

can be peppered via micro-insertions with content that helps students grow in these specific areas.

References available upon request

Title: “Why Did My Classmate Get a Better Grade than me, it’s not fair!” The Impact of Relative Deprivation on Student Reaction to Grades

Author(s): *David Ackerman (California State University, Northridge)* (david.s.ackerman@csun.edu); Qin Sun (California State University, Northridge)*

Purpose of the Study:

Student grade dissatisfaction is a common problem for marketing instructors. Students will sometimes complain even when their grades are fairly high. This research examines the possibility that these student reactions to grades may also be due in part to relative deprivation. Some part of student reaction to grades may be influenced by the context, what their classmates received. It is always frustrating for instructors when students compare grades. A “C” might be acceptable in some circumstances, but not if other classmates especially friends, received a higher grade. A student receiving the same grade as a friend, even an “A” or a “B,” may be upset if that student is perceived as not as bright or lazier. Maintaining privacy does not prevent such comparisons since students are quite willing to share grades with each other. This study intends to explore the impact of grade comparison on student reaction to grades and their perceived fairness of the instructor, as well as the moderating effect of self-efficacy.

Method/Design and Sample:

To examine the above research questions, a 4 (grade comparison) X 2 (self-efficacy) between-subjects study measured students’ reactions to a grade on a fictitious term paper in a hypothetical scenario when comparing to a friend’s grade. Data were collected from students in two marketing research course sections at a large public university in the southwestern United States (n=68). Students were informed that the study would help the instructor to improve instructional method and thanked for participating. Data were collected three to four weeks into the semester via an online survey. Students completed an online questionnaire containing closed-ended questions measuring their reactions to the grades, about their satisfaction with the grade and liking for the instructor, about their attributions, and about their emotions, all measured on seven-point Likert-like scales anchored by “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (7). Existing scales were used to measure dependent variables such as satisfaction and instructor-related measures, as well as students’ self-efficacy regarding academic assignments.

Results:

Despite the preliminary nature of this study and the small sample size, results found that comparison of grades between students can affect student reactions. Specifically, respondents in the “lower grade than friend but higher overall B+ grade” perceived the instructor to be the fairest in grading, followed by those with the same grade as their friends. Respondents in the

“higher-grade than friend” condition perceived the instructor to be a little less fair, but still scored highly. By contrast, respondents in the “lower-grade than friend” condition perceived the instructor to be an unfair grader. Note that all of the respondents in all of the scenario conditions received exactly the same grade, a B.

Respondents felt the instructor had the best impression of them in the “lower grade than friend but higher overall B+ grade” condition. Respondents in the “same grade and higher grade than friend” conditions perceived the instructor to have not quite as good an impression of them, but it was still relatively good. Respondents in the “lower-grade than friends” condition perceived the instructor to have the worst impression of them, worse than those in the other conditions by a significant margin. Results also show that negative emotions such as longing and loss were felt the most in the “lower-grade than friend” condition.

ANCOVA results revealed that those respondents high in self-efficacy may be the ones to react most strongly to grade comparisons. For low self-esteem students, there were minor differences between the conditions for perceived fairness of the instructor. Perceived fairness was significantly lower in the “higher grade than friend” condition, but similar in the other conditions. By contrast, perceived fairness of the instructor is quite a bit lower in the same grade and lower grade conditions than in the “higher grade than friend” and “lower grade than friend but higher overall B+ grade” conditions.

Value to Marketing Education:

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the extant literature. First, this study provides empirical evidence and insights into how student grade comparison may be a major potential driver of student dissatisfaction with and complaints about unfair grading. Second, it fills a literature void in applying relative deprivation to examine the impact of student grade comparison on perception of grade fairness and the results confirm the differential impact of grade comparisons on student reactions such as perceived grade fairness. Third, grade comparisons were found to also influence student perception of instructor impressions of their performance as well as their emotions. Fourth, self-efficacy plays a significant moderating role in the relation between grade comparison and perceived grade fairness, as well perceived instructor impression of students. The findings provide fresh insights on potential actions instructors could use to handle student complaints about unfair grading.

References available upon request.

Title: Live Case Study Writing as a teaching method for experiential learning – Are master students able to master it?

Author(s): *Magali Dubosson (Hes-so - HEG Fribourg); Sabine Emad (HEG Geneva - HES-SO)* (Sabine.emad@hesge.ch); Maryline Pasquier (HES-so - HEG Fribourg)*

Purpose of the study: