

ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC HELP SEEKING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Abstract

THESIS: Engagement and Academic Help Seeking in Middle School: The Insights from Self-Determination Theory and Achievement Goal Orientation Theory.

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The current study aimed to gain insight into two prominent motivational theories, Self-Determination Theory and Achievement Goal Theory, and their relationship to various student engagement and academic help seeking outcomes. Past research has taken only a single theory into account when investigating these relationships. By utilizing two theories and various student engagement outcomes, we view these relationships through a wider lens. Three hundred and seventy-three middle schoolers from the Midwest answered a survey involving their perceived teachers' support for their basic psychological needs and perceived classroom goal structure. These constructs were used to predict student behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, disruptive behavior, adaptive help seeking behavior, expedient help seeking behavior, and avoidant help seeking behavior. Both theory's components significantly predicted all engagement outcomes observed in some fashion. Teaching practices based on these theories are reviewed and potential overlap is discussed.