

## Concept: Control value theory

### Brief overview of concept:

Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun *et al.*, 2007) is a behavioural theory that focuses on how learners' emotions and motivations are influenced by the learner's own perceived level of control over their outcomes. This perception additionally is impacted by the value they place on the outcomes of academic activities. Control-value theory therefore aims to explain the complex interplay between control perceptions, achievement emotions, and academic performance.

### Control Appraisals:

A key element of Control-Value Theory is individuals' appraisals of control in academic situations. This appraisal includes perceptions of their control over a task, the influence of effort on potential outcomes, and the degree to which success is attributed to personal abilities.

### Value Appraisals:

The individual's perceptions of the value of academic tasks is fundamental to their motivation and ownership of that task. This evaluation involves determining the personal importance of tasks, the learner's interest in the subject matter, and the relevance to the learner of the stated learning goals and outcomes.

### Achievement Emotions:

Control and Value Appraisals influence the experience of 'achievement emotions' - the emotions induced by (or associated with) success or failure. These emotions might include enjoyment, pride, satisfaction at success; or anxiety, anger, frustration, dejection or boredom, as a result of failure/under-achievement. These emotions play a crucial role in shaping individuals' motivation, engagement, and overall well-being in academic settings. The 4 major

factors for Achievement Emotions are summarised in figure 1: Cognitive Appraisals, Physiological Responses, Expression factors and Subjective feelings.

Figure 1

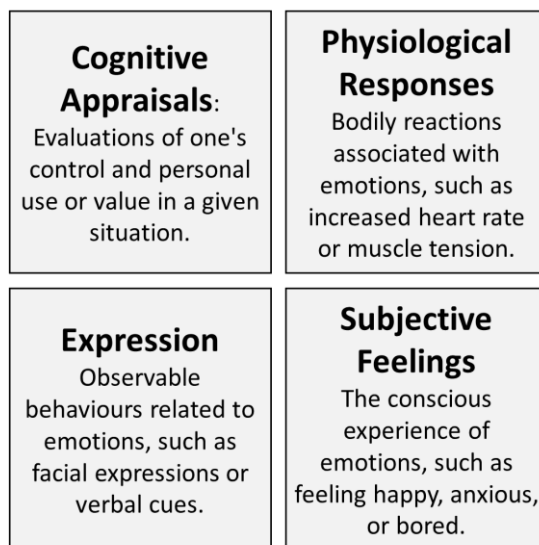


Figure 1: Key factors impacting upon Achievement Emotions (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun *et al.*, 2007)

### Emotion Regulation:

To a great or messed extent, learners engage in emotion regulation strategies to manage their emotional experiences in academic contexts. Emotion regulation can impact motivation, persistence, and performance. **Achievement emotions** influence motivational and learning outcomes. Positive emotions, such as enjoyment, are associated with increased motivation and better learning outcomes, while negative emotions, such as anxiety or boredom, may hinder motivation and performance.

Figure 2

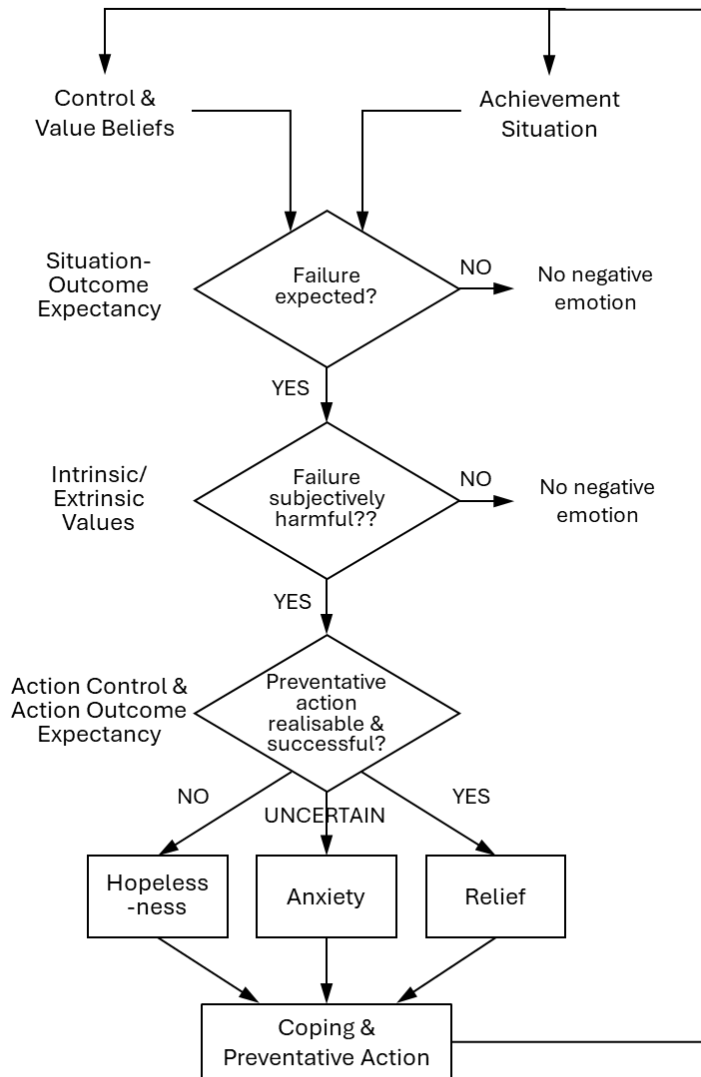


Figure 2 - Typical sequence of control appraisals, value appraisals, and negative achievement emotions. Adapted from Pekrun (2006)

Figure 2, adapted from Pekrun (2006) highlights the interactions between these various factors. The Control and Value Beliefs, as well as the situation in which the learner is situated impact on their expectations of success, their intrinsic and extrinsic values, and their degree of agency and control over their actions and the outcomes of those actions. These factors, if they impact on the learner, lead to the development of coping strategies and preventative actions, which then refine how they interact with those initial factors. The whole process is an iterative loop.

### How does this theory align with EAT?

Considerations of learners' perceptions of their agency within a learning task is underpinned by all the subdimensions of EAT. The engagement with an assessment being impacted by their perceptions of relevance, and their ability to influence the outcomes of their assessment, are influenced strongly by their assessment literacy. Clarity of how tasks fit together (AL2), the

relevance of the task to discipline (AL4/AD2), signposting of what they need to do to succeed (AL1), and their roles and responsibilities (AL3), directly impact on the sense of control and agency.

The emotional response to feedback has a clear alignment to this theory. Achievement emotions, and the extent to which a student can regulate these, have a major influence on the extent to which they engage with feedback. A major contemporary challenge in higher education is encouraging students to engage with feedback after an assessment. This challenge is particularly significant if the outcomes of that assessment are worse than the learner was anticipating. Managing their emotions is fundamental in affecting the extent to which they will want to engage with the feedback, and apply it to feed forward. The development of peer- and self-feedback (AF3 and AF4) can help mediate these emotions. The same is true for the impact of accessible and timely feedback (AF1 and AF2).

The practical challenge, therefore, is ensuring that learners are able to effectively evaluate the value of an activity to their learning, as well as their own levels of agency and control within that learning activity. Effective assessment design to support these factors.

## References

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