

On the potential influence of setting goals on students' future development

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Abstract: Goal setting is always noticed by the field of many in the field of psychology, education, economics, etc. It is so important that numbers of expert research it. From Locke, we know that goal-setting can lead to a positive impact on our future performance because we will use it more, more energy on our goals to achieve it. It is quite useful to study the goal-setting process in the field of education, especially for high school students. Goal-setting is a process that can make us act more efficiently. According to Locke, the goals might make us put more energy and attention to our goals. It will increase the extent of personal efforts and it is very helpful for the individuals to achieve their goal.

Keywords: Setting goals, future developments, education, school students

The goal-setting is always complex which means it will lead to many other things. Goal-setting can indeed make us concentrate on our goals but it will also bring many other distractions that will disperse our attention. The students will be more concerned about the consequences that mean the consequence will make a big impact on their future performance. The student will not give a strong point on the process to your goal but only attach importance to the consequence. If they achieve goals, they will keep going and get more confidence. However, if they do not achieve it, students may lose confidence. If their confidence disappearing, they will also lose their motivation. Motivation is one of the keys to achievement. Many people will never fight again after they lose their motivation. So that makes different people have a different way to set their goals.

It's common to see students often change their small goals, however, they seldom change their final academic goal. Normally, we think the person who changes his goal means he doesn't have a strong will and he will fail to achieve his final goal. Is it true? Of course not. We have a lot of bias in this opinion. It is true everyone wants to learn the good students' learning style and they think probably the style of study can help them get a high score. Sometimes it does help but other times it doesn't. That depends on you, whether you can get fit into it. Like the machine, not the biggest gear is the best. The fit one is the best one for you. Different people use different gear to make their machines great and unique.

There is a lot of bias in the goal-setting. Some people copy other student's methods of setting goals without any change because they think if I use their way, I can learn as well as them. Some people think more the difficult the goal is, the more the reward he will get. First, which goal do the person A chooses, narrow one or wide one. Second, after A know the consequence of inceptive goal, what's A's reaction, and what affection of it for A final academic goal. Third, find out other people's reactions. What's A's next step. Forth, will A change his goal after notice these things, etc? After doing all these procedures, you can have a different experience. The draft of the machine needs you to revise a lot of times and that is common to fix.

After I collect the data from the interview, I get some conclusions.

- 1) The specific goal is more likely to bring you to the achievement and many students like to set the specific goals. Changing your goals is also important in the goal setting
- 2) Many high school students don't like their parents compare them with others and they also don't listen to their parents although their parents are right.
- 3) Most students don't care about their friends' reactions when they knew the consequence of their goals.
- 4) The failure of the goal will affect the future goal setting.

1. Introduction

Once my friend asked a question: “Why I cannot have a high score?” I know he is kidding with me because he is the first in our grade. However, many people asked him a lot of times why he can always get a high score. He always said: “I have a study schedule that includes all the things I have to do on this day. I set a lot of small goals that I have to achieve it in one day. It is not an exaggeration to say everything is under my control.” Many students start to copy his method, however, that does not work at all. I know that he is a “monster”. He can have no rest to have a whole day learning. His rest way is reading the book or recite the poems. Almost everybody cannot fit in his learning method because it is too hard to follow every step you have planned already. To my surprise, many people do not choose to revise their way to set the goals but suspect their learning ability. They don’t want to change their goal which is similar to my friends because they think changing the goals means they have poor will or poor intelligence. They thought the main reason why they cannot catch up with him is their intelligence or their will but not the method of goal setting. How could the good students’ method wrong? Many students believe that. I believed that there is something goes wrong. Maybe the problem is not us is something else. Maybe the method of goal setting is the problem. I collected some data from 20 different high school students. They have different final academic goals and different opinions on changing the goals. I will discuss them later.

1.1 The reason why I did this interview

Indeed, how efficient the method depends on yourself, however, we can still discuss the goal-setting way of the main group of students. You know most of the students have similar intelligence and similar background in the same school. Almost every student has their final academic goal no matter the school or reputation or other factors.

1.2 The research of goal setting

In the past of years, the goal-setting always get strong attention in the field of management psychology or educational psychology. Plenty of researchers spent countless efforts and time on it. They all want to find out the secret of goal setting. Famous researchers like Locke get the conclusion after did the 110 goal setting research, they think the goal setting will make a positive impact on the completion of the mission. They also announced after many studies they did that the difficulty of the goal-setting will also influence consequence.

Now I will simply talk about the researches which has already been done.

First, the Mechanism of Locke and other people (Locke & Latham, 1990). They think goal-setting will help people pay attention to their goals and it help them stimulate their energy so that they will work harder. Besides, the goal-setting will even enlarge the time of hard-working. In Locke’s opinion, goal setting will help people find their way to achievement. In the end, they will even develop a new method of study for achieving their goals.

Second, the cognitive theory from Burton (Burton, 1992). This theory impressed the connection between goal, motivation, confidence, and nervous. If the individual pays more attention to the consequence, they will ignore the realistic expectations of the future. They may become arrogancy or self-abasement. In this way, they may even decrease their effort level. If they value the process, they will form realistic expectations and the best psychology addition so they will be more possible to achieve their goals.

It is common to know that goal setting is a kind of process motivation theory. The theory called “Goal Setting Theory” which was raised by Locke in 1967 suggests the goal itself has the incentive action, the goal can make people put more effort into their work. They need to compare with the consequence of the goal and inceptive goal then adjust it in time that will make them more possible to achieve their goals. This will turn their need into the motivation and the motivation will help them achieve the goals,

The research from Barnet and Stanicek indicates that setting the goal makes the athlete have big progress. Besides, the pressure from other people can also affect students’ motivation like the pressure from their peers or parents, even from society. Though the research from Mcmillan, J.K. said that the function of cognition, explanation, and evaluation in learning is a self-evaluation and self-regulation which means they prefer to adjust their goal after know consequences. The research from the Wortman and Brehm supports that they will work harder and they found more the difficulty of the mission is more

the effort they will use. Another point is they will lose their confidence, Seligman and Mikulincer thought the failure will make the individuals' future performance worse.

2. The aim and significance of this study

In this study, I want to know the connection between goal setting and other factors. I used some questions about the environment, goal changing, dream job, and other things to find out their connection. I want to find how the person who has a specific goal react to these factors and their feeling of these things. Maybe I can use the data that I collected to have a previously unimagined consequence that will help us all.

3. The hypothesis of my research

Here are the hypothesizes of my interview.

1) Students hate their parents to monitor them to study or compare them with others that make them very uncomfortable. But it is an efficient way to make them have a high score.

2) Most of the students will care about others' reactions.

3) Many people don't like to change their goals.

The method of study

1) Subject

I choose some high school students who helped me do this interview. They all in high school with a similar rank that means they probably have a similar learning ability or the family background. Totally, there are 20 people in this interview, 4 of them are girls and the rest of them are all men. They are all 16.

2) The design of the interview.

In my interview, I asked people 15 questions. Asked about their home environment, supporting other people and their own feeling after they know the consequence of their goals. Here are the questions of my interview

a) What's your gender? (Male, Female, etc.)

b) Are you a middle school student or a high school student?

c) Do you prefer to set specific goals or set blur goals? Why?

d) Which one do you prefer to compare with yourself or compare with others? Which one makes your goal more likely to be achieved in your opinion?

e) Have your parents ever compared you with other people? What's your feeling?

f) What're your parents after they know the consequence(good one)?

g) What're your parents after they know the consequence(bad one)?

h) What's your friends' action after they know the consequence?

i) Can you talk me with one of your experiences of changing your goal before you achieved it?

j) Why you changed your goal?

k) Changing your goal is a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

l) How the goal changing affect your future performance?

m) Let's imagine that, you love playing the guitar and you spend a lot of time and money on it. Your goal is winning the competition, however, you lost it. Will you suspect your ability to play the guitar or keep practicing and wait for the next year?

n) What's your dream school?

o) What's your dream job?

p) My research purpose is to find out what factors affect your goals and how these factors affect you? What do you want to talk with me about this?

I try to find out the connection between these questions. There must be some things are stable and some things are various. The various part can be the reason why these people have different grades. These questions have the potential logical connection. At first, I asked which way they prefer to set the goal. Then I asked their gender because gender is one of the reasons that make people have different answers. They may pay more attention to their environment that means they care more about the reaction of other people. After they know the reaction, they probably will change their goals or just keep going. You know, although the final goals may not change the small goal will change. It is worth to ask them about the goal changing.

3) The reason why I use the interview

First, I need to get more literature information than only the option question so if I use the survey that won't help me a lot. Second, all the samples that I found are all from my friends which means I know them well so I can discuss more further on it. Third, if I use a survey that will make a lot of trouble not only for me but also for them. The survey faces wider people who may not be familiar with them, if you send a survey with a lot of writing parts, they probably don't want to give you a favor. The interview is more specific that will make you give an impression as you value them a lot and they are probably familiar with you, so they will probably prefer to help you and they will use their heart to finish it.

After the interview is also important, you can talk more about your questions like ask more details. I supposed that the time after the interview is always joyful because I can know more about who he is. Even it can increase our relationship. Talking with friends always is happy to do with.

4. The implication for the policy

4.1 The group of students

Students want to find a good way to set their goals and make their work more efficient. The work of students is having a high score or do well in their schools and enter a good school. They probably are very confused about the goal setting. Everybody says setting the goals in this way is very efficient, why I cannot be efficient? That is their trouble. They want to go through that cycle and find out why that way is not to fit on him. They need to know that not the goals fit on other people means that goal is fit on you and you don't worry about some kind of goal setting cannot work on them. Students prefer to rid of their parents so they want to do anything on their own including setting the goal so they probably do a lot of things wrong in the past. It is important to talk with parents and seek their suggestions because they have experienced a similar situation so they can save the students a lot of effort. Understanding

4.2 The group of parents.

Parents love setting the goal for their children and they love learning from other people. My parents always teach me a lot of "lessons" like set a huge goal is the best way to set your goal! However, many students are suffered a lot from their parents and they are under the huge pressure from their parents. Parents should know that not the specific method can help students to achieve their dreams. The most important thing is whether the method fits with their children. I think the work of the parents is to correct the original goals set by their children like give them advice in a potential way. They can tell their children in a special way like to tell them a story to teach them how to set a goal or correct the wrong part of their goals.

4.3 Analyzation

1) Specific and blur goals

In the past research, we know that the specific goal can motivate the students more than the blur one. However, most people know that they still choose the blur goal. In my interview, about 30% of people choose blur goals. It is not clear that the people who like to set a specific goal know to set the goal in this way is more efficient. Is it means the people who choose blur goal don't know that? Of course not. The reason why they choose the blur one is the specific one is unfriendly with them. What's that mean? First, we have to know the theory of a specific goal. That is turn the pressure to the motivation. some people cannot stand the pressure that makes them very uncomfortable. Second, if you failed to achieve the

specific goal, that will hurt you a lot and even make you lose your confidence. However, the blur one will not. Because the goal itself is a blur so they cannot point which consequence means achieve and which is not. They will not get pain in the consequence. These kinds of people often don't like other people force them and they are diffidence. They always value the consequence so they don't like the set the specific goal though they know it is more efficient.

The people who are extroverted prefer to set specific goals because they like an adventure. The careless the consequence but the process. They can get a lot more specific goals such as higher grades or pleasure.

That does not mean the extroversion is better than the diffidence. We only discuss the difference. Different methods fit different people. The blur goals make people become more confident and the specific goals make people enjoy the adventure. After setting the blur goals several times, they can try the specific one. Although the specific one will make them uncomfortable, it is worth to have a try. The main reason is if they don't force themselves, how can they make huge progress. The process maybe is painful but after the trying, they will see their true power. The end is not important but the process. "Failure is the mother of achievement".

2) The affection from circumstances

In the interview, everyone has experienced the comparison from their parents. 95% of students hate their parents to compare them with other students. They are very angry with it because this action is deemed not to respect them. Only a female thought this action is kind of encouragement. Teenagers are eager to get rid of their parents and they want more freedom like the Icarus who want to fly to the higher sky and ignore the word his father said. Often, they don't care about their parents' intentions behind their actions. They only thought their parents' actions is trying to control them so they are angry with this. The girl who acceptable the comparison seems to understand the potential intention. She knows why her parents do this and make it a motivation to make progress. I also found that boys often don't care about the reaction from other people after they know the consequence. Many people just said that they don't know their reaction. 70% of students don't know the reaction from their friends and 80% of people know their parents' reactions. Only 20% know both friends' and parents' reactions. Boys often don't care about others' reaction but girls always care about their friends' reactions. I think because always sometimes students have to stay with your parents so it is not weird for them to know the reaction of their parents. I found that the people who attach importance to the reaction from others prefer to set specific goals. These people are more cautious and sensitive than other people. I also found that the people who notice others' reactions often clear their dream job but the people who don't care about the surrounding area often don't find their dream job or their dream job is not a specific job but is work in a field. In my opinion, the people who are more sensitive prefer to set a specific goal. One reason is they usually think a lot about their future so they will project their life in more detail. These kinds of people are usually women.

3) The goal of changing

Goal changing always happens in our lives and many people think it is wrong to change your goal. There is an old saying in China: the road of their choice, kneeling also wants to go through it. However, it is wrong in many cases. For example, there is a man called Cao Cao, he is very famous in the world. Once, he is the founder of Wei during the period called "the Three Kingdoms". He is known as an arch-careerist because he stole the country of Han. Do you know that his incipient goal was to be a great minister and helped revive the Han? That was his dream. However, after he saw how rotten the royal court was. He gave up his goal and change another one. Building his own kingdom. If Cao Cao didn't change his goal but insist on his beginning goal, he will probably not become a king and even death in the court. From my interview, I found that about 80% of people have changed their goals and they think changing the goal is a good thing because that can help them more efficiently. We always set a lot of goals and many of them we cannot achieve it. Like the New Year's wish, we plan our whole year like reduce 20 pounds or buy a new car. But at the end of this year, we found that we even increase 20 pounds and have no money to buy the train ticket. These kinds of goals not only can help us become better but also paralysis our eyes. We need to change them like run 1000m each day or every day save 10 yuan. Not keep going is always right, changing is also important.

Once, I asked my friend: "Have you ever changed your goals?" She said no because how could be the dream changed? She set every goal carefully and make sure every goal is properly for her to do. She tried her best to do it even she knew that is really hard to achieve. She never gives up. If she failed to achieve it, she will record it and analyze why she failed. She doesn't afraid of failed because the failure is the mother of the achievement. I think she is the kind of person who is optimistic.

It is okay for both two ways. That depends on your personality and the situation. Sometimes, we have to change and sometimes we can insist on it. Don't feel sad after the failure because that can be a lesson for you and you can turn the sadness into your motivation.

4) The action after the failure.

Here is my question:

Let's imagine that, you love playing the guitar and you spend a lot of time and money on it. Your goal is winning the competition, however, you lost it. Will you suspect your ability to play the guitar or keep practicing and wait for the next year?

Many people will consider changing their goals in this situation because they think the guitar maybe don't fit on them. Some of them think the problem is not no themselves but the method. Some of them consider that they are not good at guitar and lose their confidence. I conclude these two kinds of people into one group called group A. Other people will keep going because they have invested a lot or they just want to prove themselves. I conclude them in group B. In my opinion, I think these two groups are all right. However, I told this question with my brother who gave up the guitar when he was young. At first, I asked him: "Why you gave it up?" He told me that he practiced a lot and that made his fingers very hurt, however, he still couldn't play a wonderful song so he gave it up. "Did you regret it?" "Definitely not. I was even glad that I gave it up before I invest more time or money. You know, I have a lot of things to do and my parents force me to put all the energy on the study so I have to give it up." If a person invests a lot of things in his goals, he will hardly give it up. He will keep investing until he has no money or he has no chance to achieve anymore. That just like the gamble. There are a lot of people trap in this situation. To be honest, group A and group B are all reasonable. But, if you have no more chance, it is better for you to change it. Now imagine playing the guitar is your learning method and get the prize is your goal and you are a high school student. In high school, many people are busy and they have no more time to test whether this method fits them. If you found that method is not fit you, just change it. If you have a lot of time or money, you can do whatever you want. Once you failed is not a horrible thing but if you always fail, you have to think it carefully. You don't need to suspect your ability because it is useless and it will even distract your attention on the study.

It is interesting that I found the people who will suspect themselves are often keep the mind on their environment. They care more about others' reactions and of course they will think more about themselves. Sometimes, they may put their attention in the wrong place. In this situation is themselves but not the method.

5. Conclusion

Back to the story in the introduction part. Many people are trapped in that marsh. There is a student called C to jump out of this marsh. "Why not I design a special method of my goal setting on my own?" he thought. He started to consider a lot of that. What's my personality? What's my first step? What's my dream school. After thinking a lot, he decides to set a small goal as his beginning. He doesn't like to feel to nurse so he sets a wide one. After he achieves this small goal, he decides to set a more difficult one. However, this time, he loses his goal. His parents give him some advice and he accepts them. He changes his goal and keeps going. I think set the goal by yourself is the best way because you are the person who knows you well. You can try others' methods but if it does not work, you'd better change another one. Changing is the most important part of goal setting. We are not a saint so we cannot always right. As research from the Mcmillan, J.K., the self-evaluation is very important. Students need self-evaluation in order to adjust their goal in time. Although parents compare their children with other people will make their children feel angry especially the teenagers, the students know that parents want you to do better. If the students don't like this, they can talk with their parents to express that they hate this behave.

Above all. Imagine that there is a student called D. First, D has to get an academic goal like better than yesterday or get a doctoral degree. Second, set a small goal. It is better to set a specific goal because a specific goal can force D to keep going. Third, after knowing the consequence of goal, he starts to consider the next step. D can ask for help from his parents or friend to do some changing on inceptive goals. Forth, D should not suspect his learning ability because that will not bring him any benefit. In the end, he keeps going until he achieves his final academic goal or dream school. Planning is very important. D has to think about his future job or dream school because high school students is elder enough, they will be soon work in society.

Not everyone can be like my friend who is always doing a good job but we can do ourselves. Maybe we cannot get the rank of 10 in the grade immediately but we can slowly make progress until we achieve it. Different people have different ways to set the goal and don't forget that changing is important.

In my opinion, from now on, we need to find our way to set our goals. After many times of trying, we have to know which way is fit on us. Trying is the first step of the road to success. Don't fear the failure. Don't suspect yourself. Don't keep going without changing. Keep mind. Stay calm.

6. Limitation

In this research, I don't get too many samples because of the epidemic so I think my conclusion is not very correct. In my research, I discuss the factor which may affect the goal-setting. Like the personality and gender. However, because I have no too much time and it is my first time to the writer the paper. I cannot discuss it specifically and correctly. My conclusion is the best way to set goals is to find a way that is the fittest one on oneself. However, that is not an efficient way. Many people don't know which way is the fittest way for them. They even don't know how they find them. My further research may talk about that. Second, the main problem is I have too many variables so my analysis is not persuasiveness. Third, my interview also has some problems. Some of my questions confuse other people so their answers sometimes are not what I want.

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