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KIPP STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATIONS

by

Donna R. Gray

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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Despite decades of research on achievement goals, little research evaluates achievement goal orientations in African American students, particularly African American males. This study, therefore, examines the relationship between students' achievement goal orientations and students' academic self-efficacy. A social cognitive framework describes this association, and the relationship between students' achievement goal orientations and students' perceptions of the classroom goal structures. In addition, the relationship between students' achievement goal orientations and students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success was analyzed. Participants were eighth-grade students ($N = 70$) enrolled in a charter school in the Knowledge is Power Program. Results of the investigation revealed that the males and females do not differ in their goal orientations. The results also indicated that mastery goal orientations and academic self-efficacy are positively correlated; however, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance were not related to academic self-efficacy. Results indicated that all three goal orientations of students were positively correlated with their respective classroom goal structures. Finally, as hypothesized, regression analyses revealed that mastery goal orientations, performance-approach goal orientations, and academic self-efficacy were found to be significant predictors for students' educational aspirations and students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Study

Achievement goal theory is one of the dominant motivational frameworks currently used to explain why some students engage in learning and achievement-related behavior (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 1999; Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Although most researchers agree that achievement goal theory is important, there is an ongoing debate about how many types of achievement goals exist and which types of achievement goals are more beneficial for students to pursue. Initially, achievement goal theorists made a distinction between two types of achievement goals: mastery goals and performance goals (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Later, theorists separated performance goals into two components including performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals. As a result, achievement goals were then examined in the context of a trichotomous framework including mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goals (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Finally, Elliot and McGregor (2001) proposed a 2 x 2 framework that consisted of four goals: mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance. Current research indicates that of these four goal types, only mastery-approach, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goals are the most operative goals used in the classroom (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Thrash & Elliot, 2002). These three goal types were the focus of the current investigation.

Achievement Goals in the Classroom

The three achievement goals have different manifestations associated with different cognitions, behaviors, and outcomes. Students exhibiting mastery-approach goals are concerned with self-improvement (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Students who adopt mastery-approach goal orientations focus on developing skills and evaluating their performance through self reference standards (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). In contrast, students displaying more performance-approach goals focus on demonstrating competence in comparison to others. Finally, students manifesting performance-avoidance goals focus on avoiding looking incompetent or less able in front of others (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). Each of these goals activates different cognitions and leads to different achievement outcomes and associated affect (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot, 2005).

Consequences of Different Achievement Goals

Mastery-approach goals. Mastery-approach goals promote deeper levels of processing, (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999) cognitive engagement, and achievement (Ames, 1992). Students who adopt mastery goals report positive affect about themselves and their school (Ames & Archer, 1988; Anderman, 1999; Kaplan & Maehr, 1999). As a way to measure their performance, mastery oriented students use their prior experiences as a point of reference for future improvements (Butler, 1989).

Performance-approach goals. Performance-approach goals promote more surface level processing, such as rehearsal and memorization (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999), and as a consequence, performance-approach goals are associated with

both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes (Elliot, 1999). For example, performance-approach goals are adaptive in terms of achievement, but less adaptive in terms of affect and strategy use (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Harackiewicz et al., 1998). Performance-approach oriented students use other students as points of comparisons to measure their performance rather than focus on themselves (Butler, 1989).

Performance-avoidance goals. Performance-avoidance goals are typically associated with maladaptive outcomes. Students who display these goals become overly concerned about appearing or looking incompetent, which can lead to avoidance-related outcomes, such as self-handicapping, (Ames, 1992; Ames & Ames, 1984; Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001), procrastination, and less self-regulated learning (Elliot, 1999). Research also shows that performance-avoidance goals may evoke feelings of apprehension as students are more focused on trying to avoid looking incompetent in the presence of others (Meece, Blumenfeld, & Hoyle, 1988). These salient consequences of achievement goals have led numerous researchers to try and discern the causes of the differential adoption of achievement goals.

The Adoption of Achievement Goals

Research on achievement goal development typically involves looking for differences between students who display different goals. This research indicates that there are several factors, both individual and contextual, that influence student adoption of achievement goals.

Individual factors. Some researchers have shown that gender, ethnicity, and self-efficacy differences exist in the adoption of achievement goal orientations (Meece & Holt, 1993; Midgley et al., 2001; Nolen, 1988; Skaalvik, 1997), while other researchers

have found contrary results (Abrahamsen, Robert, & Pensgaard, 2007; McInerney, Hinkley, Dowson, & Van Etten, 1998; Phan, 2008; Turner et al., 1998). These often conflicted results are discussed next.

Gender. Some research indicates that adolescent girls are more mastery oriented than adolescent boys (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000) and that adolescent girls reported higher levels of cognitive engagement and mastery motivation than adolescent boys (Wolters & Pintrich, 1998). Wolters and Pintrich (1998) found that boys were more likely to engage in self-handicapping strategies than girls, and that this likelihood was related to the adoption of a performance-avoidance goal orientation. In another study, Brdar, Rijavec, and Loncaric (2006) found that males engaged in more work avoidance behaviors related to performance-avoidance goals than females. Alternatively, Ablard and Lipschultz (1998) and others (e.g., Meece & Holt, 1993; Niemivirta, 1996) found no significant differences in performance goal orientations between male and female students. These mixed results suggest that additional research needs to be conducted on gender differences in achievement goal adoption. The current research adds to this literature.

Ethnicity. Research on ethnic differences and the adoption of achievement goal orientations is also inconclusive. Whereas some researchers have suggested that ethnic differences exist in the adoption of achievement goal orientations, others find no differences. For example, Freeman, Gutman, and Midgley (2002) reported that African American students are more mastery oriented and pursue more extrinsic goals than their White counterparts. In addition, other researchers (e.g., Midgley et al., 2001; Middleton & Midgley, 1997) found that African American males tend to adopt more performance

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goals as compared to Caucasian students. Other researchers find no evidence of differences between ethnic groups in the adoption of achievement goals (McInerney et al., 1998). Additional research is needed as African American students continue to fare worse than White students (U. S. Department of Education, 2006). For instance, throughout elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, African American males lag behind their White counterparts (Jackson & Moore, 2006; Moore, Flowers, Guion, Zhang, & Staten, 2004). In addition, African American males are more likely to be placed in special education classes and are more likely to be classified as having a learning disability or being emotionally disturbed (Holzman, 2006; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Likewise, graduation rates for African American males are much lower compared to White males, with only 45% of African American male students graduating in 2004 compared to 70% of White males. Furthermore, African American students account for 14.7% of all dropouts, nearly twice the rate of White students (U. S. Department of Education, 2006).

Ethnicity and educational outcomes. In terms of African American student motivation, researchers found that African American students report wanting to succeed; however, because of prior experiences researchers have found that African American students may disidentify with school if they do not believe it will lead to future positive outcomes (Steele, 1997). Other research suggests that African American male students differ very little in comparison to their White male counterparts in terms of their educational aspirations; however, African American males were found to be the least likely of students to attain their educational aspirations (Bateman & Kennedy, 1997). Further, Graham (1994) contended that in order to understand what motivates African

American students more emphasis needs to focus on students' beliefs about their underachievement. The current research will add to the literature on achievement goals in an African American population and determine if other individual variables (e.g., self-efficacy) are important in the adoption of achievement goals in this group.

Academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy is considered an individual factor relating to achievement goal adoption, and can effect whether a student persists with a task in the face of difficulty (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Academic self-efficacy is the "belief in one's capability to organize and execute a course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Many researchers suggest that a student's academic self-efficacy is a good predictor of academic achievement and motivation (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Pajares, 2003; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995). Pintrich and Schunk (2002) found that when students have positive academic self-efficacy beliefs, they are more likely to work harder and persist with an activity. However, students with a low sense of academic self-efficacy are more susceptible to developing maladaptive goal patterns (Elliot & Dweck, 1988).

In terms of student adoption of achievement goals, research suggests that students' academic self-efficacy is a strong predictor of behavior and motivation (Maddux, Norton, & Stoltenberg, 1986). Indeed, some researchers find a positive association between mastery goals and academic self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Pajares et al., 2000; Skaalvik, 1997). However, the link between performance-approach goals, performance-avoidance goals, and academic self-efficacy remains unclear. Whereas some researchers report a positive association between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Bong, 2001; Skaalvik, 1997), other

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researchers report no relationship between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Turner et al., 1998). For instance, Bong (2001) found that performance-approach goals were positively correlated with academic self-efficacy, task value, and task goal orientations. However, Turner et al. (1998) reported that performance goals have an indirect negative effect on students' academic self-efficacy after students experience failure. Finally, Roeser et al. (1996) found performance-approach goals were not predictive of academic self-efficacy. Given these mixed results, it remains unclear how performance-approach goals relate to patterns of learning. Similarly, the relationship between performance-avoidance goals and academic self-efficacy remains unclear. Some researchers report performance-avoidance goals and academic self-efficacy as negatively related (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Elliot & Church, 1997), and others report no significant relationship between the variables (Skaalvik, 1997). The current investigation explored the relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and goal adoption. In addition, it explored the association between students' goal patterns and individual and contextual factors.

Contextual Factors. At the contextual level, researchers have shown that the manner in which the classroom is structured has a strong influence on student adoption of achievement goals. How teachers structure assignments and respond to students in the classroom can affect how students perceive the importance of learning (Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992).

Classroom goal structures. Some theorists stress how various structures in the classroom environment may influence students' perceptions of the classroom goal structures (Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992; Meece, 1991). Classroom goal structure

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refs to the way teachers establish routines, set up rules, assign tasks, and evaluate students (Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992; Meece, 1991). Classroom goal structure is often categorized into six dimensions: task design, distribution of authority, recognition of students, grouping arrangements, evaluation practices, and time allocation (Ames, 1992; Epstein, 1988). When teachers introduce these dynamics into the classroom, they are better able to promote a mastery or performance-approach to learning (Ames, 1992; Epstein, 1988). For instance, when teachers provide students with a variety of learning tasks, place emphasis on autonomy, and praise students for improvement, they are better able to promote a mastery structured environment (Ames, 1992; Epstein, 1988). In contrast, a performance-oriented classroom structure is promoted when competition is encouraged among students (Ames, 1992; Epstein, 1988).

How students perceive their teachers organize the classroom in terms of learning activities, task design, distribution of authority, recognition of students, grouping arrangements, evaluation practices, and allocation of time are all found to impact student adoption of achievement goals (Ames, 1992; Epstein, 1988). Anderman (2003) found that when students report feeling respected and welcomed in their school environment, they are more likely to perceive the learning environment as supporting a mastery approach, and they are more likely to adopt a mastery orientation. Additionally, Anderman and Anderman (1999) found that when students do not perceive the classroom environment as being a warm and safe place, then students become more focused on external factors, such as social comparison and competition which makes performance goal orientations more prevalent in the classroom.

School relevance and aspirations. Teachers or the way teachers engage students in the learning process can impact how a student perceives the relevance of school for their future success. In order for students to excel in school, they must see the relevance or usefulness of school and believe that they possess the skills needed to achieve in order to fully engage in the learning process. Researchers advocate that teachers can make learning more relevant by relating the coursework towards students' needs, experiences, and goals (McCombs & Pope, 1994; Wlodkowski & James, 1990). Hootstein (1994) suggests that educators should allow students to make choices about the type of assignment they complete and allow students to demonstrate what they have learned. These kinds of choices are believed to increase students' interest and involvement in the learning process (Hootstein, 1994; McCombs & Pope, 1994; Wlodkowski & James, 1990).

Consequences of Contextual Factors

In general, researchers found that students tend to embrace the achievement goal constructs emphasized in the classroom. For instance, Ames and Archer (1988) found that when students perceived their class as emphasizing mastery goals, they reported using more learning strategies, preferred tasks that offered challenge, and had a more positive attitude toward their class. In the same study, Ames and Archer found that when students perceived the classroom as emphasizing performance-avoidance goals, they were found to be negatively related to attitudes and self perceptions of ability. Others have found similar patterns, noting that students tend to embrace similar goal orientations that they perceive in their classroom (e.g., Wolters, 2004; Young, 1997). However, not all students perceive the classroom in the same manner. Further research is warranted to

examine how individual students perceive and give meaning to their classroom experiences. The current investigation adds to this literature in an African American sample.

Theoretical Framework

According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), there are three components that work interactively to influence student motivation: cognitive/personal factors, environmental factors, and behavior factors. Each of these components, according to the social cognitive theory, influences the other in a reciprocal manner. For instance, a student's cognition can affect how a student perceives their ability. The environment, such as a classroom environment or the way a classroom is structured, can influence a student's behavior. In like manner, a student's behavior can influence the environment. For example, the way in which the instructional environment is structured can affect how a student learns, and the way a student performs can affect how the instructor responds to the student's behavior. The instructor can decide to alter the instructional approach to meet the student's level of understanding or continue to teach in the same manner.

In essence, student behavior influences the environment and student cognition by way of performance. To illustrate this point, consider what occurs when a student persists with a task and begins to show improvement. The student may become more confident and begin to perceive their ability more favorably. The actions performed or the behavior influenced how the student perceived their ability. When a student perceives their ability more favorably, they may be willing to spend more time and effort learning new material. Subsequently, student cognition may begin to affect the student's behavior.

Cognitions can not only affect how students perceive their abilities but also how they engage in learning. According to social cognitive theory, the behaviors exhibited by students can affect the students' perception of their ability and how educators respond to the students' behaviors. Graham (1994) contended that in order to understand what motivates African American students, educators need to examine students' beliefs and emotions. This, according to Graham, includes examining students' beliefs and expectations for success. Graham (1994) further contended that because of the disproportionate number of African American students in special education and remedial classes, more emphasis needs to focus on students' thoughts about their underachievement.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the current study is to examine the achievement goal orientations of African American students. One objective is to determine if gender differences exists amongst African American students on their mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Prior research suggests that gender differences may develop as students reach adolescence and begin to evaluate who they are (Shim, Ryan, & Anderson, 2008). Using *t*-test analysis, Shim and colleagues (2008) found that African American males adopt more performance-approach goals as compared to other students.

Another objective of the current research is to examine whether a relationship exists amongst African American students' goal orientations (mastery, performance-approach, performance-avoidance) and their reported academic self-efficacy. In prior studies, researchers found a positive association between mastery goals and academic-

self efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Pajares et al., 2000; Skaalvik, 1997). However, the link between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy remains unclear. Some researchers found a positive association between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Bong, 2001; Pajares et al., 2000; Skaalvik, 1997), whereas others found no relation between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997). This is tested in the present study through correlational analysis.

Another purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between students' goal orientations and their perceptions of classroom goal structures. Although prior research has demonstrated that students often adopt the goal patterns that are reflected in the classroom, because of the many educational disparities that many African American male students experience in the learning environment, this study sought to add to the literature in an African American population.

Another purpose of the current investigation is to determine the predictive link between the relevance of school for future success on mastery goal orientations, performance-approach goal orientations, and academic self-efficacy in an African American population. This is tested in the present study through regression analysis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This empirical study employed a quantitative correlational and predictive research methodology to data analysis in order to answer the following research questions.

Research Question 1. Among eighth grade African American students, are there gender differences between students' goal orientations?

Hypothesis 1a. It is hypothesized that eighth grade African American male and female students will differ in their rates of self-reported mastery goals.

Hypothesis 1b. It is hypothesized that eighth grade African American male and female students will differ in their rates of self-reported performance-approach goals.

Hypothesis 1c. It is hypothesized that eighth grade African American male and female students will differ in their rates of self-reported performance-avoidance goals.

Research Question 2. Among eighth grade African American students, is there a relationship between students' achievement goal orientation and their academic self-efficacy?

Hypothesis 2a. It is hypothesized that African American students who adopt a high mastery goal orientation will have high academic self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2b. It is hypothesized that African American students who adopt a high performance-approach goal orientation will have high academic self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2c. It is hypothesized that African American students who adopt a high performance-avoidance goal orientation will have no significant relationship with their academic self-efficacy.

Research Question 3. Among African American students, is there a relationship between students' perceptions of the classroom goal structures and their goal affiliations?

Hypothesis 3. It is hypothesized that students' perceptions of the classroom goal structures would be related to their goal orientations.

Research Question 4. Is there a predictive relationship amongst mastery goals, performance-approach goals, academic self-efficacy, and students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success?

Hypothesis 4. It is hypothesized that students' mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy would be a positive predictor for students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success.

Research Question 5. Is there a predictive relationship amongst mastery goals, performance-approach goals, academic self-efficacy, and students' educational aspirations?

Hypothesis 5. It was hypothesized that students' mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy would be a positive predictor of students' educational aspirations.

Summary

Research in achievement goal theory is essential because it explains the reasons why students engage in achievement behaviors (Ames, 1992: Dweck; 1986; Elliot, 1999). More specifically, it explains why some students adopt more adaptive coping responses to learning while others adopt less effective coping strategies. Using achievement goal framework researchers are able to predict which students will adopt certain achievement goals and the associated consequences of goals. Researchers have found that a large number of students, particularly African American male students, adopt goal patterns that often result in a number of maladaptive outcomes that can lead to a decline in academic

motivation and engagement in the learning process. As a consequence, understanding how individual and contextual factors influence student goal adoption is critical to providing a deeper understanding about the role of gender, ethnicity, and the classroom context on student behavior.

The literature review provided an overview on achievement goal adoption, consequences of goal orientations, and the relationship between students' academic self-efficacy, classroom goal structures, and beliefs about the relevance of school for future success. The purpose of the current study is to investigate African American students' goal orientations using a social cognitive framework to provide information on how cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors influence students' achievement behavior. The methodology proposed for the current investigation is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of how the research was conducted and what instruments and procedures were utilized to examine the achievement goal orientations of African American students. One purpose of the current investigation was to determine if gender differences existed amongst African American students in regard to their achievement goal orientations. Another purpose was to determine whether a relationship existed amongst African American students' goal orientations and their academic efficacy. In prior studies, researchers found a positive association between mastery goals and academic efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Pajares et al., 2000; Skaalvik, 1997). However, the link between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy remains unclear. Some researchers found a positive association between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Bong, 2001; Pajares et al., 2000; Skaalvik, 1997), whereas others found no relation between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997).

Participants

Participants for the present study were eighth-grade students ($N = 70$) enrolled in a charter school from the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP). The KIPP school is a voluntary college preparatory school. Students are not assigned or required to attend. However, if a student decides to attend a KIPP school, they are required to sign a written commitment, agreeing to uphold KIPP's commitment to excellence and to study and work hard. Parents and educators are also required to sign a written commitment to uphold high standards of excellence. KIPP is an open-enrollment charter school where

incoming fifth graders are admitted regardless of their test scores. KIPP has extended school hours, an extended school year, and numerous opportunities for students to engage in diverse extra curricular experiences to enhance social development. The KIPP program has more control over the school budget and personnel hiring. This allows KIPP administrators to have more control to make changes in its curriculum and fiscal decisions. Students who attend a KIPP school can continue their education throughout middle school before having to enroll in another school setting.

The sample for this study comprised predominantly of African Americans (92.9%); other participants included Caucasians (1.4%), Americans of Hispanic/Latino origin (1.4%), and "other" (4.3%) who attend a KIPP school. Of the participants, 45.7% lived in single-parent households, and 50% lived in two-parent households; the remaining participants (4.3%) lived with relatives or friends. The reported mean age of participants was 13.14 years, ranging in age from 13 years to 15 years ($SD = 0.46$ months). Over 80% of KIPP students qualify for federal free and reduced-price meal programs.

Measures

  The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (PALS). The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (PALS) (Midgley et al., 2000) was used to explore the differing associations that exist and contribute to the formation of achievement goals and to identify the type of achievement goals that are most operative among African American students. The three types of achievement goals used in this study were mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. All of the reliability scores below are based on Midgley et al. (2000).

Mastery goal orientation. Mastery goal orientation was measured using a 5-item scale (Midgley et al., 2000). A sample question of a mastery goal orientation is "I do the work in class because I like to understand what I am learning." Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher responses indicating a mastery goal orientation. Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an alpha level, $\alpha = 0.77$.

Performance-Approach goal orientation. Performance-approach goal orientation was measured using a 5-item scale (Midgley et al., 2000). This scale included such items as "I do the work in class because I want to show that I know more than my classmates." Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher values indicating adoption of a performance-approach goal. Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an alpha level, $\alpha = 0.81$.

Performance-Avoidance goal orientation. Performance-avoidance goal orientation was measured using a 4-item scale (Midgley et al., 2000). This scale contained items that referred to how students would feel or what students would want when doing class work, for example, "I do the work in class because I do not want others to think I know less than they do." Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher responses indicating an adoption of a performance-avoidance goal orientation. Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an alpha of level, $\alpha = 0.68$.

Academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy was measured using a 5-item scale. A sample question of academic efficacy is "I'm certain I can figure out how to do the most difficult class work." Responses were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being "not at all true" and 5 being "very true." Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an alpha level, $\alpha = $ of 0.74, with higher responses indicating higher academic self-efficacy.

Perception of classroom goal structures. Perception of classroom goal structures refers to students' perceptions of the goals that their teachers emphasize in the classroom. A sample question of perceptions of classroom goal structures is "In our class, really understanding the material is the main goal." A 2-item scale was used to measure students' perceptions of the goals that their teacher emphasize in the classroom, as identified by Midgley et al. (2000). Classroom mastery goal structure used a 6-item scale, $\alpha = 0.75$ and classroom performance-approach goal structure used a 3-item scale, $\alpha = 0.75$.

Relevance of school for future success. Relevance of school for future success was measured using a 6-item scale. A sample question of skepticism of school relevance is "My chances of succeeding later in life don't depend on doing well in school." Each item on the PALS was rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being "not at all true" and 5 being "very true." Six of the items regarding skepticism about school relevance were reverse-scored so that all of the items on the PALS are positively correlated. For instance, the above sample question would be changed to read "My chances of succeeding later in life do depend on doing well in school." Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an alpha level, $\alpha = $ of 0.75.

Educational aspirations. To measure students' educational aspirations, participants were asked to rate the highest level of education they expected to complete. The scale ranged from 1 to 6, with 1 being less than high school, 2 being some high school completed or GED, 3 being trade or vocational school, 4 being some college or Associate's degree, 5 being college completion, and 6 being graduate school (M.A.,

Ph.D., M.D.). The scales ranged from 1 to 6 to gauge students' commitment to pursue higher education.

Procedure

Once approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at The University of Memphis, participants were recruited during class and provided with a survey package. Participants were administered informed consent forms. Data was collected during the fall semester of 2009. Participation was voluntary and confidential. Participants received no economic or other incentives for participation. During class time, teachers administered the survey and read the instructions to participants. Participants were told the overall purpose of the study. Participants were further told that the survey is not a test and to be as honest as possible in their responses. To ensure that the participants understood the question, it was explained that similar sounding questions would be asked in order to measure the information accurately and to understand what is being said. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that no one at home or at school would see their responses. Data was collected during participants' homeroom class. The procedure took approximately 30 minutes. One participant's survey was removed due to the same answer being marked throughout the survey. After all data collection procedures had been administered, the data was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.

Data Analysis Plan

Scores on the questionnaire were entered and tabulated into SPSS. Descriptive analyses consisting of frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the study variables were conducted. Inferential analyses consisted of *t*-tests, correlations, and multiple regression analyses.

In order to address Research Question 1, a series of *t*-tests were conducted to determine if gender differences between goal orientations existed. For Research Questions 2 and 3, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine value, direction, and significance of relationships between achievement goal orientation scores, academic self-efficacy, student's perceptions of classroom goal structures, and goal affiliation scores.

In order to address Research Questions 4 and 5, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore the link between (1) the relevance of school for future success, (2) mastery goals orientations, (3) performance-approach goal orientations, and (4) academic efficacy. The dependent variable in Research Question 4 was the relevance of school for future success, and educational aspirations in Research Question 5. The independent variables were mastery goal orientations, performance-approach goal orientations, and academic efficacy. The three predictor variables were entered simultaneously into both analyses for research questions four and five.

In conclusion, this study employed a quantitative research methodology to data analysis. In addition, it explored the goal affiliations of African American students to understand why some students adopt more adaptive goal orientations than others.

.   **CHAPTER 3: RESULTS**

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of the current study was to examine achievement goal orientations in an African American population. One objective was to determine if there are differences between the genders on their mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Another objective was to examine whether a relationship exists between goal orientation (mastery, performance-approach, performance-avoidance) and reported academic self-efficacy. Another purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' goal orientations and their perceptions of classroom goal structures. Although prior research has demonstrated that students often adopt the goal patterns that are reflected in the classroom, because of many educational disparities that many African American male students experience in the learning environment, this study sought to add to the literature in an African American population. A final objective of the study was to determine if there was a predictive link between the relevance of school for future success variable on mastery goal orientations, performance-approach goal orientations, and academic efficacy in a new population of African American eighth-grade students.

Information on Study Participants

Participants in this study were 70 students, (31 males and 39 females), ranging in age from 13 to 15 years old with a mean age of 13.14 years old. Each participant was asked to give a self report about their future educational aspirations (Table 1). The majority of participants reported that they planned to complete college and attend

graduate school. The lower percentage of students reported that they planned to complete less than high school (7.2%) or high school (7.2%).

Table 1
Participants Educational Goal Aspirations

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than high school	5	7.2	7.2
High School completion/GED/Certificate	5	7.2	14.5
Some College/Associates	8	11.6	26.1
Complete College	24	34.8	60.9
Graduates School (MA, Phd, MD)	27	39.1	100.0

The participants were also asked to report their future occupational goals and aspirations (Table 2). The largest percentage of subjects reported that they aspired to be in business as a manager or owner. The lowest percentage of subjects reported that they aspired to be a laborer, farmer, housewife (1.4%), and service worker (1.4%).

Table 2
Participants Occupational Aspirations

Occupational Aspirations	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Laborer, farmer or housewife	1	1.4	1.4
Service Worker	1	1.4	2.9
Craftsperson, military, police, security	5	7.2	10.1
Technician/semi-professional	2	2.9	13.0
Business, manager, business owner	22	31.9	44.9
Administrator/semi-professional	3	4.3	49.3
High executive professional	14	20.3	69.6
Other	21	30.4	100.0

Descriptive Analyses

The means and standard deviations of goal orientation variables, classroom goal

structures, school relevance and efficacy variables are presented in Table 3, and a

crosstabs frequency chart of goal orientations by gender was calculated and is presented

in Table 4.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Goal Orientations, Classroom Goal Structures, School Relevance, and Academic Efficacy

Study Variable	M	SD	
School relevance	1.90	0.883	
Mastery goals	4.61	0.412	
Performance-approach goals	3.04	1.019	
Performance-avoidance goals	2.77	1.076	
Academic efficacy	4.3	0.560	
Classroom Mastery	4.3	.599	
Classroom performance-approach	3.61	.870	

Table 4

Crosstabs Frequencies of Goal Orientations by Gender

	Male	Female
Mastery goals	30	39
Performance-approach goals	30	39
Performance-avoidance goals	30	39
Total	90	117

Main Analyses

The current investigation posed five research questions. *T*-test, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to address the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1. Research question 1 asked if there are significant gender differences between male and female students on goal orientations in African American eighth-grade students. To answer this question, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were performed to determine if there were statistically significant differences between

male and females on the three goal orientations. In this analysis, no significant

differences were found between male and female students' employment of mastery goals,

$t(67) = 0.771$, $p < .44$; performance-approach goals, $t(67) = 1.77$, $p < .08$; or performance-

avoidance goal orientations, $t(67) = 0.85$, $p < .40$ (Table 5).

Table 5
Independent Samples t-Test

Gender	N	Mean	*t*	*p*
Mastery Goal				
Male 30		4.65	.771	.444
Female 39		4.57	.786	.435
Performance Approach				
Male 30		3.28	1.765	.082
Female 39		2.85	1.795	.077
Performance Avoidance				
Male 30		2.88	.852	.397
Female 39		2.62	.852	.392

Research Question 2. Research question 2 asked if there was a relationship

between students' achievement goal orientations and their academic self-efficacy. In

order to address question 2, a Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was

conducted. In terms of the relationship between achievement goals and academic self-

efficacy, the correlation analysis showed mastery goal orientations to be positively and

significantly associated with academic self-efficacy $r(67) = .38$, $p < .01$ (Table 6),

meaning that students who had a high mastery goal orientation tended to have high

academic self-efficacy. Cohen's (1988) guidelines show the effect size of $r = .38$ as being medium or typical.

No statistically significant correlation was found between performance-approach goals and academic self-efficacy $r(67) = .23, p > .05$ indicating that performance-approach goal score and academic self-efficacy ratings are not related. Similarly, no statistically significant correlation was found between performance-avoidance goals and academic self-efficacy $r(67) = .12, p < .34$, indicating that performance-avoidance goal score and academic self-efficacy ratings are not related (Table 6).

Table 6
Correlations among Study Variables

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Mastery goals								
2. Perf. approach	.08							
3. Perf. avoidance	.06	.77						
4. Academic efficacy	.38	.23	.12					
5. School relevance	.35	.10	-.03	.30				
6. Classroom Mastery	.67	.23	.23	.28	.28			
7. Classroom Perf/appr.	.06	.32	.32	.038	.04	.25		
8. Educ. Aspirations.	.29	-0.22	-.12	.05	-.02	.23	-.06	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 3. Research question 3 asked if there was a relationship between students' perceptions of the classroom goal structures and their adoption of a mastery, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance goal orientation. The data revealed that mastery goal orientations were shown to be positively associated with classroom mastery goal structures $r(67) = .67$, $p < .01$, meaning that students who adopted a mastery approach to learning also perceived the classroom as being more mastery-oriented. The effect size of $r = .67$ is considered large.

A performance-approach goal orientation and classroom performance-approach goal structures were also found to be positively correlated and showed a medium effect size, $r(67) = .32$, $p < .01$. The relationship between performance-approach goal orientations and performance-avoidance goal orientations revealed a positive correlation $r(67) = .77$, $p < .01$ and a large effect size (Table 6).

Research Question 4. Research question 4 asked if mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy were the best predictors of students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success. In order to address this question a regression analysis was conducted. Results indicated that as hypothesized when the combination of variables to predict students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success included mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy, then $F(3, 65) = 4.05$, $p < .05$.

However, a very high multicollinearity was found when conducting the regression analysis and performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals showed high intercorrelation (.77) and shared substantial covariance with the dependent variable. As a result, the performance-avoidance goal was removed from the regression.

The beta coefficients are presented in Table 7. Note that mastery goals

significantly predict expectations for success when all three variables (mastery goals,

performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy) are included. The adjusted R^2

value was 0.119. This indicates that approximately 12% of the variance for expectations

for success was accounted for in the model. According to Cohen (1988), this is a small

effect size.

Table 7
Multiple Regression Model on School Relevance

Variable	B	SE B	*Beta*	Sig.
School relevance	0.668	2.074	0.312	.748
Mastery goals	1.147	0.457	0.312	.015*
Performance-approach goals	-0.358	0.176	-0.24	.046*
Academic efficacy	-0.023	0.344	-0.008	.947

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Research Question 5. Research question 5 asked if mastery goals, performance-

approach goals, and academic self-efficacy were the best predictors for educational

aspirations. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the best

predictors of educational aspirations. When the combination of independent variables to

predict educational aspirations included mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and

academic self- efficacy, then $F(65, 68) = 3.58$, $p < .05$.

The beta coefficients are presented in Table 8. The results revealed, that as

hypothesized, mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy

significantly predicted educational aspirations when all three variables are included. The

adjusted R^2 value was 0.102. This indicates that approximately 10% of the variance in

educational aspirations was accounted for by the model. According to Cohen (1988), this is a small effect size.

Table 8
Multiple Regression Model on Educational Aspirations

Variable	*B*	SE *B*	*Beta*	Sig
Educational aspirations	-0.009	1.197		.994
Mastery goals	0.604	0.263	0.282	.025*
Performance-approach goals	0.027	0.101	0.031	.795
Academic efficacy	0.29	0.198	0.184	.149

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

Summary

Data from 70 African American eighth-grade students were analyzed to investigate the differences between the genders on their mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. The results indicate that contrary to the hypothesis, there are no gender differences on goal orientations in this sample. In terms of the relationship between achievement goals and academic self-efficacy, in accord with the hypothesis, the correlation analysis showed mastery goal orientations to be positively and significantly associated with reported academic self-efficacy, indicating that students who had a high mastery goal orientation tended to have high academic self-efficacy. The other two goal orientations (performance-approach, performance-avoidance); however, were not associated with academic self-efficacy. When the relationship between students' goal orientations and classroom goal structures were analyzed, results indicated that, as hypothesized mastery goal orientations were shown to be positively associated with classroom mastery goal structures, meaning that students who adopted a mastery approach to learning also perceived the classroom as being more mastery-oriented. Also

as hypothesized, a performance-approach goal orientation and classroom performance-approach goal structures were found to be positively correlated, as was the relationship between performance-approach goal orientations and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Finally, it was predicted that there would be a predictive link between the relevance of school for future success and educational aspiration variables on mastery goal orientations, performance-approach goal orientations, and academic self-efficacy. The results indicated that mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy significantly predicted educational aspirations when all three variables were included; and that mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy significantly predicted educational aspirations when all three variables were included. The implications of these results are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Restatement of Purpose

The aim of the present study was to explore the differences between male and female African American eighth-grade students on mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Results of the investigation indicated that the males and females in the current sample do not differ in their goal orientations as hypothesized. There were several significant correlations obtained in the current research and having a mastery goal orientation was shown to be positively related to reported academic self-efficacy; however, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance were not related to academic self-efficacy. Results indicated that as hypothesized mastery goal orientations were positively correlated with classroom mastery goal structures, and that performance-approach goal orientation and classroom performance-approach goal structures were also positively correlated, as was the relationship between performance-approach goal orientations and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Finally, as hypothesized, regression analyses revealed that mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy significantly predicted educational aspirations when all three variables were included: and that mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy significantly predicted educational aspirations when all three variables were included.

The current investigation collected data from 70 African American eighth grade students enrolled in a charter school from the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP). Participants completed the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (PALS) and variables of goal orientations, academic self-efficacy, perception of classroom goal structure,

relevance of school for future success, and educational aspirations were measured. A quantitative research methodology and approach were used to examine the main effect of gender on goal orientation, and the correlational and predictive relationships between the study variables.

Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1. The first research question asked is there a difference among African American male and female students in achievement goal orientations. An independent sample *t*-test was used to explore these differences. It was predicted that significant gender differences would exist between males and females on goal orientation. Contrary to the hypothesis, the results indicated no gender differences in the goal orientations of the students. These results are inconsistent with some previous literature that indicated that girls and boys approach schoolwork differently, with girls being more mastery-oriented and less performance-oriented than boys (Ablard & Lipschultz, 1998; Meece & Holt, 1993; Nolen, 1988). However, the current results do support the research of Patrick, Ryan, and Pintrich, (1999) and Ryan and Pintrich, (1997) who reported no significant sex differences in the endorsement of mastery goals.

One possible explanation for the lack of significant gender differences may have to do with the type of academic program these students were enrolled in, and the type of parents that elect to send their children to participate in a voluntary academic school with extended school hours and requiring a high level of engagement from students, parents, and teachers. Study participants were enrolled in the KIPP program. The mission of KIPP is to instill in each student a commitment to teamwork, respect, excellence, humility, and responsibility. Each morning students are required to recite a daily affirmation such as,

"If you believe it, you can achieve it," speaking the goal into present reality. A growing body of theoretical and empirical literature supports the view that when students' perceptions of personal control in the learning situation increase, so does their motivation to learn (Alderman, 1990; Ames, 1990; Deci & Ryan, 1991). As a consequence, the males in the current sample may have reported more mastery orientations as a function of the school program. By finding no differences in the goal orientations of male and female students, it is suggested that male students are just as capable as female students of excelling in academics when placed in an environment that fosters learning such as in KIPP schools. Additional research comparing African American males from different school programs on their mastery goal orientations may be helpful in elucidating this relationship further.

Research Question 2. The second research question asked if there is a relationship between students' achievement goal orientations and their academic self-efficacy. A significant and positive relationship was hypothesized, and the data analysis supported the hypothesis. That is, in the current investigation, students' achievement goal orientation was significantly and positively related to their academic self-efficacy. Specifically, the data indicated that students who exhibited high mastery goals also tended to have high academic self-efficacy. The current finding supports prior research findings (Pintrich, 2000), that indicated that mastery goals lead to persistence in face of difficulty. This suggests that mastery goal−oriented students may persist more with a challenge, and that this increases the opportunities they have to build academic self-efficacy (i.e., the more energy the students spend on learning and developing skills, the more likely the students are to build self-confidence in their beliefs about their abilities

and have more faith in what they can accomplish). Simply telling a student that he or she can learn to perform a skill may not be as effective as the direct experience of successfully performing the task. This idea has ramifications for the learning environment, and possibly suggests that teachers should set goals for students that are challenging yet attainable. This research may also indicate that when students have high academic self-efficacy, their faith in their abilities are stronger, and this may enable them to adopt more adaptive goal orientations. Additional research should be conducted on the nuances of this significant relationship.

Although the relationship between academic self-efficacy and mastery goal orientations was significant, contrary to the hypothesis the results showed no relationship between academic self-efficacy and performance-approach goals. This finding was unexpected as prior research has shown performance-approach goals to be related to academic self-efficacy (Bong, 2001; Skaalvik, 1997). It is possible that students were driven by performance and therefore utilized more superficial processing that did not impact their academic self-efficacy. Learning may have occurred; however, it may not have been internalized as meaningful. This may explain why the significance levels for academic self-efficacy and performance-approach goals tethered on borderline. In relation to performance-avoidance goals and academic self-efficacy, no significant relationship was found as supported by previous research (Skaalvik, 1997).

Research Question 3. The third research question asked if there is a positive relationship between students' mastery goals and their perceptions of the classroom goal structure. As hypothesized this relationship was found to be significant and in the positive direction. That is, when students believed that their teachers emphasized mastery of

learning tasks and a deep understanding of class work, even more than grades, they tended to embrace similar beliefs towards learning and espouse a mastery orientation.

The data from the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale showed that students who believed their teachers supported a mastery approach reported that in their class trying hard was very important. This finding emphasizes the importance of exerting effort regardless of outcome. Students also strongly agreed that in their class, understanding the material is the main goal and by understanding the material students are better able to apply the information they have learned. Students also agreed that how much you improve is really important and when students make improvements in their studies, they are better able to build efficacy. This finding in the current research has implications for teaching strategies.

The results of the current investigation also demonstrated some correlation between performance-approach goals and classroom performance goal structures. This finding suggests that when teachers adopt performance-approach goals, students tended to adopt performance-approach goals as well. In some academic settings, the use of performance-approach goals can be beneficial to students when they are engaging in tasks that are competitive in nature (e.g., college entry exams), as cited by Midgley et al. (2001); however; the long-term benefits of adopting performance-approach goals remains debatable. Additional research needs to be conducted so appropriate teacher training strategies can be recommended.

Research Question 4. The fourth research asked if there is a predictive relationship between mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy on students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success. A series of

multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the associations between students' beliefs about the relevance of school for future success. These analyses showed that as predicted, the adoption of mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy predicted a student's expectations for future success. Because there is no research on this relationship, literature comparisons cannot be made.

This is of importance in terms of being able to identify those students who have higher levels of confidence in their abilities versus those with lower levels of confidence. The implications are that by identifying those students who display low academic self-efficacy beliefs, educators will be better able to provide feedback to students that will help them alter there beliefs and develop more positive attributions about their ability, as well as place more emphasis on more adaptive goal structures in the classroom. For African American male students, in particular, who experience higher rates of school failure, their efficacy beliefs and goal adoption can have significant consequences in terms of how they perceive the relevance of school for their future success. Therefore, additional research in other populations may be warranted as this finding is the first of its kind.

Research Question 5. The fifth research asked if there is a predictive relationship between mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy on students' educational aspirations. Analysis showed that as predicted, the adoption of mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and academic self-efficacy were also predictors for educational aspirations.

A closer look at students self reports about their future aspirations indicated that of the KIPP students, at least 60% aspire to graduate from college and more than 40%

aspire to pursue more challenging occupational endeavors. This suggests that students'

goal adoption and efficacy beliefs can have an influence on students' educational

aspirations and whether a student elects to register for more advanced coursework or

pursue higher education.

Implications

The current investigation examined goal orientations in an African American

population. The findings from this study add to the literature as an investigation of this

nature in this population had not yet been conducted. Some of the current findings

support the previous literature on students from different populations; however, some of

the findings do not. African American male students were often found to be lagging

behind their female counterparts in academics, disengaging in the learning process, and

disproportionately placed in lower academic track programs. This study, however,

suggests that there are no male-female differences in goal orientations. It is possible that

there are ways to reduce gender disparities in an African American population that may

have to do with the type of school and learning environment they are engaged in and

additional research should be conducted on this topic.

The results also indicate that teachers who are perceived by their students as

adopting a mastery or performance promoting classroom structure have students who

adopt a similar goal orientation. Of the three goal types, mastery goals are believed to be

the most beneficial for all students across cognitive and achievement outcomes (Kaplan

& Middleton, 2002; Midgley et al., 2001). Therefore, information on this important

finding needs to be disseminated to educators as there are numerous beneficial outcomes

associated with the adoption of a mastery goal orientation.

Implications for Educators

Information concerning student's perceptions of their teacher's classroom structure and this relationship with a student's goal orientation needs to be communicated. First, educators need to be more cognizant of the effect that students' attributional beliefs can have on their achievement goal orientations. Second, the learning environment needs to provide more preventive wraparound services to children that are developing maladaptive goal patterns of behavior. Third, educators need to take into account how students' cognitions and affect shape students' achievement outcomes. Finally, educators need to identify ways to increase students' academic efficacy to counteract any avoidance behavior that may inhibit persistence and a commitment to future endeavors. Educators should also help develop more innovative programs centered on heightening the level of conscious awareness of African American males so that they can see themselves as academically and socially competent and not defined by labels. Although educators are on the front line of interacting with students, the dissemination of study findings seems appropriate for teacher training programs as well.

Implications for Schools

The classroom goal structures also appear to play a vital role in the type of achievement goals that students employ. Schools should modify or change the nature of students' experiences in the learning environment to include more mastery-driven instruction. This would increase opportunities for students to develop more meaningful learning and a deeper level of processing that can help students develop the cognitive skills needed to evaluate and improve their learning. Finally, policy-makers and administrators should examine the frameworks of other school models that have proven

to be effective in helping African American males achieve. It is also recommended that school administrators allow educators ample time to utilize different instructional approaches when providing instruction to students that are experiencing educational difficulties.

Significance of Study

The current investigation adds to the literature on achievement motivation and its correlates in an African American population. This information can be used by teachers or school personnel. Teachers can impact how a student perceives the relevance of school for their future success. In other words, teachers play an integral role in motivating students. Teachers can help students understand the relevance and significance of school by how they relay the class material or content to meet the students' needs and goals. Higbee (1996) suggested that educators should encourage students to investigate their own attitudes and beliefs concerning their motivation to learn, as well as their own goals related to higher education. The end result is that learning is impacted when students take more ownership and personal responsibility for their learning.

Limitations

The current study is limited by a homogenous sample and the use of data that was collected at a single point in time. Due to the small sample size, a factorial analysis was not conducted. In addition, because the participants attended a college preparatory program through KIPP, the dynamics of the school curriculum differ from other public school systems. This difference in curriculum prevents the researcher from being able to make generalizations for other school programs. By not having access to student grades, the researcher was unable to make any comparisons between students' achievement and

was unable to determine the students' level of improvement in the college-preparatory program prior to them enrolling in the program. Finally, because the majority of the participants were African American, the researcher is unable to make generalizations about the goal orientations of other minority students who participate in a college-preparatory program.

Conclusion

The current study supports prior research findings in that mastery goals appear to be more facilitative in promoting learning and can be better predictor variables for education attainment and future expectations for success. Since no differences were found in the goal orientations of male and female students, this research suggests that male students are indeed capable of adopting adaptive goal orientations that promote academic achievement. When mastery orientations are promoted in the classroom, students' academic self-efficacy can increase along with students' expectations for success. For the students who espouse more performance-approach–oriented goals, educators should continue to support their achievement but help them attribute their successes to effort and effective strategies and attribute their failures to low effort and ineffective strategies, modeling and structuring instruction around a mastery orientation.

Further research should include a longitudinal study to assess whether students' goal orientations change as they advance through school or if their goal orientations change over time. It would also be advantageous to see if the college-preparatory students who participated in this study continued their educations to pursue higher degrees, which would allow some insight into the effectiveness of the school program and the use of

adaptive goal orientations. It may also be informative to compare the goal orientations of African American students participating in different types of educational programs.

Additional research on African American students' attributional beliefs should be evaluated more in-depth to fully understand the engagement process and the reasons why students approach and engage in learning from their own points of view. It may also be advantageous to learn whether students adopt similar goal patterns to their parents in order to identify ways parents can provide more educational support for their children. The findings from the current investigation add to the literature on this important topic and can help educators learn more about the achievement goal patterns of African American students.

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University of Memphis Informed Consent Form
Students' Perceptions and Their Impact on Achievement Goals

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Donna Gray, a graduate student from the UNIVERSITY of MEMPHIS. The purpose of this study is to examine why some students are very motivated to learn and why others appear to be less interested in learning. Your child has been selected as a possible participant in this study because he or she can give a student's perspective about the school environment and their reasons for wanting to learn.

If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child will be given a survey to fill out. It will take approximately 30 minutes during school hours.

There are no risks to participating in this study, as the questions are non-controversial. There are no direct benefits to the students. The aim is to heighten educators' awareness in how students' beliefs and expectations influence learning. I hope that significant implications can be learned to help students develop goals that will enhance learning.

The data will be analyzed to see if there is a relationship between students' perceptions and the way they formulate achievement goals. The data will be coded and transferred from the survey into a computer file, using a correlation statistical test to describe and measure the relationship between students' perceptions and achievement goals. The data will be interpreted and conclusions will be drawn from the results.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained and data gathered will remain private. Your child will be given a code number. The key to the code will be kept in a separate, locked file from the data. The consent form will be kept in a locked file from the data. Only the researcher will have access to the files. Participant's name and other facts will not appear when this study is presented. The data will be stored for 3 years and then destroyed.

Your child's participation is voluntary and no compensation will be offered. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your or your child's relationship with the school. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you and your child are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments about the study, please feel free to contact me or my advisor.

Thank you
Donna Gray

4320 Loral Cove
Memphis, TN 38109
(901) 859-9918
drgray@memphis.edu

Faculty advisor:
Dr. Christian Mueller
100 Ball Hall
Memphis, TN 38152
(901) 678-4392
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If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Administration 315, The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152, telephone (901) 678-2533.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to allow your child to participate, that you and/or your child may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims.

Two copies will be given to you. One copy you will keep for your record and the other copy will need to be returned to the researcher.

Signature of parent or guardian:

_____

Print name:

_____

Date: _____

Child's assent:

_____

Date: _____

PLEASE READ ALL DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS <u>HONESTLY AS YOU CAN.</u>

Directions: Here are some questions about you as a student in this class. Please circle the number that best describes what you think.

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

1. It's important to me that I learn a lot of new concepts this year. 1 2 3 4 5

2. One of my goals in class is to learn as much as I can. 1 2 3 4 5

3. It's important to me that I thoroughly understand my class work. 1 2 3 4 5

4. One of my goals is to show others that I'm good at my class work. 1 2 3 4 5

5. One of my goals is to show others that class work is easy for me. 1 2 3 4 5

6. One of my goals in class is to avoid looking like I have trouble doing the work. 1 2 3 4 5

7. It's important to me that my teacher doesn't think that I know less than others in class. 1 2 3 4 5

8. It's important to me that other students in my class think I am good at my class work. 1 2 3 4 5

9. It's important to me that I don't look stupid in class. 1 2 3 4 5

10. One of my goals is to master a lot of new skills this year. 1 2 3 4 5

11. It's important to me that I look smart compared to others in my class. 1 2 3 4 5

12. One of my goals is to keep others from thinking I'm not smart in class. 1 2 3 4 5

13. In our class, trying hard is very important. 1 2 3 4 5

14. In our class, really understanding the material is the main goal. 1 2 3 4 5

<u>PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE!</u>

Student Achievement Survey

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

15. My chances of succeeding later in life don't depend on doing well in school.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Even if I do well in school, it will not help me have the kind of life I want when I grow up.

1 2 3 4 5

17. In our class, it's OK to make mistakes as long as you are learning.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Doing well in school doesn't improve my chances of having a good life when I grow up.

1 2 3 4 5

19. I'm certain I can figure out how to do the most difficult class work.

1 2 3 4 5

20. Even if the work is hard, I can learn it.

1 2 3 4 5

Please answer the following demographic questions:

1. Sex: ☐Male   ☐Female

2. Age: _____

3. Which best describes your ethnicity (check one):

    ☐Asian   ☐Other

    ☐Black/African-American   ☐White/Caucasian

    ☐Hispanic/Latino

4. Describe your type of household.
    ☐Single Parent Household   ☐Two Parent Household   ☐Other

5. What is the highest level of education you ever expect to complete? (Please check only one box)

    ☐Less than high school   ☐Some College/Associate's Degree

    ☐High school completion/GED/Certificate ☐College Completion

    ☐Trade or Vocational School   ☐Graduate School (MA, PhD, MD)

6. What job or occupation do you plan to have when you are age 30?

    ☐**Laborer, farmer or housewife**

    ☐**Service Worker** (included personal services, customer services, mechanic, repairer, service technicians/skilled operatives/transport operatives)

    ☐**Craftsperson, military, police, security** (Includes craftsmen/protective services, criminal/justice/military)

    ☐**Sales, Clerical** (includes secretaries, receptionists/cashiers, tellers, sales clerks, clerks, data entry/clerical, other/sales/purchasing

    ☐**Technician/semi-professional** (includes cooks, chefs, bakers, cake decorators, legal support/research assistants, lab technicians/technical workers/computer equipment operators/health, recreation services)

    ☐**Business, manager, business owner** (includes business/financial support services/financial services/medical services/computer systems/computer programmers/performers/artists/midlevel manager/supervisor)

☐**Administrator/semi-professional** (includes medical licensed professional/
   K-12 educators/human services/editors, writers, reporters)

☐**High executive/major professional** (includes doctor, lawyer, college educator,
   Engineer, architect, software engineer, scientist)

Other (please list): _____