

Periodic Research

Assessment of Level of Self-Efficacy among Post Graduate Students



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Abstract

The present study was carried out to explore the role of self-efficacy as an important life skill for higher education level. The level of conviction or confidence in one's own ability to do something can be related to enhancement of a student's performance in life. Total sample of 250 were collected from various department of a University within Guwahati city area. Data were collected by administering an interview schedule and the General self-efficacy scale developed by Ralf Schwarzer and M. Jerusalem, 1979. The results showed that there are various family factors, socioeconomic status, personal issues related to self-efficacy and above average level of self-efficacy was found among undergraduate and post graduate students. Therefore Self-efficacy can be an important life skill in the 21st century students' life.

Keywords: Self Efficacy, Life Skills.

Introduction

To flourish in a dynamic global economy, every student deserves an education that culminates in 21st century readiness for college education, careers and civic participation. Many students need additional preparation to handle the increasingly higher expectation, employment demand and civic responsibilities. (ACTE, 2010). All students need to be ready for whole world outside the formal education. For higher education and career readiness they require both technical knowledge and skills.

WHO defines Life skills as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life". Hence life skills are those positive abilities within a person that assist people in functioning well in the environment in which they live. Life skills are learned abilities. Life skills include psychosocial abilities and interpersonal skills that help people to take decisions, solve problems, think critically, communicate well, build healthy relationship, and empathize with others. Cope with stress and strain of life in a healthy and productive manner. Therefore self-efficacy can be an important life skill which can positively strengthen the students' performance and wellness. According to positive psychology approach, psychologically healthy individuals generally experience life as manageable, under stable and meaningful even if it is challenging. These individuals will be better at solving problems, reasoning and will lead a healthy emotionally stable life.

First we need to define the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as the individual's belief in their capabilities to accomplish a specific task or attain a goal and is coupled with a willingness to put in the required effort and persist until target is reached (Bandura, 2001). It is the judgment of one's ability to complete a task (Bandura, 1997). The higher the level of confidence, the more likely it is that a person will persevere until the task is completed. Based on this original definition positive psychology explained self-efficacy as 'One's conviction about ability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources and courses of his action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context to obtain his or her specific outcomes (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998).

Self-efficacy motivates us to choose and welcome challenges and to use our strength and skills to meet the challenges. It also encourages and energizes us to pursue our goals and invest time and hard work that may be necessary to accomplish them. It is expected of ourselves and our awareness about who we are and which can be positively changed or developed with short intervention to grow to become who we can be. That means self-efficacy is measureable, developable (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998).

Previous reaches has been conducted in various setting but students at University level were not taken into consideration till now. There is lot of tension among students at University level due to their career

prospects in job market. They have to look secure future and stable jobs as per their specialization. There are lots of pressure on them to perform well and establish a respected position in society and a secure lifestyle. Today's world, there is high level of competition in job market and students has to fulfill many criteria to fit for a position in any organization. There is little information on this area in Indian context especially among University students. Therefore present study is planned to carry out in this unexplored area. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of self-efficacy among undergraduate and post graduate students. Following objectives are taken for the present study to explore:

To Study the Level of Self-Efficacy among Post Graduate Students

Participants

For the present investigation a sample of 250 students were taken from various department of a University located in Guwahati city area. The average age of the sample was 25.33 years. The total participants included male and female various department of Gauhati University. The selection criteria included that student should be from regular class and non technical course from Post graduate level.

Materials

Self-Efficacy Scale

It was developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Mathias Jerusalem in 1979 in Germany. German version was developed in 1979 by these psychologists and later revised and adapted to 26 other languages by various co-authors. The scale was created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events. In samples from 23 nations, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .76 to .90, with the majority in the high .80s. The scale is uni-dimensional. Criterion-related validity is documented in numerous correlation studies where positive coefficients were found with favorable emotions, dispositional optimism, and work satisfaction.

Interview Schedule

An interview schedule was prepared by the researcher herself. The schedule includes twenty one items/ questions to find the socio demographic information of the students. The information was collected on the following categories:

- 1 Name, age gender
- 2 Family information
- 3 Socioeconomic status.
- 4 Education background of the students
- 5 Hobbies and interests.
- 6 Parents educational Qualification.
- 7 Parents occupational description.

Procedure

The study was conducted on university students pursuing post graduation respectively. The consent was taken from the students and authority for

the data collection. The questionnaires were distributed in classroom in a group of 8-10 students at a time. At first basic instructions were given about the data collection. Then interview schedule was filled up by them to get the socio -demographic information. Thirdly the main psychological tests were administered to the students. All the tests are self reported so students filled these by themselves. Lastly they were thanked for their participation in the research. Each set of tests were needed almost one hour to complete. Data were collected by the investigator herself from the field.

Results and Discussion

The present investigation was carried out to explore the level of self-efficacy among undergraduate and post graduate students. Data were collected from a sample of 200 students from various colleges and department of a University in Guwahati city area. Information were collected by using one Interview schedule, self-efficacy scale.

At first the interview schedule was analyzed and some information about the students' academic background, family related information and socio economic status were found. All these factors are related to a person wellbeing and self efficacy level. These informations were presented in the following tables.

Table 1

Showing Number of Students Belonging to Different Category among Post Graduate Students

| | General | OBC | SC | ST | Total |
|--------------|---------|-----|----|----|-------|
| Postgraduate | 138 | 71 | 10 | 31 | 250 |

The table showed that most of the students belonged to general category followed by other backward caste, schedule tribe and schedule caste. It showed that presence of students from weaker and backward caste and tribal groups in higher education level. It signifies improvement in the educational scenario of those societies. It is important for the enhancement of the level of self-efficacy among those students. Therefore increase in self efficacy can better the feeling of wellness among them.

Table 2

Showing Percentage of Fathers and Mothers Related to Different Occupation of the Students among Post Graduate Students

| | Service | Business | Not working |
|---------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Fathers | 156(62.40%) | 94(37.60%) | |
| Mothers | 95(38%) | 12(4.8%) | 143(57.2%) |

The above table result showed that in case of fathers most of them were working and whereas mothers only half of them are working and earning finance for their families. It was found that in case of fathers and mothers types of occupation, majority were related to service sector followed by business. It showed socio economic stratification in terms occupational differences. It indicated that there is a balance in the family financial status and empowerment of women in the family.

Table 3

Showing Educational Qualification of the Fathers and Mothers of Students of Post Graduate Level

| | Doctorate | Post Graduation | Graduation | Hs Pass | Metric Pass |
|---------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Fathers | 13(5.2%) | 82(32.8%) | 98(39.2%) | 32(12.8%) | 25(10%) |
| Mothers | 3 (1.2%) | 44(17.6%) | 86(34.4%) | 82(32.8%) | 35(14%) |

This table resulted that in case of fathers' higher percentage were past graduate and graduate whereas in case of mothers higher percentage was graduate and Hs pass. It showed that parents of the students were mostly educated and passed out school level and college level. It was also found that mothers were less educated than fathers. It indicated that educated parents will be better in guiding their children in various situation of life. Therefore good family support can enhance self efficacy and well-being of the students.

Table 4
Showing The Family Income of the Students Per Month in Three Different Categories of Post Graduate Students

| | A(10-30 thousand/month) | B(31-50 thousand/month) | C (51 thousand and above/month) |
|----|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PG | 118 | 89 | 43 |

This table showed that most of the students were from low income group followed by middle and higher income. It indicated that less access to others facilities due to economical constraints. It can lead to decrease in well-being level of a person.

Table 5
Showing Percentage of Students Having Different Numbers of Sibling of Post Graduate Students

| | A(0) | B(1-3) | C(more than 3) |
|----|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| PG | 18 (7.2%) | 156 (62.4%) | 56 (22.4%) |

The table 5 showed that more than 60% of total students have siblings in their family. A person can share his/her feelings with sibling, they can provide support, motivation which may play important role in enhancing self efficacy level and well-being.

Table 6
Showing Students' Family Members in Category A and B of Post Graduate Students

| | A(1-5 members) | B(6 and above members) |
|----|----------------|------------------------|
| PG | 174(69.6%) | 56(22.4%) |

The table 6 showed that most of the students have small family size almost 70% whereas only 22% have more than 5 members in their families. This indicates that small family size can lead to better allocation of resources within family members and it can enhance life satisfaction of each members which can increase well-being of a person.

Table 7
Showing Numbers of Students Having Different Types of Extra Activities and Hobbies in Post Graduate Level

| | Sports | Music | Dancing | Painting | Others |
|----|--------|-------|---------|----------|--------|
| PG | 60 | 66 | 68 | 31 | 25 |

The table 7 showed that all the students engaged themselves in some extra activities other than academic and these could be their hobbies and specific abilities. It indicated that students do engage in some creative activities which they like. Hence it can be related to enhancing belief of a person about his/ her own abilities. It can create a positive mindset within the person.

In the second step of analysis, self-efficacy test and Psychological well-being questionnaire was analyzed. From the raw of all the students, mean, Standard deviation values were calculated. After that correlation was calculated by using person product moment correlation coefficient technique. The results are presented in the following tables:

Table 8
Showing mean, SD and Values of Self-Efficacy among Post Graduate Students

| Variable | Mean | SD |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| Self-efficacy | 29.03 | 4.826 |

This table showed that mean values of the students were found to be above average. This indicated that students are having average level of self-efficacy. It indicated that they have confidence or conviction about their own abilities. This confidence should be uplifted by teacher and family members specially parents so that they can come up with flying colours in their performances. It was also found that family economic status, number of family members, educational qualification of fathers and mothers can be important factor related to enhance the self-efficacy among students at higher educational level.

Conclusion

The present study found that self-efficacy is an important factor for post graduate students. It can be concluded that self-efficacy that is belief or confidence on ones' own abilities can be an important life skill which can enhance performance of the students. Therefore training module can be prepared to enhance self-efficacy because it is a construct which can be developed.

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