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SELF-EFFICACY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH

Abstract: This study reviews the relevant self-efficacy related literature, a central point of social cognitive theory, in the area of language learning. Role of self-efficacy in academic performance of learners is also considered. In the global world, English language has become the fundamental means of international affairs and communication. As a consequence researchers tried to find out the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance in English of secondary school students. The current research tested the research hypotheses using a sample group of 520 secondary school students. Scale of self-efficacy and academic performance test in language are used as instruments. The result revealed that there is a significant difference in the academic performance in English and self-efficacy of rural and urban students. In the case of gender and type of management there were no significant difference found.

Key words: Self –efficacy, Academic performance, English language.

Introduction

Albert Bandura defined self-efficacy as "Beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given achievements". He hypothesized that the level of self-efficacy can be used to determine whether a task will be initiated, the amount of effort that will be expended and the level of persistence to complete the task when face with obstacles and aversive experiences. Once a person has acquired a high level of self-efficacy belief, he will become motivated to invest more effort in his life. Bandura theorized self-efficacy in his seminal articles; extensive studies were done to extend the role of self-efficacy as a mechanism to better understand behavioral change in the area of academic performance, cognitive functioning, health, promotion, athletic performance, career choices and coping with mental disorders.

Self-efficacy is multidimensional, that is, domain specific or context dependent. This means that high sense of efficacy in a particular domain may not necessarily translate in to having similar level in another domain. Even within the same domain, there may be different levels of self-efficacy beliefs occurring in various contexts. In this case the researchers decided to study the role of self-efficacy in academic performance of English secondary school students of Calicut District, Kerala.

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Need and Significance of the study

In the academic setting, many studies have shown that there is a positive relation between self-efficacy and academic performance. Studies found that regardless of age, gender, domains, disciplines and countries, a student with higher sense of self-efficacy will achieve better academic performance. Louise and Mistele (2011) reported that although there were differences in level of self-efficacy by gender in young adolescents taking mathematics and science, self-efficacy is still found to be a good predictor of the achievement scores. Amil (2000) studied the self-efficacy and self-regulated abilities of students taking economics at 'A' level and found that there was a significant, positive correlation between self-efficacy with self-regulated learning. Liem *et al* (2008) examined self-efficacy, task value and achievement goals in English language ability with a group of secondary school students. It is found that self-efficacy is a predictor to English test scores. Purzer (2011) did a sequential mixed methods study to examine the relationship between team discourse, self-efficacy and achievement. Results showed that self-efficacy is positively and significantly correlated with academic achievement. In most of the studies the level of self-efficacy is found to be different between genders.

The efficacy belief system is not a global trait, but a differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of functioning. Multi domain measures reveal the patterning and degree of generality of people's sense of personal efficacy. Since a wide body of literature had covered extensively on the influence of self-efficacy on Academic Achievement, it is compelling to look in to the sources of the belief to understand better how self-efficacy is developed. Bandura had theorized that self-efficacy was developed from four main sources, namely, mastery experiences, indirect experiences, social persuasions and emotional excitement.

The process of creating and using self-efficacy beliefs is intuitive. An individual gets engaged in an event, interprets the results of one's actions, uses these interpretations to create and develop beliefs about one's capability to engage in subsequent behaviours in similar tasks and activities, and behaves according to the beliefs created. In school, for example, the beliefs of students developed about their academic capabilities help to determine what they do with the knowledge and skills they have learned. Consequently their academic performances are, in part, the result of what they come to believe they have accomplished and can accomplish. This helps us explain why student's academic performances may differ markedly when they have similar abilities.

Since Bandura's (1977) introduction of the concept of self-efficacy, educational researchers have investigated the role of these self –perceptions play in the academic lives of students at all levels. Two decades of research findings have now confirmed that students' academic self-efficacy beliefs influence their academic achievements and mediate the effect of skills or other self-beliefs on these achievements. So, student's self-efficacy beliefs influence their academic performances in several ways. Then the investigators decided to do a study on the topic "THE INFLUENCE OF SELF-EFFICACY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS".

Objectives of the study

- To find out whether there is any significant difference in self-efficacy and academic performance in English language in secondary school students.

- To find out whether there is any significant difference in self-efficacy and academic performance in English language in case of secondary school students with respect to gender (Male-Female), environment (Urban-Rural), and Type of Management (Govt-Aided).

Hypotheses of the study

- There will be significant differences between the mean scores of students' self-efficacy and Academic Performance in language learning.
- There will be significant differences between the mean scores of self-efficacy and academic performance in English with respect to gender (Male-Female), environment (Urban-Rural) and Type of Management (Govt-Aided).

Methodology

This study is conducted on a representative sample of 520 secondary school students of Calicut district, Kerala. Proper representations were given to the relevant sub-sample categories such as gender, locale and type of management. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. It is a survey study.

Variables

Independent variable: Self-efficacy

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance in English

Instruments used

Scale of self-efficacy (Meera and Jumana 2013) was administered for collecting adequate data. It was prepared and standardized by the investigators. The scale was constructed by considering the different factors affecting self-efficacy, according to available literature, existing tools on self-efficacy and expert advice. The investigators identified '6' dimensions, as follows: use of Social Resources, Academic Achievements, self-regulated learning, meet expectations of others, social self-efficacy, and using and relying on parental and community support. Initially investigators established '60' items; after standardization the scale consisted of 48 items. Content and construct validity of the scale was established. Reliability was established according to test-retest method. The correlation of coefficient obtained is 0.892.

Test of Academic Performance in English (Meera and Jumana 2015)

Investigators prepared a test based on some basic language skills in English from standard IX text book of English. The items were prepared on the basis of four language skills as follows: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The initial test consisted of 50 items and after standardization it involved 42 items; furthermore, criterion related validity was established. Reliability of the test was determined by test-retest method. The reliability coefficient of the test was 0.782.

Statistical Technique used

Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 was used to analyze the collected quantitative data. Preliminary descriptive analysis, t'-test (Test of significance of difference between mean) and Carl Pearson's product Moment Correlation were used to analyze the data and standardize the instruments.

Procedure of the study

Survey method was carried out on the sample consisting of secondary school (9th class) students. The Scale of Self efficacy and a test of Academic Performance in English were administered. The score sheets were collected and scoring was done. The data was entered in to SPSS. Preliminary and Descriptive analysis (Mean Difference Analysis) were carried out. The researchers reached their findings and conclusions according to the results obtained from the analysis.

Result of the study

The scored data were analyzed and the results obtained are given in the text below in detail.

Results: Independent and Dependent variables for the total sample

| Variables | Mean | Median | Mode | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|------|--------|----------|----------|
| Academic Performance in language | 16.58 | 16 | 15 | 5.329 | 0.328 | 0.12 |
| Self-efficacy | 140.19 | 150 | 170 | 30.781 | 0.694 | 0.022 |

Results of the test of significance of Difference between Mean scores for Boys and Girls

| Variables | Boys (N=230) | | Girls (N=290) | | t-value | Level of significance |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Self-efficacy | 140.742 | 28.812 | 140.742 | 30.812 | 1.234 | NS |
| Academic Performance in Language | 16.016 | 4.538 | 15.412 | 5.521 | 0.489 | NS |

NS – Not significant

The results reveal that there is no significant difference between Boys and Girls in the Academic Performance in English and Self-efficacy, as the t-value obtained is 1.234 and 0.489 which are less than 1.96, the critical ratio for significance at 0.05 level.

Result of the Test of significance of Difference between Mean scores for Rural and Urban School Students

| Variables | Rural (N=300) | | Urban (N=220) | | t-value | Level of significance |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Academic Performance in Language | 14.892 | 4.812 | 17.932 | 6.162 | 4.214 | 0.01 |
| Self-efficacy | 132.81 | 30.52 | 154.084 | 29.64 | 4.924 | 0.01 |

The results reveal that the Rural and Urban students differ significantly in their Academic performance in English and self-efficacy. Both variables are significant at 0.01 level. So the t-value is greater than 2.58; the critical ratio for significance.

Results of the test of significance of Difference between Mean scores of Govt. and Aided School students

| Variables | Govt. (N=227) | | Aided (N=293) | | t-value | Level of significance |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Academic Performance in Language | 16.193 | 3.971 | 17.01 | 5.561 | 0.332 | NS |
| Self-efficacy | 142.316 | 3.575 | 141.19 | 30.83 | 0.052 | NS |

The results reveal that there is no significant difference between Government and aided students in their Academic Performance in English and self-efficacy, as the t-value obtained is less than 1.96, the critical ratio for significant at 0.05 level.

Discussion

A strong sense of self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. It is considered as accurate predictor of performance; furthermore, self-efficacy is an important cognitive skill which ensures success in life. In this study the relationship between self-efficacy and Academic Performance in English has been studied extensively according to available literature. It has already been found by many studies that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and Academic Performance in English. The study of group differences reveals that there is significant difference in Academic Performance in English and self efficacy of rural and urban students. In the case of boys and girls, as well as government and aided school management, there were no significant differences found.

Educational Implications

The present study helped to find out the relation between self – efficacy and Academic Performance in English of secondary school students of Calicut district. Students who have high self-efficacy belief showed better performance in learning and thinking and should also have better performance in evaluative level of learning. Self-efficacy is positively correlated to academic performance. For better result in Academic performance school should improve classroom practice. Teachers should aim to deliver instruction in a way that maximizes the opportunity for mastery experience. Teachers should promote co-operative learning strategy. It will maximize learning of students from teachers and from one another. Teachers should also promote activity oriented classrooms and provide opportunities for a wider range of communicative experiences. Mutual interaction and verbal expression should enhance self-efficacy of the learners. Learners should be given plenty of opportunities to explain their ideas to their team mates and to lead the discussions.

Building self-efficacy in students today is highly important. Along with creating a good school image, other practice measures also have to be taken. Teachers can do this by conveying high expectations of students and praising good work. To help struggling learners with low self-efficacy and get them to invest sufficient effort and persist on challenging tasks, teachers must systematically develop high self-efficacy within these students. Teachers can help strengthen the self-efficacy of struggling learners by

- Linking new work to recent success
- Reinforcing effort and persistence
- Stressing peer modeling
- Teaching struggling learners to make greater efforts.

Teachers must find out efficient and enjoyable ways of communicating language to students there by making it interesting. It is therefore suggested that teachers should be able to improve students' performance in English language by providing students with learning opportunities creating English atmosphere and organizing classes in language labs. Giving real life experience in language acquisition is essential in developing self-efficacy of students in language classrooms.

Conclusion

In the past 15 years, many studies have shown that relationship between self-efficacy and Academic performance exists. According to relevant literature, as well as current research findings we can come to the following conclusions. Since self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors for language learning, it appears to be very important for the teacher to help students develop their self-efficacy. Teachers can enhance the level of student's efficacy through various feasible teaching techniques. Learners who have repeated experience of success have higher self-efficacy than those students who experience repeated failure. As a consequence, providing abundance of experiences and building positive beliefs in students is essential for students to develop the sense of self-efficacy.

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