

Academic Self-Efficacy and Gender Differences

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Abstract

Academic self-efficacy is a foremost concept in educational psychology because it has been shown to be a strong prophet of academic achievement. When students have high levels of academic self-efficacy, they are more likely to set challenging goals for themselves, persist in the face of difficulties, and ultimately achieve higher levels of academic success. It consists of confidence that individuals have in their own abilities to achieve academic goals, even when faced with challenges and setbacks. It is based on an individual's past experiences, feedback from others, and their own interpretation of their abilities. Academic self-efficacy is positively associated with increased motivation, persistence, and academic achievement, while negatively associated with decreased motivation, self-doubt, and poor academic performance. To find the gender differences among school students (boy and girl), 200 students were selected from different private schools of Patna District. The students filled out academic self-efficacy scale developed by Gafoor and Ashraf, (2006). To compare the level of academic self- efficacy among students (boy and girl), an independent sample t test was used. It was found that boy and girl students of private schools were no different at the level of academic self-efficacy.

Keyword: Academic self-efficacy, self-efficacy, private school

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Academic self-efficacy is a construct that is closely related to broader concept of self-efficacy which was introduced by psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1970s. It is a subcategory of self-efficacy that relates specifically to academic performance and achievement.

Self-efficacy refers to a person's confidence in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks or behaviors in a particular domain (Bandura, 1997). It is a key concept in social cognitive theory and is considered to be an important predictor of behavior and achievement in various domains.

Academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform academic tasks and achieve academic goals (Bandura, 1997). There are number of factors that can influence academic self-efficacy, including past academic experiences, feedback from teachers and peers, and the level of support provided by family and friends. Additionally, academic self-efficacy can be strengthened through various interventions, such as providing students with opportunities to practice academic skills, setting achievable goals, and offering praise and encouragement for effort and improvement.

Studies related to Gender differences and Academic Self-Efficacy – Gender differences can play a significant role in academic self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to perform academically. Research has shown that males and females can differ in their academic self-efficacy beliefs in certain areas, such as mathematics and science. Studies have found that male tend to have higher self-efficacy beliefs in mathematics and science than females (Betz and Hackett, 1981). This gender gap in self-efficacy beliefs may be influenced by societal factors such as stereotypes, cultural expectations, and gender- based discrimination. A study by Pajares and Graham (1999) found that males had higher science self-efficacy beliefs than females.

Additionally, gender differences in academic self-efficacy can also influenced by personal experiences, such as past successes or failures in academic tasks. For example, if a female student performs poorly in mathematics in a previous academic year, this experience may negatively impact her self-efficacy beliefs in the subject. A study by Jacobs and Osgood (2002) found that girls who had experienced failure in math or science had lower self-efficacy beliefs in those subjects than girls who had not experienced failure. However, the same study found that boys' self-efficacy beliefs were not affected by past failure experience.

Researchers have noted that cultural and societal factors can contribute to gender differences in academic self-efficacy. For example, a study by Schunk and Pajares (2002) found that girls from cultures that placed a high value on math and science had higher math self-efficacy beliefs than girls from cultures that did not value these subjects as highly.

Teachers can play a key role in shaping students' self-efficacy beliefs. A study by Watt and Eccles (2008) found that female students had higher math and science self-efficacy beliefs when their teachers provided them with support and encouragement.

It is important to recognize and address these gender differences in academic self-efficacy to ensure that all students, regardless of gender, have the confidence and belief in their abilities to succeed academically. Teachers and parents can help by providing supportive and encouraging environments, as well as offering opportunities for students to build their self-efficacy beliefs through positive experiences and feedback.

Overall, the literature suggests that gender differences in academic self-efficacy are complex and multifaceted, with cultural, societal and personal factors all playing a role. However, there is also evidence to suggest that teachers and parents can help to mitigate gender differences by providing supportive environments and opportunities for students to build their self-efficacy beliefs.

Objectives –

1. To examine gender differences among private school students (boys and girls) on the level of academic self - efficacy.

Hypotheses –

1. There will be a significant difference between boys and girls private school students on the level of academic self-efficacy.

Methodology

Sample – 200 school students (100 boys and 100 girls) were selected for the study. The age range of the students was from 15 years to 20 years. Data were collected from different private schools of Patna, Bihar.

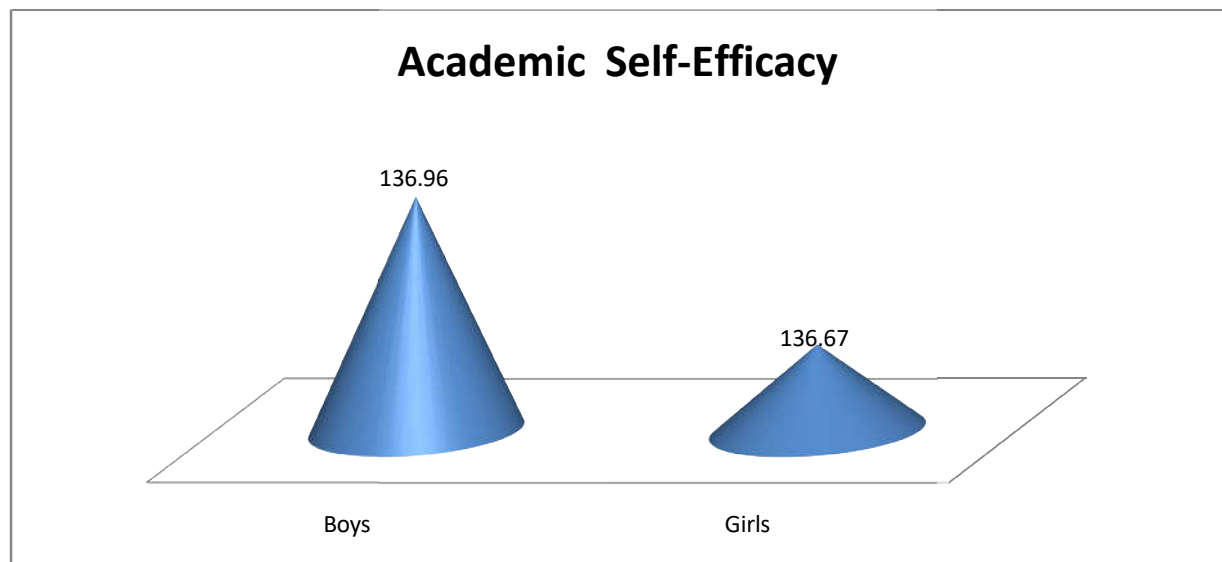
Tool –

Academic self – efficacy scale – Gafoor and Ashraf (2006) developed this scale for school students for measure academic self-efficacy and its different dimensions. This scale consists of 40 items and the reliability of this scale is 0.85.

Results –**TABLE - 1**

Showing Mean, S. D. and S. E. Scores and t - ratio of Private school students (Boys and Girls) on the level of Academic Self- Efficacy

Academic Self- Efficacy					t-ratio	Level of significance
Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	S. E.	0.22	Nil
Boys	200	136.96	21.13	2.11		
Girls	200	136.67	23.42	2.34		



Results indicated that the mean value of boy students are 136.96 and the mean value of girl students are 136.67, the value of standard deviation for boys and girls are 21.13 and 23.42

respectively. The values of standard error of boy and girl students are 2.11 and 2.34 respectively. The value of t-ratio is 0.22 which is not significant on the measures of academic self- efficacy. This shows that there is no difference between boy and girl students on the level of academic self-efficacy in private schools.

Discussion – There are many factors that are associated with academic life, some of which creates obstacles in achieving academic success and on the other hand, some helps in achieving academic achievement. Academic self- efficacy is one of them which plays essential role in academic success. This study found no any difference between boys and girls student in private school at the level of academic self-efficacy. It has been seen that private schools are very costly, their fee structure, facility etc are very advanced. When parents give admission to their children (boys and girls) both, their aim is that they should achieve big in life. So the students of the private school may be that they should achieve success in their academic life. That's why both boys and girls students work hard and there is no inequality to be seen in the private schools so both have the same level of academic self-efficacy. As the study shows there is no any difference between boys and girls student in private school at the level of academic self-efficacy.

Conclusion – On the basis of the studies, it is concluded that academic self-efficacy is a key factor for academic success. Finding shows that in the private schools, the level of academic self-efficacy is equal in both boy and girl students.

Limitations –Sample has been taken from only Patna district of Bihar in India. It would be better for generalization when sample will be taken from different states. Higher statistics should be applied like regression, correlation etc.

Suggestions – Apart from gender differences, there are many other demographic factors that can be studied such as residence, types of family, educational level of parents etc.

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