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Examining Secondary Students Self-Efficacy in Kerala

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Abstract



Keywords:

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Orientation.

Self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capacity to act in the ways which are necessary to reach their goals. The learner who self-efficacy is the belief that individuals can control their behavior in attaining the goals that they set for themselves. Self-efficacy is key to promoting student engagement and learning. In this study the researcher aimed to study the self-efficacy of the higher secondary school students in the state of Kerala, India. The tool for self-efficacy with five dimensions namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness and goal orientation was developed by the researcher. The study involved in testing the significant difference between/among the gender, group of study and percentage of marks scored by the students. Results of the study in related to gender, the female students were having high self-efficacy than the male. The Science group students have high self-efficacy than the Arts group students. It is also found that the dimensions of self-efficacy used in the study are well correlated among themselves with positive significance at 1% level. The study concluded that a supportive and encouraging teachers, parents and well-wisher of the students will enhance the learning atmosphere which will greatly contribute to students' self-efficacy and encourage them to set and strive for higher goals and to perform well in the academic performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The subjective well-being, encompassing an individual's overall life satisfaction, emotional states, and sense of happiness, has garnered substantial attention in the field of education. It is widely recognized that students' well-being not only influences their academic performance but also plays a crucial role in their overall life satisfaction and self-efficacy. School is not merely an institution for academic learning; it is also a social environment where students form relationships, build social skills, and develop a sense of belonging. Self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capacity to act in the ways which are necessary to reach their goals. Self-efficacy is commonly defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome. According to the social-cognitive theory, human actions are influenced by the interplay of personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. The learner whose self-efficacy is the belief that individuals can control their behavior in attaining the goals that they set for themselves. Self-efficacy is key to promoting student engagement and learning. However, it is not always easy to understand its role in the learning process. Self-efficacy expectations rely on five dimensions, they are self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness and goal orientation. Repeated successes create an expectation of efficacy, which reduces the negative impact of failure. The higher the learner's self-efficacy, the higher the goals they set and the greater their commitment to their fulfillment. This, in turn, supports the growth of self-efficacy. The dimensions of self-efficacy as explained as follows:

Self-Confidence: Self-confident students have strong sense, to believe in their abilities, engage in learning, and develop the belief in their capacity to succeed. Thus self-

confidence is a key ingredient for fostering self-efficacy

Emotional Adjustment: Students who are emotionally well-adjusted tend to have higher self-efficacy because they are better equipped to handle stressful situations, navigate social dynamics, and maintain a positive outlook on their academic and personal abilities.

Leadership Quality: Students observe and experience positive leadership of their teachers and principal, and same they are more likely to develop a belief in their own abilities and potential, which is a key component of self-efficacy.

Cooperativeness: When students work together, they learn from each other, share ideas, and build confidence in their abilities. This, in turn, can lead to increased self-efficacy and a stronger belief in their capacity to learn and succeed. Thus, cooperative learning and activities in school can positively impact student self-efficacy.

Goal Orientation: Mastery goal oriented students, driven by a desire to learn and develop competence, are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy. This is because mastery goals promote a focus on effort, persistence and learning from mistakes, which in turn fosters a belief in one's ability to succeed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study explored by WenQi Zhao and Rui Ma (2025), delved into the complex interplay between self-efficacy, achievement goals, positive emotions, and affective engagement among university students in China. To achieve this, a stratified random sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample of 391 students from four geographically distinct universities across China. The data collection relied on self-reported questionnaires that measured

academic self-efficacy, goal orientation (specifically focusing on mastery versus performance goals), positive emotions, and various aspects of affective engagement, including enjoyment, satisfaction, and interest in learning. Structural equation modeling (SEM) served as the primary statistical tool to analyze the hypothesized relationships between these variables. The analysis revealed a network of positive associations, indicating that students with higher levels of self-efficacy and positive emotionality reported experiencing greater affective engagement in their academic pursuits. Furthermore, a stronger mastery goal orientation was associated with increased enjoyment, satisfaction, and interest in learning. Self-efficacy and positive emotionality also indirectly influenced affective engagement through goal orientation, suggesting that students with higher self-belief and positive emotions were more likely to adopt mastery goals, leading to more positive learning experiences. This study highlights the importance of self-efficacy, positive emotionality, and goal orientation in shaping students' affective engagement. By fostering these factors, educators can create more positive and engaging learning environments for university students.

The survey-correlational study aimed by Wenbin et al., (2025), aims to determine the students' self-efficacy, school adjustment, and psychological resilience as related to their subjective well-being as inputs to the guidance program for the school year 2023-2024. This study focused on undergraduate students from a state-owned university in China. Two hundred eighteen undergraduate students were identified as respondents to the study. Four (4) adapted data-gathering instruments were utilized to gather the needed data. These were the Index of Well-Being by Campbell (1976), the General Self-

Efficacy Scales by Schwarzer (1982), the Chinese College Student Adjustment Scale (CCSAS), developed in the context of Chinese culture by Fang et al. (2005), and the Resilience Scale for Chinese Adolescents compiled by Chinese scholars Hu Yueqin and GanYiqun (2008). Frequency count, percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used as statistical tools. The alpha level was set at 0.05. Results revealed that, generally, students in China have low self-efficacy, experience normal school adjustment, and have moderate psychological resilience. They have average subjective well-being.

A positive and highly significant relationship existed between grade level and self-efficacy; grade level and school adjustment; grade level and psychological resilience; grade level and subjective well-being; number of siblings and self-efficacy; self-efficacy and school adjustment; self-efficacy and psychological resilience; self-efficacy and subjective well-being; school adjustment and psychological resilience; school adjustment and subjective well-being; psychological resilience and subjective well-being.

Cui Qi et al., (2021), conducted a survey to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and depression in college students. 620 college students from a medical school and an engineering college completed the tests of the Chinese version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D). The results show that the general self-efficacy of male students was significantly higher than that of female students. There is a significant negative correlation between general self-efficacy and depression and its four dimensions. General self-efficacy has a significant negative predictive relationship with depression.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Students with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated. These students will put forth a high degree of effort in order to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to things which are in their control, rather than blaming external factors. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals. Self-confidence significantly influences a student's self-efficacy, acting as a crucial factor in their belief in their abilities to succeed. Students with high self-confidence are more likely to believe in their capacity to handle challenges and learn, which directly boosts their self-efficacy. Self-confidence contributes to a positive emotional state, which in turn can boost self-efficacy. A positive mood can lead to a greater belief in one's ability to succeed.

Self-confidence and self-efficacy can work in a positive cycle. When students are confident, they are more likely to succeed, which in turn strengthens their belief in their abilities and reinforces their self-efficacy. Self-confidence, which refers to a student's belief in their abilities, is a crucial factor in shaping their self-efficacy, which is the belief in their ability to successfully perform a task or achieve a goal. Self-confidence empowers students to set realistic and challenging goals, as they are more likely to believe in their ability to achieve them, further enhancing their self-efficacy.

Emotional adjustment significantly impacts school students' self-efficacy, as it influences their ability to manage emotions, cope with challenges, and believe in their abilities to succeed. Leadership qualities in school, particularly those demonstrated by teachers and school leaders, strongly influence the self-efficacy of students. Leadership self-efficacy as a basis

from which to understand one's performance in organizing and leading others and asserts that one's confidence can help develop mastery to become a better leader. In other words, self-efficacy in leadership refers to one's confidence in his or her ability to lead, and this frequently impacts whether or not one decides to lead. Students with a mastery orientation are focused on improving their skills and understanding, regardless of how they compare to others. They embrace challenges, see mistakes as learning opportunities, and are persistent in their efforts. Students with a performance orientation are more concerned with demonstrating competence or outperforming others. They may be more prone to avoiding challenging tasks or giving up easily when faced with difficulty. Performance goals can lead students to focus on external factors like grades and comparisons to others, which can distract them from the process of learning and developing their skills, impacting their self-efficacy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Is there is any significant difference between the male and female secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

Is there is any significant difference between the Arts and Science group of secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

Is there is any significant difference among the marks scored by the secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional

adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

Is there is significant correlation among the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy of the secondary school students?

METHODOLOGY

The survey method is adopted for the study among the secondary school students in state of Kerala, India. The data is collected from both the male (50) and female students (50), totally 100 students were involved in the study. The secondary school students belonging to both arts and science group were taken for the study. The tool for self-efficacy with five dimensions namely self-confidence (9), emotional adjustment (7), leadership quality (5), cooperativeness (8) and goal orientation (6) was developed by the researcher along with the guidance from the research supervisor. There was nearly about 35 items, which is scored as 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. The data were analyzed using the SPSS.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Is there is any significant difference between the male and female secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

It is inferred from the above table that the dimension like self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, goal orientation and overall total of self-efficacy of the female students are found to be better than their counter parts. Moreover, it is also inferred that the above mentioned variables are significant at 1% level. Whereas, the cooperativeness were found to be similar for both male and female students.

Is there is any significant difference between the Arts and Science group of secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

It is observed from the above table that the dimension like self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, goal orientation and overall total of self-efficacy of

Table 1 Significant difference between the male and female secondary school students with respect to the self-efficacy and dimensions (N = 100)

| Dimensions of Self-Efficacy | Male (N = 50) | | Female (N = 50) | | 't' Value | Level of Significance |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------|-----------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Self-Confidence | 20.14 | 6.145 | 27.48 | 3.466 | 7.357 | P<0.001 |
| Emotional Adjustment | 20.06 | 7.249 | 24.58 | 4.146 | 3.827 | P<0.001 |
| Leadership Quality | 13.86 | 4.189 | 17.60 | 3.375 | 4.916 | P<0.001 |
| Cooperativeness | 24.46 | 5.870 | 25.24 | 7.023 | 0.603 | P>0.005 |
| Goal Orientation | 14.76 | 4.033 | 17.92 | 1.926 | 4.999 | P<0.001 |
| Overall total of Self-Efficacy | 85.52 | 32.393 | 115.92 | 10.042 | 6.338 | P<0.001 |

Note: P<0.001 – is significant at 1% level; P>0.005 – not significant

Table 2 Table 1 Significant difference between the arts and science secondary school students with respect to the self-efficacy and dimensions (N = 100)

| Dimensions of Self-Efficacy | Arts group (N = 50) | | Science Group (N = 50) | | 't' Value | Level of Significance |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Self-Confidence | 20.18 | 6.170 | 27.44 | 3.506 | 7.234 | P<0.001 |
| Emotional Adjustment | 20.36 | 7.261 | 24.28 | 4.426 | 3.259 | P<0.001 |
| Leadership Quality | 13.80 | 4.150 | 17.66 | 3.354 | 5.115 | P<0.001 |
| Cooperativeness | 24.10 | 6.072 | 25.60 | 6.788 | 1.165 | P>0.005 |
| Goal Orientation | 14.92 | 3.999 | 17.76 | 2.227 | 4.387 | P<0.001 |
| Overall total of Self-Efficacy | 86.70 | 32.221 | 114.74 | 13.503 | 5.675 | P<0.001 |

Note: P<0.001 – is significant at 1% level; P>0.005 – not significant

Table 3 Significant difference in self-efficacy with respect to age (N = 100)

| Dimensions of Self-Efficacy | Above 60% (N = 55) (1) | | Below 40% (N = 18) (2) | | Between 40-50% (N = 27) (3) | | 'F' Value | Level of Significance | Groups differed significantly |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Self-Confidence | 22.09 | 6.366 | 24.61 | 6.400 | 26.78 | 4.335 | 5.922 | P<0.001 | (3,1) (2,1) & (2,3) |
| Emotional Adjustment | 21.64 | 7.006 | 24.00 | 5.770 | 22.59 | 4.932 | 0.989 | P>0.005 | None |
| Leadership Quality | 14.67 | 4.074 | 16.56 | 4.514 | 17.33 | 3.833 | 4.274 | P<0.005 | (3,1) & (2,1) |
| Cooperativeness | 25.27 | 5.765 | 25.06 | 7.008 | 23.85 | 7.477 | 0.445 | P>0.005 | None |
| Goal Orientation | 15.44 | 3.971 | 17.00 | 2.849 | 17.74 | 2.263 | 4.567 | P<0.005 | (3,1) & (2,1) |
| Overall total of Self-Efficacy | 93.18 | 31.32 | 108.11 | 24.55 | 111.15 | 18.78 | 4.718 | P<0.005 | (3,1) & (2,1) |

Note: P<0.001 – is significant at 1% level; P<0.005 – Significant at 5% level; P>0.005 – not significant

the science group students are found to be better than the arts group students. Moreover, it is also inferred that the above mentioned variables are significant at 1% level. Whereas, the cooperativeness were found to be similar for both Science and Arts group school students.

Is there is any significant difference among the marks scored by the secondary school students in the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-

confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy?

It is revealed from the above table that marks scored between 40% - 60% of students were found to have better self-confidence, leadership quality, goal orientation and overall total of self-efficacy than the marks scored by below 40% of school students and followed by marks scored by above 60% of

Table 4 Relationship between dimensions of self-efficacy

| Dimensions of Self-Efficacy | Self-Confidence | Emotional Adjustment | Leadership Quality | Cooperativeness | Goal Orientation | Overall total of Self-Efficacy |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Self-Confidence | 1 | 0.334** | 0.327** | 0.577** | 0.569** | 0.818** |
| Emotional Adjustment | x | 1 | 0.126 | 0.334** | 0.375** | 0.357** |
| Leadership Quality | x | x | 1 | 0.350** | 0.376** | 0.306** |
| Cooperativeness | x | x | x | 1 | 0.570** | 0.579** |
| Goal Orientation | x | x | x | x | 1 | 0.599** |
| Overall total of Self-Efficacy | x | x | x | x | x | 1 |

Note: ** - significant at 1% level.

school students. It is noted that self-confidence alone is significant at 1% level, whereas leadership quality, goal orientation and overall total of self-efficacy is significant at 5% level. Further, it is also observed that emotional adjustment and cooperativeness of school students who were scored marks above 60%, between 40-60% and below 40% are found to be same, that is there is no significant difference among the group.

Is there is significant correlation among the dimensions of self-efficacy namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness goal orientation and with overall total of self-efficacy of the secondary school students?

It is inferred from the above table that the dimensions namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness, goal orientation are well correlated among themselves and with the overall total of self-efficacy. It is also noted that there is positive and significant correlation among the dimensions and overall total of self-efficacy which is significant at 1% level.

CONCLUSION

It is proved in the present study that the dimensions which is used for the study namely self-confidence, emotional adjustment, leadership quality, cooperativeness, goal orientation have influenced the self-efficacy of the secondary school students. The female students are reported to have high self-efficacy than their counterparts.

With the growing impact of globalization and communication without borders on the internet, more attention should be paid to different forms of groups such as students belonging to arts, science and other vocational group students to develop their self-efficacy.

A supportive and encouraging teacher-student relationship and learning atmosphere greatly contribute to students' self-efficacy and encourage them to set and strive for higher goals.

Ethical Approval

No ethical approval was necessary for this study.

Author Contribution

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception, design, acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work. They were involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content. All authors gave final approval of the version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring its accuracy and integrity.

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