

SCHOOLCHILDREN'S COMPETITIVENESS AND HUBRISTIC MOTIVATION: THE DIMENSIONS AND ASSESMENT POSIBILITIES[†]

 **Viktoriya Nadyon**

H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv national pedagogical university

29, Alchevskikh St., Ukraine, 61002

E-mail: vik_tory183@ukr.net

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1939-1980>

Synopsis: According to results of theoretical analysis it was found that two competitive strategies are distinguished in children: interpersonal competitiveness and goal competitiveness. Interpersonal competitiveness (other-referenced competition) is considered as the striving to have better achievements than others and to win in interpersonal situations (games and activity) and to enjoy the interpersonal competition and refers to hubristic striving for superiority. Goal competitiveness (task-oriented competition) is considered as the striving for excellence, goal achievement, and do one's best and refers to hubristic striving for excellence and perfection. A Schoolchildren Competition Questionnaire was adapted. It consists of 17 items and characterized by high rates of reliability and validity and describes three dimensions: 1) Other-referenced competition; 2) Task-oriented competition and 3) Maintenance of dominance hierarchy. It was revealed competitive strategies are connected with hubristic motivation in primary schoolchildren. Other-referenced competition characterizes schoolchildren with "Expressed dominance of pursuit for superiority". The lowest level of it is determined in children with "Low Hubristic Motivation". The highest level of task-oriented competition characterizes schoolchildren with "Expressed Dominance of the pursuit of Excellence". The lowest level of other-referenced competition and task-oriented competition is determined in children with "Low Hubristic Motivation". Maintenance of dominance hierarchy characterizes schoolchildren with "Balanced Hubristic Motives". The lowest level of maintenance of dominance is determined in children with "Moderate Dominance of the pursuit of Superiority".

Keywords: *hubristic motivation, aspiration for superiority, aspiration for excellence, competitive strategies, primary schoolchildren.*

Preface

In modern society, interindividual competition is widespread in different spheres of life, for example, at work, in sports, and in educational activity. The multidimensional approach to the competition among university students' examination have been adopted, e.g. the Griffin-Pierson model of competition (1990), describes two indicators - interpersonal competitiveness and goal competitiveness, which discuss performance in both academics and play activities. Interpersonal competitiveness is considered as the desire to perform better than others and to win in interpersonal situations. It supposes enjoyment of interpersonal competition (Griffin-Pierson, 1990) and refers to hubristic striving for superiority. Goal competitiveness is considered as the desire for excellence and goal achievement (Fomenko, 2018) and refers to hubristic striving for excellence

and perfection. The two strivings are not exclude each other, but are considered as general dispositions to perceive achievement situations in a certain way (Griffin-Pierson, 1990). R. M. Ryckman (1990; 1996; 1997) has also outlined two parameters of competition in activity: the hypercompetitive attitude and the personal development competitive attitude.

Hypercompetitiveness (other-referenced competition) reveals the need of competition and winning (and of avoiding losing) at all costs as a means of improving the feelings of self-worth. Personal competitiveness (task-oriented competition) is considering as an attitude with the focus not on winning in competition, but rather upon using the competitive experience for the further growth and development. Task-oriented competition The refers to the process of self-discovery and self-improvement, and not on comparison with others

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(Ryckman, Libby, Van den Borne, Gold & Lindner, 1997). These two separate dispositions have also been observed in eight- and nine-year-olds pupils and athletics. Whereas other-referenced competition means the motive of superiority proof, task-oriented competition supposes the task of evaluating one's own performance in order to improve it (Tassi & Schneider, 1997; Tassi, Schneider, Richard, 2001).

Other-referenced competition refers to coercion and task-oriented competition supposes a cooperation. Cooperation is considered as the strategy that receive resources in the long term (Axelrod, 1984), while coercion gets the most resources in the short term. Both cooperation and coercion are an effective competitive strategy for schoolchildren to obtain resources in problem-solving tasks (Charlesworth, 2003). The balance of competition and cooperation is considering as a factor of social adjustment (Flanders, Herman, Paquette, 2013). Vaughn et al. (2003) and Hawley (2003) showed that bistrategic children (prosociality and coercion) control more personal resources.

The increased complexity and difficulty of social life has enhanced the significance of the coercive and cooperative strategies' balancing to obtain resources. Schoolchildren who always employ aggression/assertion can be socially isolated, which would prevent them from enjoying the benefits of social life. On the other hand, pupils who only perform cooperation may not defend or assert themselves in the many arising competitive situations (Paquette, Gagnon, Bouchard, Bigras, Schneider, 2013).

The problem of the balance between cooperation and coercion as aggressive competition is relevant to the phenomenon of hubristic motivation. Hubristic motivation is the desire of the individual to maintain one's self-esteem and self-worth and is manifested in the process of self-affirmation of personality (Fomenko, 2018). The hubristic motive for achieving excellence acts as the desire for self-affirmation through the perfection of the results of one's achievements, the orientation to self-development, the ability to improve self-realization, mastery in activity, and the hubristic motive to achieve superiority as the pursuit of self-affirmation through achievement according to the results of social

comparison and external evaluations of activity (Fomenko, 2018).

The **purpose** of the study is to adapt the Preschool Competition Questionnaire to the purposes of children's of the primary school age assessment and to verify the correlations between competition strategies and hubristic motivation.

Our sample included 204 children between the ages of 5 and 8 years. 47% were girls, and 53% were boys. The 106 school teachers completed a separate questionnaire for each pupil between the ages of 6 and 8 in their class forms. In primary schools parents were required to sign a consent form for their children to be assessed. Three months later, 22 of the teachers completed the Schoolchildren Competition Questionnaire (SCQ) a second time to verify test-retest reliability.

Instruments.

1. The projective methodology "Fairy tale Kingdom" for senior preschool and primary school age was developed by us in order to study hubristic motivation in children aged 6-10 years. The technique allows to determine the degree of expression of striving for superiority and striving for excellence in children. The procedure involves choosing one of 18 cards that depicts fairy-tale characters, who on the one hand are fairly generalized and do not belong to any particular fairy tale, on the other hand embody archetypal images. Each of the characters corresponds to a certain number of points on the scale of striving for superiority and striving for excellence (Fomenko, 2018).

2. The PCQ (Preschool Competition Questionnaire) originally consists of 17 items for childcare teachers, who are to assess each pupil using the same six-point scale. Psychometric data for the PCQ are provided below. The content of items was adapted according to the social situation of development and dominant activity of younger schoolchildren.

Results.

Factorial Structure of the SCQ. The final factorial structure consists of 17 items, which are presented in Tables 1-3 and refers original structure of SCQ. It has to be noted that even the lowest loading obtained (0,509) was satisfactory.

Descriptive SCQ Statistics. Table 1 includes internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha) varied between 0,84 and 0,89, which represents excellent levels of homogeneity.

The results of intercorrelation analysis emphasize that the Hierarchy Maintenance scale was positively correlated to the two other scales ($r=0,44$, $p<0,0001$

for other-referenced competition and $r = 0,36$, $p<0,001$ for task-oriented competition), while the slight negative correlation was found between the task-oriented competition and other-referenced competition scales themselves ($r = -0.21$, $p<0,05$).

The K-means cluster analysis revealed five typological profiles of hubristic motivation.

Table 1. Factor 1 including item loadings and descriptive statistics for the SCQ

Factor 1: Other-referenced competition				
Items	α	Mean	SD	Factor loading
Is angry when does not win at a game (poor loser).	0,852	2,44	1,12	0,741
Contests when another child wins.	0,841	2,69	1,15	0,652
Is envious when the good academic performance of another child is praised.	0,862	2,85	1,20	0,523
Likes to compare own performance and achievements to those of others.	0,857	3,12	1,09	0,851
Is motivated to win or to come first at games.	0,863	2,56	1,13	0,621
Is angry when another child gets something he/she desires first.	0,888	2,87	1,45	0,564
Is disappointed when does not succeed in achieving own goals.	0,885	3,02	1,26	0,743
Tends to abandon games when not winning.	0,848	2,75	1,20	0,547

Table 2. Factor 2 including item loadings and descriptive statistics for the SCQ

Factor 2: Task-oriented competition				
Items	α	Mean	SD	Factor loading
Perseveres when confronted with difficult tasks.	0,878	2,52	1,52	0,891
Actively seeks to improve own performance and abilities.	0,876	2,75	1,12	0,521
Is enthusiastic about challenges posed by adult.	0,890	2,56	1,42	0,658
Prefers difficult games.	0,886	2,89	1,32	0,852
Plays according to rules of the game.	0,867	2,47	1,25	0,751
Tolerates compromise as a solution to conflict.	0,652	2,36	1,20	0,509

Test-retest stability of the SCQ was also excellent for all scales, as correlations varied between 0,63 and 0,82 ($p<0,0001$).

Table 3. Factor 3 including item loadings and descriptive statistics for the SCQ

Factor 3: Maintenance of dominance hierarchy.				
Items	α	Mean	SD	Factor loading
Objects when another child takes toy away or usurps place.	0,848	2,50	1,13	0,621
Does not let other children grab toys away or usurp place.	0,856	2,70	1,18	0,551
Defends self when attacked by another child.	0,877	2,57	1,17	0,558

Cluster № 1 - the pursuit of superiority is higher than the pursuit of excellence. The profile was called "*Moderate Dominance of the pursuit of Superiority*".

Cluster № 2 - the pursuit of superiority and the pursuit of excellence are balanced and expressed at a moderate level. The profile was named "*Balanced Hubristic Motives*".

Cluster № 3 - the pursuit of superiority far exceeds the pursuit of excellence - "*Expressed dominance of pursuit for superiority*".

Cluster № 4 - low level of expressiveness of hubristic motives. The profile was called "*Low Hubristic Motivation*".

Cluster № 5 - the pursuit of excellence far exceeds the pursuit for superiority. The profile was named "*Expressed Dominance of the Pursuit of Excellence*".

Table 4 shows the peculiarities of competitive strategies depending on types of hubristic motivation in primary schoolchildren.

Other-referenced competition characterizes first of all schoolchildren with “Expressed dominance of pursuit for superiority”. The lowest level of Other-referenced competition is determined in children with “Low Hubristic Motivation”.

The highest level of task-oriented competition characterizes schoolchildren with “Expressed Dominance of the pursuit of Excellence”. The

lowest level of task-oriented competition is determined in children with “Low Hubristic Motivation”.

Maintenance of dominance hierarchy characterizes schoolchildren with “Balanced Hubristic Motives”. The lowest level of maintenance of dominance is determined in children with “Moderate Dominance of the pursuit of Superiority”.

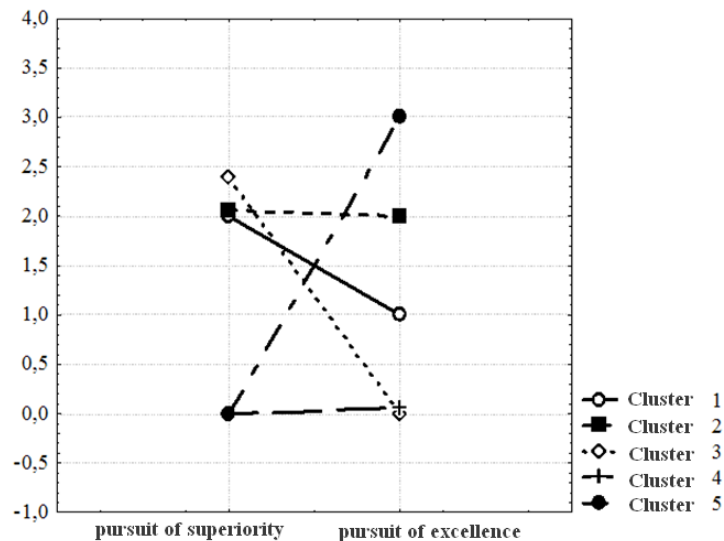


Fig. 1. The cluster profiles of junior students' hubristic motivation (Fomenko, 2019)

Table 3. Competitive strategies depending on types of hubristic motivation in primary schoolchildren

Indicators	Groups according to clusters of hubristic motivation										H
	Moderate Dominance of the pursuit of Superiority		Balanced Hubristic Motives		Expressed dominance of pursuit for superiority		Low Hubristic Motivation		Expressed Dominance of the pursuit of Excellence		
	M	σ	M	σ	M	σ	M	σ	M	σ	
Other-referenced competition	36,94	3,09	32,44	4,81	42,47	3,54	18,95	5,26	26,59	7,00	147,88
Task-oriented competition	29,42	5,93	28,69	5,21	15,03	7,32	21,15	3,87	31,95	3,04	115,51
Maintenance of dominance hierarchy	6,75	3,32	14,42	2,08	12,86	2,79	4,23	2,42	9,61	3,02	128,29

Conclusions. There are two competitive strategies, which characterized individual striving for self-affirmation: interpersonal competitiveness and goal competitiveness, with respect to performance in both playing, academics, sports and labor activity.

Interpersonal competitiveness (other-referenced competition) in pupils is considered as the desire to do better than other schoolchildren and to win in interpersonal situations and also enjoy of interpersonal competition. It refers to hubristic

striving for superiority. Goal competitiveness (task-oriented competition) is considered as the desire of perfection, goal achievement, and do one's best and refers to hubristic striving for excellence and perfection.

Adapted Schoolchildren Competition Questionnaire consists of 17 items and characterized by high rates of reliability and validity and describes three dimensions: 1) Other-referenced competition; 2) Task-oriented competition and 3) Maintenance of dominance hierarchy.

Competitive strategies are connected with hubristic motivation in primary schoolchildren. Other-referenced competition characterizes schoolchildren with "Expressed dominance of pursuit for superiority". The lowest level of is determined in children with "Low Hubristic Motivation". The highest level of task-oriented competition characterizes schoolchildren with "Expressed Dominance of the pursuit of Excellence". The lowest level of other-referenced competition and task-oriented competition is determined in children with "Low Hubristic Motivation". Maintenance of dominance hierarchy characterizes schoolchildren with "Balanced Hubristic Motives". The lowest level of maintenance of dominance is determined in children with "Moderate Dominance of the pursuit of Superiority".

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КОНКУРЕНТНІ СТРАТЕГІЇ ТА ГУБРИСТИЧНА МОТИВАЦІЯ ШКОЛЯРІВ: ВИМІРИ ТА МОЖЛИВОСТІ ПСИХОДІАГНОСТИКИ

Вікторія Надьон

Харківський національний педагогічний університет імені Г.С. Сковороди
вул. Алчевських, 29, Україна, 61002

За результатами теоретичного аналізу виявлено, що у дітей виділяють дві змагальні стратегії: міжособистісна змагальність і цільова змагальність, що проявляється як в ігровій, так і далі в навчальній, спортивній та трудовій діяльності.

Міжособистісна змагальність (конкуренція з іншими) розглядається як бажання досягти кращого за інших і перемагати в міжособистісних ситуаціях, а також насолода від міжособистісної конкуренції і відноситься до губристичного прагнення до переваги. Цільова змагальність (конкуренція, орієнтована на завдання) розглядається як бажання досягти успіху, досягти мети та зробити все якнайкраще і відноситься до губристичного прагнення до досконалості. Адаптовано опитувальник змагальності школярів. Він складається з 17 пунктів і характеризується високими показниками надійності та валідності та описує три виміри: 1) конкуренція з іншими; 2) конкуренція, орієнтована на завдання, та 3) підтримка ієрархії домінування. Виявлено, що конкурентні стратегії пов'язані з губристичною мотивацією у молодших школярів. Змагання з іншими посиленнями характеризують школярів «Виражене домінування гонитви за перевагою». Найнижчий рівень визначається у дітей з «низькою губристичною мотивацією». Найвищий рівень змагання, орієнтованого на завдання, характеризує школярів «Виражене домінування прагнення до досконалості». Найнижчий рівень змагань за іншими посиленнями та змагань, орієнтованих на завдання, визначається у дітей з «низькою губристичною мотивацією». Збереження ієрархії домінування характеризує школярів із «збалансованими губристичними мотивами». Найнижчий рівень збереження домінування визначається у дітей з «помірним домінуванням прагнення до переваги».

Ключові слова: *губристична мотивація, прагнення до переваги, прагнення до досконалості, конкурентні стратегії, учні початкової школи.*

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