is your present position? _____
10. How many hours a week do you work? _____
11. Blue-collar worker____ White-collar worker____
12. Union membership? Member____ Nonmember____
13. Are you planning a career with your present company? _____
14. Are you:
Black____ White____ Oriental____ Spanish Surname____
American Indian____

Appendix C
ANOVA Tables

Table 1
 Analysis of Variance
 Results for Effectiveness Summing Across Items 1 and 8

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	541.41	.001	.95
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	.50	.951	.00
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	82.10	.001	.04
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	2083.42	.001	.91
2-Way Interactions	5	.78	.565	.00
GS x A/R	2	1.51	.225	.00
GS x S/F	2	.35	.710	.00
A/R x S/F	1	.18	.673	.00
3-Way Interactions	2	.93	.911	.00
GS x A/R x S/F	2	.93	.911	.00
Explained	11	197.25	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			

Table 2

Analysis of Variance

Results for Goal Commitment Summing Across Items 2, 9, 12, 14, 15

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	1188.71	.001	.79
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	564.17	.001	.19
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	372.15	.001	.06
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	3254.35	.001	.54
2-Way Interactions	5	205.02	.001	.17
GS x A/R	2	249.34	.001	.08
GS x S/F	2	156.53	.001	.05
A/R x S/F	1	213.34	.001	.04
3-Way Interactions	2	72.70	.001	.02
GS x A/R x S/F	2	72.70	.001	.02
Explained	11	538.67	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			

Table 3
 Analysis of Variance
 Results for Ability Summing Across Items 4 and 21

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	301.17	.001	.63
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	52.89	.001	.05
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	2.02	.158	.00
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	1096.89	.001	.58
2-Way Interactions	5	116.03	.001	.30
GS x A/R	2	6.23	.003	.01
GS x S/F	2	283.67	.001	.30
A/R x S/F	1	.37	.543	.00
3-Way Interactions	2	4.58	.012	.00
GS x A/R x S/F	2	4.58	.012	.00
Explained	11	163.07	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			

Table 4

Analysis of Variance

Results for Goal Difficulty Summing Across Items 5, 11, 13

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	367.81	.001	.59
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	101.67	.001	.08
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	179.67	.001	.07
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	1088.25	.001	.44
2-Way Interactions	5	140.03	.001	.28
GS x A/R	2	60.23	.001	.05
GS x S/F	2	126.77	.001	.10
A/R x S/F	1	326.15	.001	.13
3-Way Interactions	2	99.17	.001	.08
GS x A/R x S/F	2	99.17	.001	.08
Explained	11	215.43	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			

Table 5
 Analysis of Variance
 Results for Effort Summing Across Items 6, 10, 16, 18

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>	Significance of <u>F</u>	ω^2
Main Effects	4	619.87	.001	.81
Goal Set Conditions (GS)	2	66.91	.001	.04
Accept/Reject (A/R)	1	91.12	.001	.03
Success/Fail (S/F)	1	2254.52	.001	.74
2-Way Interactions	5	87.45	.001	.14
GS x A/R	2	13.82	.001	.01
GS x S/F	2	203.81	.001	.13
A/R x S/F	1	2.01	.160	.00
3-Way Interactions	2	18.69	.001	.01
GS x A/R x S/F	2	18.69	.001	.01
Explained	11	268.56	.001	
Residual	108			
Total	119			