

Trichotomous Goals of Elementary School Students Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Structural Equation Model

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Abstract

This study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques to define the relations among trichotomous goals (mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals), self-efficacy, use of metacognitive self-regulation strategies, positive belief in seeking help, and help-avoidance behavior. Elementary school students (N = 105), who were learning English as a foreign language, were surveyed using five self-report scales. The structural equation model showed that self-efficacy led to the adoption of mastery goals but discouraged the adoption of performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals. Furthermore, mastery goals increased the use of metacognitive self-regulation strategies, whereas performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals reduced their use. Mastery goals encouraged positive belief in help-seeking, but performance-avoidance goals decreased such belief. Finally, performance-avoidance goals directly led to help-avoidance behavior, whereas positive belief assumed a critical role in reducing help-avoidance. The established structural equation model illuminated the potential causal relations among these variables for the young learners in this study.