INTRODUCTION

According to Thoha (1999), perception is a cognitive process experienced by everyone in understanding environmental information through senses like sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Widayatun (1999) posits that perception arises from objects or stimuli captured by the senses, which the brain then interprets as impressions or responses. Perception, especially regarding students’ ambitious behavior, is a frequent occurrence in academic environments.

Ambition in students is generally viewed positively, as it motivates them to fulfill their duties and develop their skills. Perceptions allow individuals to assess things based on what they see, influenced by their environment and knowledge. This process enables one to objectively or subjectively evaluate the worth of others. Our research focuses on ambitious behavior, a topic of significant discussion. The context of this issue often involves ambitious individuals prioritizing their own goals over others’, lacking balance between personal interests and those of others, and unwilling to be outperformed. Excessive ambition can lead to intense struggles to achieve goals, even if it means undermining others. Individual perceptions vary greatly, as do views on ambitious behavior in student environments. Some students view ambition as a positive trait necessary for everyone, providing motivation for life. This ambition inspires individuals to pursue new endeavors daily. Conversely, other students find ambitious behavior irritating.
seeing it as a manifestation of selfishness and competitive reluctance. Such contrasting views are common and not inherently wrong, as personal perspectives can significantly differ.

Behavior and thought patterns simply refer to consistent, repeated actions or habits displayed by individuals or groups in specific situations or at particular times. This includes how someone acts, responds, or behaves in daily life contexts. Generally, university settings offer diverse human characteristics, particularly among students. Students, as defined by experts, are individuals engaged in higher education or advanced learning programs. Psychologist Abraham Maslow suggests that students are individuals striving to meet their educational and self-development needs, aiming to realize their full potential through higher education. This understanding reveals that every student has unique goals and priorities. Recently, numerous conflicts in student environments have stemmed from individual students’ selfish ambition.

The serious nature of academic environments fosters a highly competitive atmosphere, with the academic phase being crucial for future career opportunities. This influences how students behave in competition to achieve their goals. Competition involves emotions and feelings, with ambition being a common emotion in academic life. Henry Murray, a psychologist, defines ambition as a strong desire to achieve extraordinary things, gain recognition, and feel competent in achieving goals.

Ambition has two facets: healthy ambition and excessive or negative ambition. Individuals with healthy ambition still consider others’ interests alongside their own. They strive to achieve set goals without resorting to unethical means or undermining their peers. On the other hand, those with excessive ambition often go to any lengths to reach their goals, even if it means harming others. Consequently, many students are highly motivated to be top performers in all aspects.

This competition leads to diverse perceptions and interpretations of ambition. Currently, many students view ambitious behavior as detrimental, openly expressing opposition to overly ambitious peers. They believe ambitious students cannot freely enjoy their youth and are selfishly focused on their own goals. These views stem from real incidents in academic settings. Indeed, most ambitious students tend to be selfish, focused solely on their aims. Their motivation often makes them oblivious to those around them, sometimes harming others. Ambitious students sometimes refuse to accept defeat, resorting to any means necessary to achieve their goals, even at the expense of those around them. However, not all ambitious students behave in such a manner; many still care for their peers and share knowledge with them.

Given the phenomenon of ambitious student behavior in campus environments, we decided to research this topic. Our study aims to understand students’ opinions and thoughts on ambitious behavior within the campus context. Does this behavior impact them positively or negatively, and what are their other thoughts on student ambition? The research categorizes findings within theoretical frameworks like Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology. Ambition is a human trait characterized by a determined and persistent pursuit of goals.

Fundamentally, ambitious behavior is positive, as it enables individuals to be responsible for their tasks and perform well. However, in the current academic world, where students compete against each other, ambitious behavior can become harmful, leading some to do anything to achieve their goals, even if it means undermining fellow students. This phenomenon has resulted in various perceptions among students who feel its impact. Some believe that if ambitious behavior is healthy and beneficial for others, it should be encouraged and developed.

But if it becomes detrimental and disruptive, they prefer to distance themselves from such individuals. These perceptions are based on real experiences in the highly competitive world of academia.

The study’s aim is to gather perceptions to understand students’ views on ambitious behavior patterns in academic competition. We posed several questions related to the issue, targeting active students aged 18–21 years. This age range was chosen as these individuals are more likely to actively interact with others and interpret behaviors. The study’s objective is to help students understand that ambition is not inherently wrong if practiced wisely and considerately, without harming fellow students. Through this research, ambitious students can learn about others’ perceptions of their behavior and possibly limit it to avoid negative impacts. This research allows both parties to understand and regulate their behavior towards each other. Interviews with active students were conducted to gather their responses and feelings towards peers with ambitious behavior. These interviews also revealed their perceptions of ambitious students, ranging from negative to positive views. Therefore, this study is highly beneficial.
for students in dealing with ambitious behavior in academic life.

In our research, we have chosen the Social Judgment Theory as one of our theoretical approaches. This theory considers the role of ego involvement in how one evaluates others based on their communication methods and interprets the meanings and messages in others’ behaviors. Meanwhile, the Sociopsychological Tradition explores the study of individuals as social beings, stemming from social psychology. This tradition focuses on individual social behaviors, psychological variables, individual effects, personality traits, perceptions, and cognition (Littlejohn, 2009:63). Sociopsychology delves deeper into a person’s psychological perspective in various aspects, ranging from their viewpoint, thought patterns, and the influence of personal experiences on their behavior and choices. Social judgment, a part of social cognition, encompasses ways we interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about our surroundings, essentially how our mind works to comprehend an environment for adaptation.

The Cognition of Social Psychology emphasizes observable external aspects when we see someone. What we first notice forms an impression of that person, which we then evaluate based on our initial observations. In social judgment within social cognition, an individual doesn't just form impressions of one person; they also categorize (segment) these impressions individually or in groups. Social judgment involves a person’s social explanation process to evaluate what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate in various activities, underpinned by social explanation, social learning, linguistic pragmatism, and emotional accounting (Mao, & Gratch, 2004). This aligns with our study of behavioral patterns, where in social interactions, individuals may speak with anyone, but not everything said by others is fully accepted. For example, in evaluating ambitious attitudes, if one person considers ambition good, another might differ, believing that each behavior can be seen as good or bad based on criteria set in one’s mind. Social Judgment Theory is interrelated with the Sociopsychological Tradition, involving psychological processes like ego. This theory discusses how we evaluate messages starting from how we communicate with others and how others influence our self-belief and confidence. This situation aligns with the phenomenon we are researching, where we inquire about ambitious behavior from several individuals, who likely have varying interpretations of ambition. This variation also stems from an individual’s self-confidence based on what they see and hear, leading to interpretation. The evaluation we aim to research remains the same, focusing on the perception of “ambition in student academic competition.” Here, students believe that ambition is a quality that should be cultivated by successful learners who have privileged opportunities, yet it shouldn’t dominate. Others think that ambitious attitudes lead to unhealthy competition, often arising in situations where positions are contested based on merit. This theory also includes the aspect of individual involvement influenced by ego, linking the effects that occur for each issue faced by an individual. Traits represent causality or distinguishing characteristics, a consistent way of thinking, feeling, and behaving in situations (Littlejohn, 2009:98). In trait theory, behavior is determined by a combination of traits and situations, allowing us to examine ambitious behavior deeply within academic competition. We also incorporate Attribution Theory in our study, related to behavioral evaluation. This theory discusses how each individual tries to understand their own behavior and that of others, and how they actually behave.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, enabling an in-depth exploration of Students’ Perceptions of Ambitious Behavior Patterns. Data were collected through comprehensive interviews with participants actively involved in this research. The respondents in this study are active university students. Additionally, direct observation was utilized to gain a deeper understanding of the research context. The qualitative approach allows researchers to delve into individual viewpoints and experiences, thereby effectively depicting complex and contextual phenomena. For this study, respondents were selected purposively, meaning they were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research topic, such as being active university students aged 18-21 years. This age range was chosen because these individuals are more likely to engage actively with others and interpret the attitudes and behaviors of their peers. Selecting respondents based on these criteria ensures that the data collected is both relevant and valuable for addressing the research questions. The gathered data in this study will be analyzed.
thematically. The first step involves transcribing the interviews and observational notes. Following this, key themes and patterns will be identified from the data. The primary theme revolves around the Patterns of Perception in Student Academic Competition, employing the Social Judgment Theory (Involving Ego).

The analysis results will be used to compile the main findings of this study, supporting research in the tradition of Sociopsychological Communication. This approach enables researchers to extract profound meanings from the collected data and answer research questions with solid empirical evidence.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we explored several interconnected subtopics under the theme “Perception of Ambitious Behavior Patterns in Student Academic Competition.” This encompassed the definition of ambitious behavior, social judgment theory, sociopsychological tradition, and interviews conducted with a student participant. Ambitious behavior is often exhibited by individuals with high goals and aspirations, who are willing to strive and work diligently for success. Psychologist Abraham Maslow stated that “ambition and personal achievement are often seen as part of higher-level needs known as 'self-actualization,' where individuals aim to reach their full potential.” Our research found that most respondents believe students with ambitious behavior patterns are indeed hard workers, willing to put in significant effort to achieve their goals, and are ready to do whatever it takes to reach their desired objectives. Ambition in academic competition represents a powerful motivational force for individuals to achieve and realize their goals. The fundamental concept of ambition involves elements like lofty goals, a willingness to learn, and the ability to prioritize. Without these, ambitious behavior patterns in students may not develop. However, the nature of ambitious behavior varies among individuals, depending on their background, objectives, and values. Social Judgment Theory explains how ego involvement influences whether to engage in a debate or not. When our ego aligns with someone’s behavior or perception, it can lead to visible dominance in a situation. However, not all individuals react the same way to disagreements, with responses varying significantly based on individual ego differences. Only the individual can determine their role in such situations, whether to oppose or accept, and whether to show or hide their involvement. This theory also relates to how individuals face challenges, like overambitious behavior, which may create a negative image among peers. It delves into the contrasting effects – understanding the background of behaviors, possibly stemming from past neglect, leading to a strong desire for attention and recognition. On the other hand, the assimilation effect offers a different perspective, where a person’s strong character might deter others from interacting, leading to perceptions of needing a “stage” for their actions. Social judgment also involves understanding attitude changes related to ego involvement. The more our ego is involved in evaluating something, the deeper our engagement in understanding the background and rationale for decision-making.

The Sociopsychological Tradition studies individuals as social beings derived from social psychology. This tradition closely relates to individual social behavior, psychological variables, personal effects, personality traits, perception, and cognition (Littlejohn, 2009:63).

It emphasizes how communication processes start with the individuals involved. It shows how individuals plan their messaging strategies, how message recipients process the content, and the effects of messages on individuals or groups. As outlined in the course material “Theory of Communication” by Daniel Susilo, S.I.Kom, M.I.Kom, this tradition includes various branches:

a. Behavior: This branch examines the relationship between human communication behavior, what is said, and what is done, focusing on how behavior links with stimuli and responses or feedback.

b. Cognitive: This area focuses on mental operations – how individuals acquire, store, and process information.

c. Biological: This branch looks at genetics, believing that characteristics, thinking patterns, and behaviors are biologically bound and influenced by neurobiology (nervous system) from birth.

These aspects clarify how various factors influence individual development, shaping perspectives related to personal traits. Ambitious characteristics can arise from different aspects, like social norms or family culture, leading to behavior that targets high academic achievement, sometimes through
unfair means.

We also conducted interviews with four students regarding ambitious behavior in campus settings, yielding a range of varied assessments among students. The core insights from these interviews supported our research, revealing diverse responses to questions about ambition.

1. What is Ambition?: Ambition is perceived as the attitude or trait of working hard to achieve one’s goals or aspirations.

2. Patterns of Academic Competition: Respondents experienced varied patterns of academic competition, ranging from moderate to unhealthy, where some students resort to paying others for good grades, viewing peers as rivals in achieving their goals.

3. Characteristics of Healthy vs. Excessive Ambition: Healthy ambition balances personal goals with others’ interests without undermining others. In contrast, excessive ambition involves doing anything to achieve personal goals, even at the expense of peers.

4. Reaction to Ambitious Individuals: Many respondents expressed reluctance to befriend overly ambitious individuals, perceiving them as detrimental to their social environment due to their readiness to sacrifice others for their own success.

5. Admirable Aspects of Ambition: Admirable ambition involves maintaining a balance between one’s own goals and others’ interests, striving equitably without disadvantaging others. From these responses, it is evident that individuals with excessive ambition are often viewed negatively by their peers, leading to social discomfort and avoidance. Additionally, our study included Attribution Theory to better understand the reasons behind ambitious behavior. This theory considers various possibilities based on overall experiences, understanding, and perception styles related to situations. For example, when evaluating an ambitious friend, one might perceive their ambition as a barrier to sharing knowledge with others, leading to different interpretations of their behavior based on experience, understanding, and situational context.

4. CONCLUSION

Ambitious behavior can be viewed as having dual perspectives - both positive and negative - depending on its application in the academic learning process. Sociopsychological studies have aided us in evaluating events by considering the overall observations based on personal experiences, others’ viewpoints, and the level of ego involvement in self-assessment. Our research on the impact of ambitious behavior within the student environment reveals that numerous students perceive it negatively. It has been observed that sometimes students exhibit excessive ambition, going to great lengths, including sacrificing the interests of their peers, to achieve their goals. This excessive ambition, often driven by self-centeredness, leads to a negative perception among other students.

However, when ambitious behavior positively impacts fellow students, it is deemed acceptable. Contrarily, if ambitious behavior yields positive outcomes, some students may choose to distance themselves, fearing negative repercussions on those around them who are seen as competitors. Positive ambitious behavior can serve as an inspiring example for peers, encouraging productivity and skill enhancement. Ambitious behavior in students is not inherently problematic; it becomes commendable when channeled into positive actions that benefit others while moderating any egocentric tendencies related to personal goals.

REFERENCES