SOCIAL AND TASK REASONS FOR PERFORMING ACHIEVEMENT TASKS AND FUTURE MOTIVATION AS A FUNCTION OF GENDER AND DOMAIN

Jennifer M. Warden, Sara J. Doty, Landon C. Brown, Bailey Welch, Gregory C. Hyde, David W. Maasberg, Jaimee E. Kidder, Jacob Hansen
(Carol Sansone), Department of Psychology

Working with others may make achievement tasks more interesting, particularly for women who are more likely to have social goals (Morgan, Isaac, & Sansone, 2001). We compared men and women on the relative importance of social (working with others), task-intrinsic (interesting), and task-extrinsic (required) motivations for doing school and work-related tasks and on whether these reasons predicted their reported future likelihood of doing the tasks. Via questionnaires, college students described a school and a work situation in which a task was more interesting because they worked with others. They then rated the importance of social, task-intrinsic, and task-extrinsic reasons for doing each task, and how likely they were to do the task again. Despite describing tasks made more interesting by working with others, both men and women rated the social reason as least important, and the task-extrinsic reason as most important, for why they initiated the task. This pattern was especially true in the school domain. For women, however, importance of the social and task-intrinsic reasons for doing the school task, predicted greater reported likelihood of doing the task again. Neither reason predicted men’s future likelihood. This pattern suggests that even if not as important initially, social and task-intrinsic reasons may become particularly important in predicting women’s future engagement in school tasks.