

## Abstract

Despite its popularity as a management tool among numerous organizations, the practice of goal setting may unintentionally contribute to harmful consequences like stressful working atmosphere and unethical behaviors. This study examined how different goal assignment methods (“do-your-best”, “assigned goal”, and “assigned goal with monetary reward”) and goal proximity (“close to goal” and “far away from goal”) affect participants’ tendency to engage in unethical behavior, measured as performance overstatement in both individual and group setting. Comparison was made between the behavioural patterns of goal setting and unethical behavior among group and individual setting. Results indicated that in both group and individual setting, apart from motivating participants to work harder and have better performance, goal setting can also encourage them to engage in unethical behaviors. Participants were more likely to overstate their performance when they were assigned a specific goal with or without monetary reward in both group and individual level. In addition, it is showed that participants’ decision of engaging in performance overstatements or not in the individual setting was more likely to be affected by goal proximity than those in the individual setting. Also, it is found that participants were less likely to overstate when they were working with a group than working alone. Implications for the business and future directions were also discussed.

## 摘要

目標設定理論被廣泛應用於商業管理上，然而有研究指出它會為機構帶來一些負面影響。本研究利用實驗的形式，志在研究在個人與小組層面上，不同的目標類型(盡力而為、指定目標和指定獎勵目標)與目標近位性(表現與目標距離較大、表現與目標距離較小)如何影響實驗參加者不道德行為(參加者於上報成績時誇大自己所得的分數)的模式。實驗結果顯示，在小組與個人層面上，指定的目標會增加參加者誇大成績的機會，而目標近位性則對個人參加者的是否誇大成績的影響比小組參加者為大。是次研究發現目標設定在個人及小組層面均有正面與負面的影響，基於在現代商業社會中不少機構均以小組為行政運作單位，本研究有助理解目標設定的限制與在應用時應注意的事項，使工業與組織心理學於此研究範疇上有更進一步的認識。