

**Effects of Experimentally Induced Choice on Motivation in Middle Childhood:
The Moderating Role of Teacher and Student Characteristics**

ABSTRACT

Objectives. Based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), many studies have investigated the effects of choice provision on people's intrinsic motivation. However, the number of experimental studies is still limited and many questions concerning moderating factors are still open. Therefore, we set up an experimental field study to examine the effect of choice provision (versus choice deprivation) on the intrinsic motivation of elementary school children. In doing so, we addressed the moderating role of teacher (i.e., child-teacher relatedness and teachers' general autonomy-supportive teaching style) and child (i.e., indecisiveness) characteristics.

Methods. In a group of elementary school children ($N = 104$), we induced an experimental manipulation of choice in which the teacher allowed half of the children to perform their preferred painting activity (i.e., the choice confirmation condition), while the other half was obliged to do another one (i.e., the choice removal condition). After actually performing the activities, we assessed levels of intrinsic motivation, need satisfaction, and psychological well-being through questionnaires.

Results. Results showed that children in the choice condition displayed enhanced intrinsic motivation, higher levels of need satisfaction, and more vitality in performing the painting activity. In addition, the perceptions of choice and the experience of competence satisfaction mediated these main effects of choice provision. Further, multiple regression analyses showed that high-indecisive children benefitted less from choice provision in terms of intrinsic motivation.

Conclusion. This study identifies choice provision as a contextual factor to enhance children's intrinsic motivation and reveals the attenuating effect of indecisiveness. Limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Choice, intrinsic motivation, elementary school, indecisiveness