
Observers' Perceptions of Self-handicappers' and Sandbaggers' Motives

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Overview

- **Purpose of the study:**

To examine how observer's rate the competence and character of people who self-handicap and sandbag.

Self-handicapping

- Self-presentation strategy in which a person creates obstacles to his or her own performance either to provide an excuse for failure or to enhance success (Franzoi, 2003).
 - Drinking the night before a test
 - Using drugs
 - Intentionally not preparing
 - Withdrawing effort during a task

Benefits of Self-handicapping

- Creates doubts about inability if one fails
- Enhances perceived ability if one succeeds

Sandbagging

- Self-presentation strategy involving the false claim or feigned demonstration of inability used to create artificially low expectations for the sandbaggers' performance (Gibson & Sachau, 2000).
 - Pool shark
 - Ringer

Benefits of Sandbagging

- Reduces performance pressure
- Performance contrast effect

Costs of Sandbagging

- Observers may become aware that they have been conned.
 - Phony, manipulative, and dishonest
- Observers may “see” poor performance
 - Hypothesis confirmation processes

Compare and Contrast

■ Self-handicapping

- Negative statement prior to performance
- True Claim
- External excuse for poor performance
 - “I have been drinking”
 - “I am ill”
 - “I have not prepared”

■ Sandbagging

- Negative statement prior to performance
- False Claim
- Internal excuse for poor performance
 - “I am not skilled”
 - “I am not capable”
 - “I am not smart enough”

Method

- **Participants**

- 97 Introductory psychology students at MNSU

- **Participants read a short scenario where Justin:**

- **Claimed or Did Not Claim** a sickness
- that he either **Had or Did Not Have**,
- and then he **Failed or Succeeded** on a test.

- 2 (claim) x 2 (sickness) x 2 (success) design

Design

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury	Have Injury
<i>Fail</i>			Sandbagging	Self-Handicapping
<i>Succeed</i>			Sandbagging	Self-Handicapping

Hypotheses: Competence

Not Claim Injury

(+)

Claim Injury

(+)

Fail

(+) *Succeed*

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
		(+)		(+)
	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)

Hypotheses: Honesty

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>			(-)	
<i>Succeed</i>			(-)	

Hypotheses: Insecurity

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury (+)

(+)

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>			(+) (+)	(+)
<i>Succeed</i>			(+) (+)	(+)

Hypotheses: Likeability

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury (-)

(-)

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>			(-) (-)	(-)
<i>Succeed</i>			(-) (-)	(-)

Dependent Measures

Participants rated Justin's:

- 1) **Competence:** smart, competent, intelligent
- 2) **Honesty:** trustworthy, honest, manipulative (rev)
- 3) **Insecurity**
- 4) **Likable**

Results: Competence

$P < .009$

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

(+)

(+)

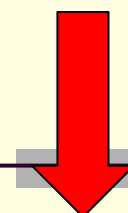
	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>	6.5	(+) 7.5	6.8	(+) 7.8
	(+) 9.6	(+) 10.7	(+) 9.7	(+) 10.1

(+) *Succeed*

$P < .001$

Results: Honesty

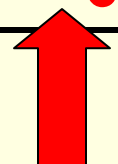
$P < .001$



Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>	9.0	8.4	6.2 (-)	7.7
<i>Succeed</i>	8.8	9.2	6.9 (-)	8.5 (+)



$P < .04$

Results: Insecurity

$P < .004$

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>	2.4	2.6	3.2	2.5
<i>Succeed</i>	1.9	2.3	3.0	2.7



Penalty $P < .06$

Results: Likeability

Not Claim Injury

Claim Injury

	Not Have Injury	Have Injury	Not have Injury (SB)	Have Injury (SH)
<i>Fail</i>	2.9	2.8	2.4 (-) (-)	2.5 (-)
<i>Succeed</i>	2.8	2.8	(-) (-) 2.8	(-) 2.8

Discussion

- People who perform with sickness are perceived as more competent.
- Sandbagging has penalty
 - seen as less honest
 - seen as less secure
- Self-handicapping did not have penalties
- No effect for likeability

Future Research

- More detailed scenarios to increase realism
- Incorporate self-esteem measures of P's
- Incorporate personality measures of P's
- Larger & broader subject pool

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Sandbagging Scenario 1

Justin is just beginning his first year as an undergraduate at a local state college. Two weeks have past since the first day of biology class, and Justin has to take his first test. On the day of the test, Justin takes a seat in the classroom and starts talking to some of the students around him. Although Justin is **healthy**, he states, **“I do not think I will do well on the test because I have had the flu for the past two days.”** The students nod around him and the professor proceeds to pass out the test.

The next class, as the professor hands back the test, Justin notices he had **received a D**. As the rest students review their test results, Justin turns to the students around him says, “Uh, I can’t believe I got a D!”