|  |
| --- |
| **Beanbags and hula hoops – Debrief** |

When undertaking an activity that compares our performance with a standard of excellence, our behaviour is driven by the motive to achieve success and the motive to avoid failure. It is presumed that the resultant conflict of these two motives influence our behaviour i.e. our ‘achievement-orientated activity’. The ‘achievement motivation’ theory is a theoretical model that primarily focuses on the behavioural outcomes of these motives. It suggests that when a person’s motive to achieve success is stronger than their motive to avoid failure, the resultant of the conflict is always positive (a person with such motivation tends to approach all tasks regardless of their difficulty i.e. approach motivation). The theory also suggests that those who have a stronger motive to avoid failure tend to find all achievement-orientated activities unattractive, and that such persons only perform these tasks when they’re obligated to (Atkinson & Litwin, 1960). Interestingly, Atkinson & Litwin (1960) reported that when participants were faced with a simple throwing task, they choose to stand at approximately 10 feet, where they achieved a success rate of around 50%, which perhaps demonstrates this conflict of motives in action. As this study is outdated, the present study sought to replicate their findings using a modern approach. Most importantly, we are interested in whether the wording of the instructions can influence where the participant chooses to stand.

To asses this, we assigned you to one of two conditions. You were either assigned to the ‘achievement’ condition, where you were told “I want to see how good you are at this task” or the ‘accuracy’ condition, where you were told “The only goal is to get the bean bag into the hoop”. We tested your decision of where to stand in the 1st part of the experiment, and your accuracy in the 2nd part of the experiment. This will allow us to identify where you chose to stand, and your success rate from your chosen spot. These findings will either allow us to support or question the findings of Atkinson & Litwin.

Thank you for participating in our experiment. Without the help of volunteers like you, we would not be able to answer many interesting questions in psychology.

If you have any questions about the experiment or would like an update on our results, please email any of the researchers at:

[Conor.connolly.16@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:Conor.connolly.16@abdn.ac.uk) (Conducting researcher)

[A.hunt@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:A.hunt@abdn.ac.uk) (Study supervisor)

For further reading, please see the following reference.

Further Reading

Atkinson, J. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1960). Achievement motive and test anxiety conceived as motive to approach success and motive to avoid failure. *The journal of abnormal and social psychology*, *60*(1), 52.