

Self-Efficacy: A Life Skill for Enhancing Psychological Well-being



Rita Rani Talukdar
Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Psychology,
Gauhati University,
Gauhati



Kakali Goswami
Guest Faculty,
Deptt. of Psychology,
Gauhati University,
Gauhati

Abstract

The present study was carried out to explore the role of self-efficacy as the predictor of Psychological well-being among post graduate students. The level of conviction in one's own ability to do something can be related to well-being of a person which can enhance mental health of him. A sample of 250 was collected from various department of a University within Guwahati city area. Data were collected by administering the General self-efficacy scale developed by Ralf Schwarzer and M. Jerusalem, 1979 and Psychological well-being questionnaire developed by Carol Ryff in 1993. The results showed that there is a positive significant correlation between self-efficacy and psychological well-being. Further regression analysis showed that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of well-being among post graduate students. Self-efficacy can be an important life skill in the 21st century students' life.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Psychological Well-Being, Mental Health.

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

Self-efficacy is one of the construct which has been seen to contribute to psychological well-being. It was also found that it could act a buffer against psychological distress. According to positive psychology approach, psychologically healthy individuals generally experience life as manageable, under stable and meaningful even if it is challenging (Ryff et al., 2004). 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, 2002). It is the judgment of one's ability to complete a task (Bandura, 1993). 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 measurable, developable (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998).

Secondly Psychological well-being can be defined as "it is a person's evaluative reaction to his or her life either in terms of life satisfaction or effective balance or to extent to which the psychological well-being resides within the experience of the individual" (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976). It includes the way people used to evaluate their lives in present and in the past combining emotional reaction to different events, moods, judgments related to the way they live their lives (Diener, 2003). Therefore psychological well-being is a dynamic which result in constant change established in the evaluation of functional or contingent relation among individual, their condition of life and environment (Ballesteros & Cayeedo, 2002).

For more than twenty years, the study of psychological well-being has been guided by two primary conceptions of positive functioning. one concept is traceable to Bradburn's (1969) seminal work which differentiated between positive and negative effect and define happiness as the balance between these two. The second conception includes life satisfaction as the key indicator of well-being. Carol Ryff (1989) proposed a multidimensional model of psychological well-being. This model explains six psychological dimensions of challenged thriving. In combination, these dimensions encompass a breadth of wellness that includes positive evaluations of one's past life, a sense of continued growth and development as a person (personal growth), the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (purpose in life), the possession of quality relations with others (positive relations with others), the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world (environmental mastery) and a sense of self determination (autonomy). This model includes both hedonic and eudemonic well-being.

Previous reaches showed that there was a relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being. Bandura (2006) found that possessing a strong level of self-efficacy contributed to psychological well-being. Others also found that self-efficacy inversely predicted psychological distress (Fry & Debats, 2002). Tong and Song (2004) found that undergraduate students with higher self-efficacy reported higher level of well-being. It was found that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe that they can maintain high levels of performance despite challenges (Sui et al., 2007). Jackson (2002) found self-efficacy beliefs to be significantly related to examination scores of students. Yu et al. (2005) showed that the predictors of psychological well-being and self-efficacy is one of them.

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. Hence overall well-being of a student is important for his/ her success in life. A variety of studies focused on relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being but mostly in western context. 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 as the predictor of psychological well-being among post graduate students in Assam.

Following objectives are taken for the present study to explore:

1. To study the level of self-efficacy among Post graduate students.
2. To study the level of psychological well-being among Post graduate students.
3. To study the relationship between self-efficacy and Psychological well-being among Post graduate students.

Based into previous researches and theoretical concepts following hypothesis are formulated:

1. There would be significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and psychological well-being among Post graduate students.
2. Self-efficacy would be a significant predictor of psychological well-being among Post graduate students.

Method

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 82 male and 168 female students. 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.

Psychological Well-being Questionnaire

This test is developed by Carol Ryff in 1989. This questionnaire measures psychological well-being in six dimensions which indicated that six construct in combination constitute the concept of psychological well-being. For each dimension internal consistency was measured and it was found to be (coefficient alpha) = .83 for autonomy, .86 for environmental mastery, .85 for personal growth, .88

for positive relations with others, .88 for purpose in life, and .91 for self-acceptance. For validity, the present 84 items test was correlated with the 20 –item parent test. The correlation coefficient values are ranging from 0.97 to 0.99 for all the six dimensions.

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 and Psychological well-being and relationship between these two variables among post graduate students. Data were collected from a sample of 250 students from various department of a University in Guwahati city area. Information were collected by using one Interview schedule, self-efficacy scale and psychological well-being questionnaire. After collection of responses, raw scores were calculated and further statistical techniques were applied with the help of SPSS software package.

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 information 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 Undergraduate and 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 then 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 Undergraduate and Post Graduate Students

	A(10-30thousand /month)	B(31-50 thousand /month)	C (51thousand-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 Undergraduate and 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 Undergraduate and 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 both Undergraduate And 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 - 9

Showing Regression Analysis on Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being Variable among Post Graduate Students

Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable: Psychological Well-being			
	R square	St. Error of estimate	F values	significance
Self efficacy	.07	42.959	18.616	.01

The table 9 showed that Self-efficacy was a significant predictor of psychological well-being among post graduate students. It was found that self-efficacy predicted 7% of psychological well-being variable. The second hypothesis stated that there will be no significant influence of self-efficacy on well-being among Post-graduate students. The present result showed that self-efficacy was significant predictor of psychological well-being of the students. Therefore the second hypothesis was found to be accepted. So it showed that if there are high level of self efficacy among the students then these could lead to better psychological health.

Conclusion

The present study found that self-efficacy and psychological well-being were important factor for post graduate students. It was found that these variables were significantly positively related. It can be concluded that self-efficacy that is belief on ones' own abilities was a significant predictor of well-being of a post graduate students. Hence self –efficacy can be a important life skill of students. Therefore training module can be prepared to enhance self-efficacy because it is a construct which can be developed.

References

1. Association for Career and Technical Education.(2010). The role of career and technical education and 21st century skills in College and Career readiness.
2. Ballesteros, B., & Caycedo, C. (2002). *El bienestar psicológico en el marco del análisis del*

Table 8
Showing Mean, SD and Correlation Values of Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being Variable among Post Graduate Students

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation
Self -efficacy	29.03	4.826	0.26**
Psychological Well-being	338.50	44.45	

This table showed that mean values of the students were found to be above average. This indicated that students are having a average level of self-efficacy and well-being. Also the correlation coefficient value showed a significant positive correlation among the two variables named self-efficacy and psychological well-being among post graduate students. Therefore the first hypothesis stated that there will be significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and well-being was accepted. This result can be supported with previous research findings. One study conducted by Y. Tong and S. Song(2004) it was found that self-efficacy was positively correlated to psychological well-being. They found that General self-efficacy of low socioeconomic status college students had significantly positively related to general affect, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Result also showed that socioeconomic status has important effect on general elf efficacy and wellbeing. Efficacy was found to be positively related with wellbeing.

comportamiento. Facultad de Psicología. Pontificia Universidad Javierana. Documento inédito

3. Bandura, A (1997) *Self efficacy, the exercise of control*, New York: Freeman.
4. Bandura, A. (2000). Cultivate self-efficacy for personal and organizational effectiveness. In Locke, E.A. (Ed.), *The Blackwell handbook of principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 120-136). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
5. Bandura, A. (2006). Adolescent development from an agentic perspective. In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.). *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents*, (Vol. 5., pp. 1-43). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
6. Bradburn, N. M. & Noll., C.E. (1969). *The Structure of Psychological Well-Being*. Chicago : Aldine Pub. Co.
7. Campbell, A., Converse, S.E., & Rodgers, W.L. (1976). *The quality of Americans Life*. New York: Russell Sage foundation.
8. Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas R. E. (2003). Personality, Culture, and Subjective Well-Being: Emotional and Cognitive Evaluations of Life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 403-425
9. Fry, R. S., & Debats, D. L. (2002). Self-efficacy beliefs as predictors of loneliness and psychological distress in older adults. *The International Journal of Aging & Human Development*, 55, 233–269. doi: 10.2190/KBVP-L2TE-2ERY-BH26.

10. Jay W. Jackson (2002). Enhancing self-efficacy and learning performance. *Journal of Experimental Education*. 70 (3), 243-254. http://opus.ipfw.edu/psych_facpubs/143
11. Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 6, 1069-81.
12. Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H., & Love, G. D. (2004). Positive health: Connecting well-being with biology. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B*, 359, 1383-1394.
13. Siu, O.-I., Lu, C.-q. and Spector, P. E. (2007), Employees' Well-being in Greater China: The Direct and Moderating Effects of General Self-efficacy. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 56: 288–301. doi: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00255.x
14. Stajkovic, A.D., & Luthans, F. (1998). Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy: Going beyond traditional motivational and behavioral approaches. *Organizational Dynamics*, 26, 62-74.
15. Tong, Y. & Song, S. (2004) A study on general self-efficacy and subjective well-being of low SES-college students in a Chinese university. *College Students Journal*, Dec.
16. Yu, P., Su, S., & Li, L. (2005). The relationships between college students' attributional style, self-efficacy and subjective wellbeing. *Chinese Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 13, 42–44.