

日本の高校生における自己評価維持

Self-Evaluation Maintenance among High School Students in Japan

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ABSTRACT

本研究は、自己評価維持 (SEM) モデル (Tesser & Campbell, 1982) に基づき、日本の高校生を対象に、学校活動への関心、実際のでき具合と友人選択における相互関連を検討した。自己にとって関与度の高い学校の教科とクラブ活動において、生徒たちは、自分と類似した能力があり、自分を上回ってはいないと評定する人物を友人として選択していた。自己にとって関与度の低い学校の教科とクラブ活動において、生徒たちは、自分より有意に優れていると評定する人物を友人として選択していた。実際の成績の結果は、生徒たちが、自己にとって関与度の高い教科で自己と類似した能力があり、関与度の低い教科で自己より優れた能力のある人物を友人として選択するという SEM モデルからの仮説を支持していた。自分がよい成績を上げている学校の教科を自己にとって関与度の高い教科とし、成績のよくない教科を関与度の低い教科としていた。高校生を参加者として用いた本研究は、SEM モデルの新たな証拠を提出している。

Based on the self-evaluation maintenance model of Tesser & Campbell (1982), the present study investigates the interrelations of interest in school activities, actual performance, and friendship choice among high school students in Japan. Students rated both of their closest classmates as performing moderately lower

on a highly self-relevant school subject, and significantly better on both self-irrelevant school subjects and club activities. Actual grades supported the hypothesis that students choose friends with similar abilities in highly self-relevant school subjects and friends with a higher ability in self-irrelevant school subjects. Students designated school subjects in which they performed well as highly self-relevant, and school subjects in which they performed poorly as irrelevant. This study provides evidence for the SEM model in Japan.

School life for most students in their adolescence is often a time for self-schema exploration, establishing independent relationships with peers, and class performance. The dramatic changes very common in adolescents, such as distancing oneself from adults and teachers and depending more on peer relationships to establish and maintain positive perceptions of the self (Rubin, 1980; Steinberg, 1990; Youniss & Smollar, 1985), entails that regular attention to student's self-definition is heavily relevant in explaining methods of social interaction in school and performance on tests. During this period, students make many new choices and have many experiences that can direct the course of the rest of their lives.

This study examined friendship choice and performance among Japanese high school students in the current academic environment. The self-evaluation maintenance (SEM) model (Tesser, 1981) suggests that interest in school, performance in school, and friendship choice are closely related factors that have direct consequences on each other (Tesser & Campbell, 1982; Tesser, Campbell, & Smith, 1984). The model also presumes people in a relationship each aim to keep his or her self, feeling good psychologically when he or she is being compared to the other person. The emphasis of the SEM model is not on better understanding the uncertainty of one's capabilities when compared to others as in a related theory by Festinger (1954) on social comparison processes, but on how one maintains or enhances self-evaluation.

The SEM model assumes individuals will attempt to maintain or increase self-evaluation through

reflection and/or comparison processes. An example of the reflection process that is clear in this study; occurred when participants magnified the distance in ratings between their ability and their close others' ability on an activity designated as irrelevant to the self. "Basking in the reflecting glory" as Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan (1976) coined it, is a technique, which helps maintain a positive self-evaluation. Evidence of comparison processes was discovered when participants chose close others who did not out perform them on self-relevant activities. In doing so, participants avoided threatening the self by avoiding comparisons with someone of higher competence.

Originality of Study.

The present study provided evidence and a better understanding of the self-evaluation maintenance model's credibility and usefulness in Japan by sampling a previously un-sampled population in Japan (high school students aged 16 to 18), and collecting data on a new variable (club activities).

Predictions

In regards to school behavior, three important variables: interest in activities, actual performance, and friendship choice will be interrelated in influencing high school students' self-evaluation maintenance.

Students are predicted to choose friends who have similar, but slightly lower abilities in highly self-relevant activities both in school and relevant

activities outside of school. We assume students will distance themselves from outperforming others, who threaten the self in self-relevant activities.

As Japan is a traditionally more collectivistic society, friendship maintenance or relationship maintenance (maintaining a healthy relationship by promoting a close other in order to maintain positive self-evaluation) is predicted to play its part in reducing distortions in ratings on self-relevant activities between the self and close other (see Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000). In earlier studies (Isozaki & Takahashi, 1988; Isozaki & Takashi, 1993), Japanese elementary and junior high school students rated close others as being more similar at relevant activities in comparison to what their actual grades were. Self-evaluation maintenance appeared to be strongly tied to actual grades and not to ratings of performance in this case.

A study by Berscheid & Walster (1977) found supporting evidence that people choose friends with overall similar abilities. The study supports our prediction that actual grades of the self and close other will be similar, but ratings on performance for high school students (self vs close other on Highly Relevant [HR] and Lowly Relevant [LR] subjects) will, to a degree, be distorted in a way that supports positive self-evaluation maintenance. Recent social changes in Japan are predicted to increase distortions in ratings on performance.

For low self-relevant activities, we hypothesize that students will choose friends who out perform them at that activity. Distortion between ratings of performance on the self and close other are predicted to be most significant here as students bask in the reflection of their well performing close other on low self-relevant activities.

Method

Participants. Participants were 130 high school

students in a private high school in Tokyo. Three first year classes (90 students total) and two third year classes (40 students total) made up the sample population.

Instruments. Two questionnaires, along with students' actual grades provided the data for analysis.

The initial questionnaire was administered to the intact class and took 10 minutes to answer. In order to measure closeness, each participant was asked to name his or her closest (close other 1) and second closest classmate (close other 2) in the same year in school. In order to measure relevance, each participant was given a list of categories (e.g. academic subjects, clubs/circles), and asked to pick the most self-relevant activity and least relevant activity for each category.

After 1 week, a follow up questionnaire also taking 10 minutes to complete was administered to each intact class. Each participant rated his or her own performance and that of 2 close others on the various activities chosen as self-relevant and least relevant on a 7-point graphic scale.

At the end of the school term, final scores (actual grades: 0-100 point scale) on relevant and irrelevant designated school subjects were obtained.

Results

Ratings of Performance on School Subjects. Students' ratings of their own perceived performance and those of close classmates on a school subject that the student designated as highly relevant and one designated as irrelevant were examined. Ratings of performance were analyzed by analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Target persons (self vs close other) x relevance of activity (HR vs LR) were within-subject variables. Descriptive statistics on ratings of performance on a school subject for high and low relevance are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviation of Ratings on School Subjects (n=113)

	HR		LR	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self	5.66	0.96	2.79	1.44
Close Other 1	5.27	1.30	4.61	1.49
Close Other 2	5.04	1.36	4.63	1.40

A within-subject design ANOVA revealed an interaction effect between target and relevance factors, $F(2, 224) = 84.937, p < .001$. Simple main effects were then examined. The simple main effect of the target on a high relevant subject was significant, $F(2, 226) = 8.684, p < .001$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 1 ($p < .05$) and for close other 2 ($p < .05$). The simple main effect of the target on a low relevant subject had a significant effect, $F(2, 234) = 84.560, p < .001$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 1 ($p < .001$) and close other 2 ($p < .001$). The simple main effect of the relevance factor on the self, $F(1, 112) = 353.366, p < .001$, on close other 1, $F(1, 112) = 15.096, p < .001$, on close other 2, $F(1, 112) = 7.966, p < .01$, were significant. The means for self vs close others on ratings of performance on a school subject are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Student ratings of perceived performance of the self and 2 close others on a school subject the student designated as highly relevant (HR) and irrelevant (LR) to their self-definition.

Ratings of Performance on Club Activities.

Students' ratings of their own perceived performance and those of close classmates on a club activity that the student designated as highly relevant and one designated as irrelevant were examined. Ratings of performance were analyzed by analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Target persons (self vs close other) x relevance of activity (HR vs LR) were within-subject variables. Descriptive statistics on ratings of performance on a club activity for high and low relevance are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviation of ratings on Club Activities (n=50).

	HR		LR	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self	5.32	1.05	3.12	1.60
Close Other 1	5.27	1.39	3.70	1.45
Close Other 2	4.60	1.37	3.78	1.49

A within-subject design ANOVA revealed an interaction effect between target and relevance factors, $F(2, 98) = 13.210, p < .001$. Simple main effects were then examined. The simple main effect of the target on a high relevant subject was significant, $F(2, 108) = 7.179, p < .01$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 2 ($p < .05$), but not for close other 1. Close other 1 was rated higher than close other 2 ($p < .05$). The simple main effect of the target on a low relevant subject had a significant effect, $F(2, 112) = 9.558, p < .001$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 1 ($p < .01$) and close other 2 ($p < .01$). The simple main effect of the relevance factor on the self, $F(1, 49) = 68.562, p < .001$, on close other 1, $F(1, 49) = 28.825, p < .001$, on close other 2, $F(1, 49) = 15.633, p < .001$, were significant. The means for self vs close others on club activities are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Student ratings of perceived performance of the self and 2 close others on a club activity the student designated as highly relevant and irrelevant to their self-definition.

Actual Grades on School Subjects. Actual grades were analyzed by analyses of variance (ANOVAs). Descriptive statistics of actual grades on a school subject for high and low relevant are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviation of Actual Grades on School Subjects (n=60).

	HR		LR	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self	86.03	14.78	72.25	17.68
Close Other 1	82.14	14.29	79.92	14.82
Close Other 2	83.11	15.28	78.77	17.08

A within-subject design ANOVA revealed an interaction effect between target and relevance factors, $F(2, 118) = 5.824, p < .01$. Therefore, simple main effects were examined. The simple main effect of the target on a high relevant subject had a significant tendency statistically, $F(2, 190) = 2.840, p < .10$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 1 ($p < .10$). The simple main effect of the target on a low relevant subject had a significant effect, $F(2, 138) = 4.483, p < .05$, and multiple pairwise comparisons using the Sidak method revealed a difference between self and close other 1 ($p < .05$) and close other 2 ($p < .10$). The simple main effect of the relevance factor on the self was significant, $F(1, 59) = 18.784, p < .001$. That is, the average grade on a highly relevant subject for

the self was higher than the grade on a low relevant subject. However, there was no simple main effect on high relevant and low relevant subjects for both close others. The means for self vs close others on actual grades of a school subject are shown in Figure 3.

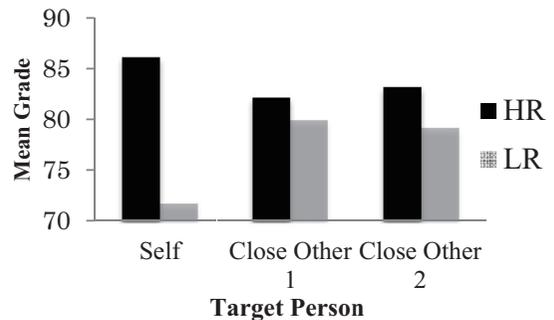


Figure 3. Actual grades of the self and 2 close others on a school subject the student designated as highly relevant and irrelevant to their self-definition.

Discussion

Self vs Close Others on Ratings of Performance on School Subjects. As predicted, students did rate themselves as performing better than close others on relevant subjects and worse on irrelevant subjects. Target x relevance interaction was highly significant. Students rated themselves as performing better than close other 1 on a relevant subject and even higher than close other 2. Ratings on low self-relevant school subjects had the greatest significant difference for self vs close others on ratings of performance. Overall close others were both rated very similarly with the exception of close other 2 being rated modestly lower on a high self-relevant subject. The results point directly to self-evaluation maintenance. Reflection and comparison strategies are clear.

Self vs Close Others on Ratings of Performance on Club Activities. As predicted, to avoid negative self-evaluation by comparison, students rated friends as not out performing themselves on a high self-relevant club activity. To increase self-evaluation by

reflection, students rated their ability in a low self-relevant activity lower than close others. Target x relevance interaction was statistically significant.

When examining the difference in performance ratings for close others on a high self-relevant club activity, close other 1 was not rated significantly less than the self, although the mean was slightly lower. Our prediction that students would rate themselves significantly better on high self-relevant club activities for both close others was not supported. This may provide evidence of relationship maintenance. Students appear to be promoting their closest other's ability (but not more than their own ability) on high self-relevant club activity. However, close other 2 was rated significantly less than the self and close other 1 on the high self-relevant club activity providing stronger evidence of SEM. Students rated themselves, as significantly worse than both close others on a low self-relevant club activity. Overall, close other 1 and close other 2 were rated similar, except for the lower rating on a high self-relevant activity for close other 2, which was similar to ratings of performance on school subjects.

Actual Grades on School Subjects. For actual grades between self and close others, students did score higher on a high self-relevant subject and lower on a low self-relevant subject. However, the difference in actual grades between the self and close others was less than the difference of the self and close others on ratings of perceived performance. Distortion strategies used to maintain self-evaluation would account for the exaggerated ratings on performance.

For self vs close other 1 on a high self-relevant subject, there was a significant tendency statistically to perform better, but not for close other 2, although the mean was slightly lower. This contradicts the perceived performance ratings, where close other 2 was rated significantly worse than the self, and

worse than close other 1 on a high self-relevant school subject and club activity. For self vs close other 1 on a low self-relevant subject, the self performed significantly worse. For self vs close other 2, a significant tendency statistically for the self to perform worse was found.

Overall, for actual grades, self vs close other 1 displayed stronger evidence of SEM than did close other 2. This contradicts perceived performance ratings on school subjects and club activities where self vs close other 2 produced greater evidence of SEM. In regards to SEM, friendship choice strategies appear to be more strongly tied to actual grades than to ratings of performance. These results are in accordance with Isozaki (1994) and Isozaki & Takahashi (1993).

General Discussion

The results on friendship choice, ratings on performance and actual school subjects found in this study are in line with the SEM model, in that students really do chose friends that perform very similar (but not better) to themselves on high self-relevant school activities, and friends who perform better on low self-relevant activities. The data provided strong support for the friendship similarity effect. Students appear not to choose poorly performing friends in order to maintain a positive self-evaluation, but instead choose similarly capable friends from which positive comparisons can be made and reflection processes can occur.

Comparison and reflection strategies are clearly demonstrated in perceived performance ratings and actual grades of school subjects. The results of this study on school subjects are in agreement with Tesser et al. (1984) on friendship choice and performance on students in the United States, where Tesser et al. found differences between the self and close others on ratings of school subject performance and actual grades.

In the current study, close others were evaluated separately. By examining the close others separately we did find a significant difference on ratings on a high self-relevant club activity. We were also able to find evidence that close other 2 was rated lower on the performance of a high self-relevant school subject than close other 1, but for actual grades, close other 2 scored higher than close other 1 on a high self-relevant school subject. The difference between ratings and actual scores is greater for close other 2 than for close other 1.

For perceived performance ratings on self vs close other 1 for school subjects and club activities, relationship maintenance strategies may play a greater role. However, perceived performance ratings on both categories for close other 2 produce stronger evidence of SEM. This is reversed on actual scores in school subjects as self vs close other 1 have the clearest evidence of SEM.

Would ratings self and close others on non-school related free-time activities, which are predicted to be very important to self-evaluation in general, (e.g. video games, fishing, or dancing) produce strong evidence for SEM or reveal more evidence for relationship maintenance as was found in this study for high self-relevant club activities? In order to keep one's self feeling good, in what situations will relationship maintenance strategies be most prominent? How do we maintain a balance between relationship maintenance and self-evaluation maintenance strategies? A follow up study is needed to better understand the relationship between relationship maintenance strategies and self-evaluation maintenance and the importance of their interactions.

Implications for Educators

Performance: Teachers can try to design situations in which the performance dimensions of interest are relevant to the child's self definition and that those

close to the student perform at about the same level or better than the child.

Close Others: Students who excel at different things can be brought together, or students can be given different tasks to work on to avoid damaging comparisons. Although students should choose their own friends, teachers can design seating charts to improve performance and closeness between students.

Relevance: Understanding a student's interests, and keeping a positive atmosphere of close others can help strengthen the interrelated/systematic 3 variables in the SEM model leading to greater success for the student.

Understanding how students see themselves and others in the present school setting is crucial for educators, parents and society. We hope to support students in maintaining a positive stable self-evaluation, which will help provide for an exceptional academic environment with increased interest in school and better performance on tests.

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