Preliminary Investigation of Continuous Self-Improvement, Interpersonal Conflict Handling Styles & Class Standing

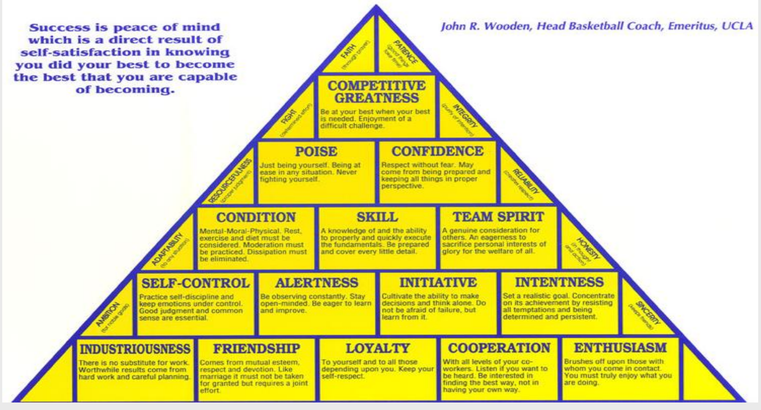
Dale Hilty, PhD

Background

Competitive Greatness/Continuous Self-Improvement

John R. Wooden's father shared two principles which were a major influence for his life: (1) "Don't try to be better than someone else, and (2) Always try to be the best you can be" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 17). The first principle was a reminder that a successful life does not find peace of mind by comparing one's self to others. There is an interconnection between the second principle and Wooden's competitive greatness construct (CG). The definition of CG: "Be at your best when your best is needed. Enjoyment of a difficult challenge" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 90).

Competitive greatness is linked to continuous self-improvement . By making the focus of life primarily on individual growth and development, there are endless opportunities to expand our skills and abilities. In Wooden's words: "We don't have be superstars or win championships to reach competitive greatness. All we have to do is learn to rise to every occasion, give your best effort and make those around us better as we do it. It's not about winning. It's about learning to give all we have to give" (Wooden & Carty, 2005, p. 91).



Wooden created a pyramid of success as guide to the continuous self-improvement process. In his books, Wooden provides explanations for each of the 15 building blocks.

Key words for each block are: (1) hard work and planning (Industriousness), (2) enjoyment (Enthusiasm), (3) mutual esteem & devotion (Friendship), (4) beneficial work (Cooperation), (5) self-respect (Loyalty), (6) discipline (Self-Control), (7) observation & open-mindedness (Alertness), (8) decisions & action (Initiative), (9) realistic goals (Intentness), (10) physical, mental, moral, & spiritual (Condition), (11) timing & performance (Skill), (12) eagerness & sacrifice (Team Spirit), (13) true to self (Poise), (14) respect without fear (Confidence), and (15) loving a difficult challenge (Competitive Greatness).

Conflict Handling Styles

The interpersonal conflict handling styles questionnaire (ICHS) was developed by Leung and Kim (2007). The ICHS measures eight levels of conflict.

Background (Cont'd)

Below are Leung and Kim's (2007, p. 175) operational definitions for six of the eight scales.

Avoiding/Smoothing — dodging topics that may admit the existence of conflict and playing down the severity of the conflict
Obliging — sacrificing one's own concerns to satisfy that of the other party
Integrating — collaborative problem solving to find a win-win solution
Compromising — cooperative bargaining for an equitable settlement
Dominating — verbal domineering to gain acquiescence
Coercing — punishing noncompliance through relationally damaging behaviors
Deceiving — misleading the other party for covert compliance-gaining
Ingratiating — showing affection for reciprocal compliance in the conflict issue

Aim

The purpose of this educational intervention was to explore the relationship among competitive greatness (i.e., (i.e., being the best you can be, continuous self-improvement, appreciating difficult challenges) and conflict handling styles.

Methods

Participants in this intervention were Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students with three different class standing levels: 1st year (N=56), 2nd year (N=78), and SDAP accelerated (N=53). Instrumentation: Competitive Greatness scale (Hilty, 2017) and interpersonal conflict handling styles questionnaire (ICHS). Hypothesis 1: Determine if there were differences among class standing and ICHS scales. Hypothesis 2: Determine if there was relationship among Competitive Greatness and ICHS conflict handling scales. Hypothesis 3: Determine if there is a significant difference from 0 (competitive greatness, dependent variable; ICHS scales, predictor variables).

Findings

Hypothesis 1
Using SPSS 25, one way ANOVA analyses did not find significant differences among BSN undergraduate students based on their student class standing (i.e., 1st year, 2nd year, SDAP) on the Ingratiating, Deceiving, Coercing, Dominating, Obliging, and Avoiding/Smoothing conflict handing scales. Significant differences were found on the Compromising Interpersonal scale ($F(2, 184) = 5.720$, $p=.004$) and the Integrating Interpersonal scale ($F(2, 184) = 5.265$, $p=.006$).

Second year students had the lowest mean scores on both the Compromising and Integrating Interpersonal scales. The Bonferroni post hoc analyses found significant differences between 1st and 2nd year ($p=.031$) and the SDAP and 2nd year students ($p=.008$) on the Compromising scale. On the Integrating Interpersonal scale, significant differences were found between 1st and 2nd year ($p=.012$) and the SDAP and 2nd year students ($p=.039$).

Hypothesis 2
Using SPSS 25, the correlational analyses found coefficient sizes between .0 and .2 for a coefficient general interpretation (Salkind, 2017) of no relationship among the competitive greatness scale (i.e., being the best you can be when your best is needed, continuous self-improvement, accepting difficult challenges) and the conflict handing scales (CG - Ingratiating, .009; Deceiving, -.123; Coercing, -.156*, $p=.033$; Dominating, -.123; Compromising, .187*, $p=.01$; Integrating, .177*, $p=.016$; Obliging, -.056; Avoiding/Smoothing, -.165*, $p=.024$; * = significant 2-tailed test).

Findings (Con'd)

Hypothesis 3
Using SPSS 25 regression analysis, the ANOVA table reported a significant effect ($F =5.165$, $p=.001$). The overall regression was significant ($r = .456$, r-squared = .208). Competitive Greatness was the dependent variable, and the interpersonal conflict handling scales were the predictor variables.

Coefficient Alpha Reliability Coefficients

	1st Year	2nd Year	SDAP
Avoiding/Smoothing	.901	.882	.841
Obliging	.748	.781	.721
Integrating	.963	.905	.712
Compromising	.838	.828	.836
Dominating	.832	.811	.802
Coercing	.740	.809	.902
Deceiving	.707	.875	.873
Ingratiating	.751	.811	.903

Conclusions

The statistical findings of this educational intervention found qualified support for the three hypotheses . The three variables were class standing, competitive greatness, and conflict handling style.

References

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Salkind, N. (2017). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics* (6th edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

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