

**SELF EFFICACY: MOTIVATOR FOR LEARNING.**

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Trichy – 620004.**ABSTRACT**

Self-efficacy and motivation to learn are the important factors that affect the academic performance of an individual/student. Over the last years researchers have found nine commonly researched psychosocial constructs among which academic self-efficacy was and has been the strongest single predictor of student's academic achievement and performance. Self-efficacy belief has been used as a performance-based measure thereby as an influence to motivate the academic performance of the student. This article explains the influence and interrelationship of self-efficacy as a motivator and as a contributor to the academic performance of the individual.

**INTRODUCTION**

Self-efficacy is based on Social Learning Theory a construct that affects motivation that promotes or inhibits learning. The Social Learning Theory (1960s) by Albert Bandura developed into the Social Cognitive Theory in 1986, which is based on self-efficacy belief. Self-efficacy belief provides the foundation for human – motivation, well-being and personal accomplishment. The theory explained, learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour. It emphasizes on how these factors interact to determine motivation and behaviour. It considers the unique way in which an individual performs a behaviour also considering the social environment in which the individual performs the behaviour Bandura (1997). The first five constructs of Social learning theory was reciprocal determinism, behavioural capability, observational learning, reinforcements and expectations. The construct of self- efficacy was added when the theory evolved into Social learning theory Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis (2002). The environmental factors affecting the behaviour of an individual can be physical and social, but behaviour is not the result of the environment or environment is not simply the result of the person or behaviour; as the environment provides models for behaviour. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence, belief in his own ability to perform effectively specified task. The theory stressed that human action and success depended on how profound was the interaction between one's thought and action Yusuf (2011).

**Defining self-efficacy and its dimension**

Zulkosky (2009) The Social Learning Theory proposed by Bandura (1977) was renamed as Social Cognitive Theory (1986). The major component added was self-efficacy; before introducing self-efficacy as a key component in social cognitive theory; human motivation was discussed primarily in terms of outcome expectations. Zimmerman (2000) The Individual difference in outcome expectations was labelled as self-efficacy and was measured. Even though outcome expectation affects motivation, Bandura suggested self-efficacy played a larger role and defined self-efficacy as:

Bandura (1986) said:

“The conviction that one can successfully accomplish the behaviour required to produce a particular outcome. It is a judgment about how well one can organize and implement effective strategies in a situation that may include novel and often stressful elements.”

(Bandura, 1986) “People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances.” The definition explains two important aspects a) self-efficacy is a belief of one's capability b) making use of their judgement of efficacy in reference to some goal/activity Anthony & Artino (2012).

Self –efficacy beliefs are an important aspect of human motivation and behaviour as it influences the action. It refers to a belief about one's capabilities to learn or perform at designated levels Schunk & Pajares (2002). Perceived self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief about their capabilities to produce

designated level of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. A person with strong sense of efficacy is capable of obtaining extrinsic rewards Switzer, Nagy, & Mullins (2005). (Zulkosky, 2009) "Higher the level of perceived self-efficacy, the higher the levels of goal, people set for themselves, which lead to a higher level of commitment to the goals." (Bandura, Self-Efficacy, 1994) "Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes." To make use of their personal judgement of efficacy in reference to some goal or activity, to attain a designated type of performance, which reflects both the task- and situation-specific nature of efficacy beliefs is required Bandura (1986). As these given domain activity may contain novel, unpredictable and possibly stressful features. Self efficacy influences the choice of activity and also can affect motivation. Bandura (1977)

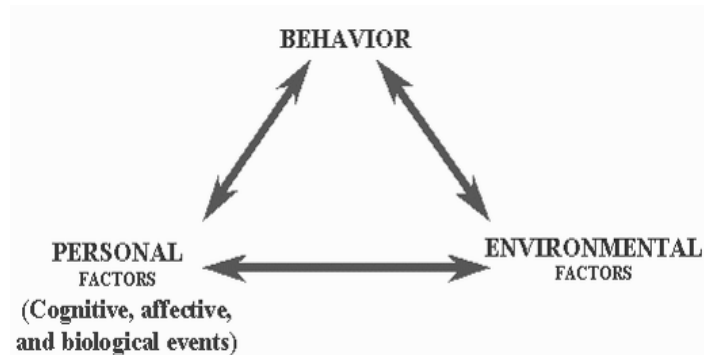


Figure 1. Source: Pajares (2002). Overview of social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy. 02-28-16.

Self-efficacy is referred to the judgement of one's capability to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments, which vary among three dimensions such as level, strength and generality Klobas, Renzi, & Nigrelli (2007). Individual vary in the *level* of difficulty of the task they can perform and in the *strength* of the beliefs about the ability to perform a particular task, given the difficulty of the task. *Generality* is a notion that efficacy beliefs associated with one activity, can be transferred to the another similar activity of the same domain or a whole range of activities Holladay & Quinones (2003).

#### SOURCES OF SELF-EFFICACY

The theory of self –efficacy assumes that individuals evaluate their efficacy belief from information acquired through four sources a) enactive mastery experiences (actual performance) b) vicarious experiences (observation of others) c) forms of persuasion (verbal) d) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their strengths, dysfunction etc...

Anthony & Artino (2012) from these sources of information, researches show that enactive mastery is the most influential source of information. A strong efficacy belief is developed through repeated success, therefore the result of a failure or its negative impact is likely to be reduced. In other words the effect of failure on the individual depends on the person's efficacy belief, the time of failure, the totality of their performance experience. Therefore later failures may not negatively impact efficacy beliefs to the same extent as earlier failures might effect.

Vicarious experiences, observers watching the other perform/succeed can generate efficacy in the observer, that the observer can also attain the performance by effort and persistence. The third source of efficacy information, verbal persuasion from others is mostly used in academic settings. The verbal persuasion can increase the perceived efficacy and bolster self-change, if the positive appraisal is within realistic bounds. The final source of information comes from the individuals own physiological and emotional feedback during performances particularly physical activity. The information conveyed is

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cognitively assessed by the individuals, which can positively or negatively influence the individual's efficacy beliefs, depending on the individual's personal cognitive appraisal.

### **SELF-EFFICACY AND MOTIVATION**

Scott (1996) an important attribute helping students become lifelong learners and joyful literates is a clear understanding of motivation.

Scott (1996) (Bandura1993) stated

“Perceived self-efficacy plays a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. It basically influences the goals of students for themselves, how much effort they will expend, how long they will persevere during difficulties and how strong their resilience to failure may be.”

These four characteristics determine the success of students, the experience that they will receive towards academic works and the motivation. An individual generally contribute to their psychosocial functioning, through the mechanism of personal agency. The most central and pervasive agency is the belief of personal efficacy. Efficacy belief is a major basis of action. Unless people believe they can produce desired impact by their actions. Therefore individuals should guide their lives by their beliefs of personal efficacy Bandura (1997).

### **SELF-EFFICACY AND STUDENT LEARNING**

Schunk D. H., (1985) Self-efficacy in students is an important variable in understanding motivated learning, which refers to motivation to acquire skills and knowledge rather than merely to complete activities. Observing similar peers succeed at a task and persuasive information from teachers can convey a vicarious sense of efficacy to students that they can accomplish. However information acquired from these sources does not influence self-efficacy directly rather the effect of it on self-efficacy depends on how the information is being processed cognitively. The self –efficacy theory suggests that a person's belief in their capacity to learn will influence their participation in learning Klobas, Renzi, & Nigrelli (2007). Mayer (2010) self-efficacy is a kind of personal expectation or judgement concerning one's capability to accomplish some task. A students self –efficacy may play an important role in his or her academic achievement. Self-efficacy theory predicts that students work harder and longer when they judge themselves more capable than when they judge themselves as unable to perform a task. It affects the amount of effort and persistence that a person devotes to a task. In the research of Kitching, Cassidy, Eachus, & Hogg (2011) which was well established with the educational sector, findings indicated self-efficacy correlates with the outcomes. Students with high self –efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves and be more motivated to succeed when faced with potential failure, as opposite for students who have low self-efficacy.

### **SELF-EFFICACY, MOTIVATION AND LEARNING**

Ersanli (2015) (Pajares & Valiante, 1997) “the beliefs that students develop about their academic capabilities help determine what they do with the knowledge and skills they possess”. First the difference between performance goal and learning goal needs to be understood. Performance goal is a goal in which a task needs to be completed. The disadvantage of a performance goal is the student compares themselves with the peer performance rather than their previous performance, it might seem that such competition motivates students but only for a short term rather than long term. Learning goal are strategies and knowledge to be acquired by the students and educators emphasize on these goals. Students work towards these goals, by focussing their attention on processes and they experienced developed self-efficacy by using effective strategies to achieve these goals Schunk D. H (1986). Motivation is the inner drive that energizes and direct human behaviour. For self-efficacy and motivation to go hand – in-hand the goals of the individual need to be more specific than general, proximal rather than distant, attainable not being to easy or unrealistic Bandura (1986). When these are the characteristics of a goal, it enables the student to believe that they can achieve it. Similarly when a student is allowed to choose their own goal, the self-efficacy of the student also increases, giving them the feel of capability and when the goal is being achieved, they are prompted to choose a new goal. So a

student should always be aware of their goal in the classroom, and these goals should empower their efficacy, thereby motivating to accomplish them Schunk & Swartz (1993). (Bandura, 1997) "Peoples level of motivation, affective states and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true." In the beginning of an academic activity student differ in their belief about their capability to acquire a particular skill, knowledge, to master the material. Etc.. Self-efficacy also varies as a function of aptitude and experience. However personal factors (goal setting and information processing) along with situational factors such as teachers feedback and reward, affect the students working. These factors serve as cues, signaling how well they are learning, which is used to assess their efficacy for future learning. As students perceive they are doing well in their learning, motivation is improved which leads to the performance of students working on task and becoming more skilful, maintaining their self-efficacy for performance Schunk D. H(1991). (Anthony & Artino, 2012) "the self-efficacy component of Albert Bandura's social-cognitive theory is believed by many scholars to be a critically important theoretical contribution to the study of academic achievement, motivation, and learning".

### **CONCLUSION**

Self-efficacy belief is an important indicator for the academic performance of a student. An educator needs to cultivate and motivate the self-efficacy belief of the student motivating them to focus on achieving their learning goal. Parents on the other hand also need to boost the belief of capability of the children which in turn builds their belief that they can achieve a particular goal or activity. As perceived self-efficacy is a powerful human characteristic. Similarly the major goal of education should focus on nurturing the intellectual, efficacy belief as Bandura mentioned and their intrinsic interest which builds them for the variety of pursuit in their lifetime.

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