

Performance deficits following failure: Learned helplessness or self-esteem protection? Witkowski, Tomasz; Stiensmeier-Pelster, Joachim; *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol 37(1), Mar, 1998. pp. 59-71. [Journal Article] Abstract: Reports 2 laboratory experiments which compare 2 competing explanations of performance deficits following failure: one based on M. E. P. Seligman's learned helplessness theory (LHT), and the other, on self-esteem protection theory (SEPT). In both studies, participants [Study 1, 40 pupils (mean age 17.2 yrs) from secondary schools in Walbrzych, Poland; Study 2, 45 students (mean age 25 yrs) from the University of Bielefeld, Germany] were confronted with either success or failure in a 1st phase of the experiment. Then, in the 2nd phase of the experiment the participants had to work on a set of mathematical problems (Study 1) or a set of tasks taken from Raven's Progressive Matrices (Study 2) either privately or in public. In both studies failure in the 1st phase causes performance deficits in the 2nd phase only if the participants had to solve the test tasks in public. These results were interpreted in line with SEPT and as incompatible with LHT. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2010 APA, all rights reserved)

Tematy: Failure; Learned Helplessness; Performance; Self Esteem; Adolescence (13-17 yrs); Adulthood (18 yrs & older); Young Adulthood (18-29 yrs); Male; Female