

SELF EFFICACY OF ADOLESCENTS: INTERPLAY OF GENDER AND LOCALITY

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ABSTRACT

The self efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment in all areas of life for almost all of us and at all stages of life, especially adolescence. In an effort to identify the self efficacy of adolescents, a descriptive study was undertaken. Hundred adolescents, both males and females, of 14 to 18 years of age constituted the sample of this study. Data was collected from the sample using Self Efficacy Scale developed by Dr.G.P.Mathur and Dr.Raj Kumari Bhatnagar. The results revealed that adolescents had low self efficacy, which is not an encouraging sign. Further, there is no significant difference in self efficacy of adolescents based on gender or locality.

INTRODUCTION

The self is an individual person as the object of his or her own reflective consciousness. The self has been studied extensively by philosophers and psychologists and is central to many world religions. The philosophy of self seeks to describe essential qualities that constitute a person's uniqueness or essential being. There have been various approaches to defining these qualities. The self can be considered that being which is the source of consciousness; the agent responsible for an individual's thoughts and actions; and/or the substantial nature of a person which endures and unifies consciousness over time. The psychology of self is the study of either the cognitive and affective representation of one's identity or the subject of experience. The earliest formulation of the self in modern psychology form the distinction between the self as I, the subjective knower, and the self as Me, the object that is known. According to Bandura, a person's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills comprise what is known as the self-system. This system plays a major role in how we perceive situations and how we behave in response to different situations. Self-efficacy plays an essential part of this self-system. According to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." In other words, self-efficacy is a

person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura described these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel (1994). She and others have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, and challenges are approached. These beliefs begin to form in early childhood as children deal with a wide variety of experiences, tasks, and situations. However, the growth of self-efficacy does not end during youth, but continues to evolve throughout life as people acquire new skills, experiences, and understanding.

According to Bandura, there are four major sources of self-efficacy.

1. Mastery Experiences: "The most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences," Bandura explained. Performing a task successfully strengthens our sense of self-efficacy. However, failing to adequately deal with a task or challenge can undermine and weaken self-efficacy.

2. Social Modeling: Witnessing other people successfully completing a task is another important source of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, "Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities master comparable activities to succeed."

3. Social Persuasion: Bandura also asserted that people could be persuaded to believe that

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they have the skills and capabilities to succeed. Consider a time when someone said something positive and encouraging that helped you achieve a goal. Getting verbal encouragement from others helps people overcome self-doubt and instead focus on giving their best effort to the task at hand.

4. Psychological Responses: Our own responses and emotional reactions to situations also play an important role in self-efficacy. Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation. A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations.

However, Bandura also notes "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted." By learning how to minimize stress and elevate mood when facing difficult or challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The last decade has seen a steady rise of reports like desperation and recklessness among adolescents. Childhood and adolescence are critical windows of opportunity for setting down the essentials of self-efficacy that govern their lives. There are several lacunas and pit-falls in the present society. The students worry about being successful in their studies, getting to school on time, mastering their lessons, obtaining good marks in report cards. They are anxious about their relationship with their teachers, parents, brothers and fellows. In schools, students face problems like inability to pay attention, day-dreaming, jumping in to self-consciousness and acting without thinking. Self-efficacy plays a key role in the etiology and maintenance of affective disorder. The present study has certain relevance in the field of education. The researcher selected the problem to find out the relationship between self-efficacy, gender and locality. Thus, it is significant to know how self-efficacy is affected by gender and the locality as to if it is urban or rural.

OBJECTIVES

Following objectives were set for the present study:

1. To study the self efficacy of adolescents.
2. To study the difference in self-efficacy of adolescents on the basis of gender.
3. To compare the study the difference in self-efficacy of adolescents on the basis of locality.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey method was used for the present study.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study was conducted on a sample of 100 adolescents in the age range of 14-18 years. The sample included 50 urban adolescents (25 males and 25 females) and 50 rural adolescents (25 males and 25 females). The sample from selected from purposively selected schools and within the schools random sampling was used to select the sample.

TOOL USED

Data was collected from the sample using Self Efficacy Scale developed by Dr.G.P.Mathur and Dr.Raj Kumari Bhatnagar. It consists of 22 items (15 positive and 7 negative) to be marked on a five point scale.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data was analysed through descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The normality of data (self efficacy of adolescents) was assessed by calculating the values of mean, S. D. In order to study the significant differences in self efficacy of adolescents with regard to gender and locality, t-test was employed. True level of significance was considered, that is 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance as the two arbitrary standards for accepting or rejecting null hypothesis.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The main results of the study have been encapsulated in the following headings -

Self efficacy of adolescents: The self efficacy of adolescents is given in the following table.

No. of adolescents	Mean	Interpretation
100	61.40	Low

Table 1: Self efficacy of adolescents

The table given below shows the detail of the scores obtained by adolescents to have a better picture of the self efficacy of adolescents.

No. of Adolescents	Self efficacy (based on scores)
0	Excellent
0	High
2	Above Average
30	Average
29	Below Average
26	Low
13	Very Poor

Table 2: Self efficacy of adolescents

The interpretation shown in the table 2 represents a low self efficacy of the whole group. Most of the adolescents lie below average level, low or poor. Low self efficacy is not a good indicator. The results are in contrast to the study of Zamir Mohd (1990) whose study revealed that students had good self efficacy.

Difference in self efficacy of adolescents on the basis of gender: The difference in self-efficacy of adolescents has been represented in the following table-

Gender	No. of students	Mean	S.D.	t- score
Male	50	61.98	11.54	0.11
Female	50	62.2	9.81	(not significant)

Table 3: Difference in self efficacy of adolescents on the basis of gender

Thus we can say that there is no significant difference in self efficacy of male and female adolescents. The results revealed are in contrast to the study conducted by Rajesh Kumar and Roshan Lal (2006) who examined the role of self-efficacy and gender differences among the adolescents as revealed by intelligence test. They found that significant gender differences existed there with females scoring higher than their male counterparts

Difference in self efficacy of adolescents on the basis of locality: The difference in self-efficacy of adolescents has been represented in the following table-

Locality	No. of students	Mean	S.D.	t- score
Urban	50	62.5	10.68	1.25
Rural	50	61.70	10.77	(not significant)

Table 4: Difference in self efficacy of adolescents on the basis of locality

Thus we can say that there is no significant difference in self efficacy of rural and urban adolescents. It is against the general commonsense notion that adolescents living in urban localities are more confident and have better concept of themselves.

OVERVIEW

The researchers want to assert that self-efficacy is a key mechanism in adolescence. At no other time is self-efficacy so vulnerable due to many changes in adolescents' lives. Further there is complete agreement on how self-efficacy

changes have important implications for adolescents' future in school, personal relationships, and career choices. Researchers have proved that key roles are played by parents, peers, and school in influencing the self efficacy of adolescents. So all the stakeholders need to play their part right in shaping good self efficacy among adolescents. Both teachers and parents need to be cognizant of the multiple influences on self-efficacy, help adolescents to make responsible decisions that build self-efficacy, work to smooth out transitions, and teach adolescents strategies for successfully dealing with conflicts that arise at home, with peers, and in school. For instance, studies have shown that sports plays a big part in adolescent girl's self-efficacy; further emphasizing the importance of participating in sport and physical activity (Sanders, M., Hall, C. & Warner, S., 2007).

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