



## Investigation relation between interpersonal behavior and self-handicapping in athletes: the mediation role of self-esteem

### Poster Presentation

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** According to Self-determination Theory (SDT), an individual's basic psychological needs can be influenced by other people's behaviors. Supportive-oriented behaviors in a sports context can affect athletes' well-being, leading to positive psychological outcomes.

**Methods:** The study evaluated the direct impact of need-supportive and interpersonal behaviors and need-thwarting interpersonal behaviors on self-handicapping and analyzed the indirect effects of self-esteem as mediators. Participants were 74 male college athletes and 141 female college athletes, respectively. Participants completed a demographical questionnaire, the Self-Handicapping Scale (SHS), the interpersonal behaviors Questionnaire (IBQ), and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

**Results:** In a preliminary analysis, it was found that athletes with low levels of self-esteem may have more engagement in self-handicapping strategies, and also, there is a significant relationship between high levels of self-esteem and avoidance of self-handicapping strategies. In addition, a high level of need-thwarting interpersonal behaviors is related to low levels of self-esteem. On the other hand, athletes who had perceived sport context as a need-thwarting environment show high engagement in self-handicapping strategies, and it leads to an increase in inadaptability, negative affectation, somatic symptoms, and substance abuse; it also lowers internal motivation, physical and psychological well-being, and satisfaction obtained from ability. Another finding of this research showed the moderator role of self-esteem on the relation between interpersonal behavior (autonomy-supportive, autonomy-thwarting (controlling), competence-supportive, competence-thwarting, relatedness-supportive, and relatedness-thwarting interpersonal behaviors) and self-handicapping. In other words, higher levels of need thwarting (autonomy-thwarting, competence-thwarting, relatedness-thwarting) were related to higher self-handicapping tendencies.

**Conclusion:** Parents and coaches should be aware of interpersonal behaviors on the level of self-handicapping and try to set the best strategies to affect athlete attribution in a sports context. Athletes with appropriate attribution about performance can use feedbacks properly.

### Keywords

Interpersonal behavior; self-handicapping; self-esteem; Athletes

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