



Self-efficacy enhancement program for sustaining course choice of freshmen college students

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Abstract

Increasing drop rates and underachievement seems to be global in tertiary level due to lack of positive belief a student has towards the chosen course. The present paper aimed to prepare a Self-Efficacy Enhancement Program that would sustain the course choice of freshmen college students. Descriptive and correlational methods of research was employed in this study under quantitative design. Triangulation method was utilized in obtaining relevant data from the modified Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire of Academic Self-Efficacy, unstructured interview and document analysis as the tools of data gathering. Results showed that behavioral indicators of self-efficacy obtained the least extent among the freshmen college students with the mean of 3.28 followed by personal indicators with a mean of 3.29 and environmental indicators with a mean of 3.37 which was the highest. Strongest significant relationship has been found between course persistency and self-efficacy with a positive correlation of .353 in terms of Personal Indicators. Meanwhile, parental involvement obtains the positive relationship in terms of environmental and behavioral indicator with the highest correlation coefficient of .686. The results of the study have important implications on the areas needed to be addressed in terms of sustaining the course choice of freshmen college students.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Personal Indicators, Environmental Indicators, Behavioral Indicators, Enhancement Program

Introduction

Increasing drop rates and underachievement seems to be global in tertiary level due to lack of positive belief a student has towards the chosen course. Factors that serve as efficacy are rooted in the core belief of every student that one has the ability to endure challenges throughout the academic semesters and achieve goals. The performance of one student is a not only byproduct of cognitive factors, but as well as non-cognitive which was usually being neglected. One of the most important non-cognitive factors is the self-efficacy. These kinds of precautions must be acknowledged by teachers to help students improve their performance by boosting their confidence in every subject area. Low levels of self-efficacy can lead to lack of motivation, off-task behaviors, and the likelihood of falling behind in science related courses as they progress through school and into higher education.

College student encountered many factors affecting their efficacy towards the course they were currently enrolled. As human being, students are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school that can greatly affect the way they see themselves. College students are dealing with multitude stressors, socially, emotionally and academically that requires higher level of independence. Students who engage in higher education cope with a learning environment that demands higher levels of autonomy, initiative, and self-regulation. This pattern of learning environment, unfortunately, converts higher education to a stressful and emotional experience to undergraduates that may lead them in a more complicated situation.

The consequence of academic demands becomes severe when a student is unable to cope up leading them to poor performance and drop outs.

Additionally, this causes students to wonder if they made the best course choice or if they should switch to a different subject that will make them feel more comfortable in their own choice. Whenever a student face difficulty their judgement regarding their potentials was being tested. A student with high level of positive beliefs regarding his/her abilities will view this as challenges but when a student has a low level of confidence towards the subject area he/she view it as a threat leading her/him to other options such as dropping and choosing another course. This kind of student's belief in their capacity towards a subject area in the academic setting is known to be the self-efficacy.

With MinSCAT's aim of transforming students into globally-competent professionals that will contribute to the development of Oriental Mindoro and the entire nation who believes that choosing the right program can help students set their future goals and visualize where they want to be, the output of the study would like to promote retention on course chosen by means of enhancing the self-efficacy of the freshmen students to be able to handle academic demands.

As one of the faculty members of the said institution who testifies the increasing rate of dropped students during the previous semester this encourages the researcher to have a perseverance in pursuing the present study. The researcher is interested in discovering which of the self-efficacy indicators manifest among students. The present study also intends to prepare a self-efficacy enhancement program that would aid the increasing rate of shifters as an output of the study. The researcher will also explore of different factors affecting the self-efficacy of every students. The study plans to include different motivating activities that would enhance the interest of students on the course they have chosen. It could also help in making every student obtains the free tuition fee policy by means of graduating on time and avoiding waste of money and effort due to shifting of courses.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on various theoretical concepts which have direct links to self-efficacy, uncertainty and factors affecting the self-efficacy of freshmen college students. Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (2012) suggests that human behavior is influenced by many factors, either external and internal which emphasizes how other are very prone to change due to contributors around them. This theory of behavior focuses more on maintaining a behavior rather than initiating unlike any other concepts. The purpose of SCT is to clarify how people control and reinforce their behavior to produce goal-directed behavior that can be sustained over time. It emphasizes how cognitive, behavioral, personal and environmental factors interact to determine motivation and behavior. This favors a model of causation called triadic reciprocal determinism. These three factors are the interacting determinants that influence each other. This concept was used by the researcher in determining indicators to be used in measuring self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is a key personal variable of Social Cognitive Theory as part of larger theory. It is referred to people's judgments about their capability to perform particular tasks. The basic principle behind Self-Efficacy Theory is that individuals with high self-efficacy look at difficulties as challenges than treat. High self-efficacy helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities. Conversely, people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters

anxiety, stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. As a consequence, self-efficacy beliefs can powerfully influence the level of accomplishment that one ultimately achieves.

Self-efficacy become such an important topic among psychologists and educators that it has been correlated with different variables such as age, gender and mental ability, it is also believed to benefit the sense of well-being of a student in different ways.

People have always been put into pressure when choosing a course for the career they want to have in the future. It was one of the toughest decisions they would do that has a great impact in their lives specially when entering college and this kind of pressure may lower their self-efficacy (Lane, 2014). In terms of age and self-efficacy, the above-mentioned articles provide an understanding with regards to the differences of self-efficacy with regards to the age of college students.

From an online article ReflecteD on the Mind, Coraline (2014) ^[3], mentioned that self-efficacy begins to form in early childhood as the child deals with a variety of experiences, tasks and situations. This simple means that development of self-efficacy beliefs continues throughout life as people learn, experience and develop into more complex human beings. It may increase or decrease as a human age.

Many sociologists and psychologist have tried to discussed and compared the biological behavior, mental and personality characteristics of gender. An article review conducted by Eccles (2012), noted that women tend to show strong reactions towards self-efficacy. A lot of women claim in a survey that lack of self-confidence becomes a barrier that challenged their persistency in college. Many women who shift courses have found out to have low self-efficacy and schools are being blames for lacking programs that would promote positive self-efficacy among students. Meanwhile, men tend to have greater tolerance on difficulties that reflects a high self-efficacy.

As stated by Hall and Ponton (2015) institution believes that students obtaining a high mental capability have higher self-efficacy leading them to success. This happens by means of exposing students to appraisals of their own capability at the start of the semester that can made them start positively and obtain greater confidence. Cited from the book of Social Psychology (David, 2012), it was indicated that the academic performances of undergraduate students with high, medium, and low mental ability were influenced by the self-efficacy of the students. Aside from that it also claimed that students' academic self- efficacy was considered to be the most influential factor on mental ability and in return to mental ability to self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is considered to be one of the barriers to successful academic preparation. Holmquist (2015), claimed that although courses of every student have no relation to their self-efficacy, self-efficacy on the other hand has an impact to their persistency in chosen course.

Students with higher efficacy generally are more willing to persist in the face of adversity, and students with goals of "mastering a task" tend to invest in focused effort Zavarella, (2014). He also mentioned that Support and enhancement of self-efficacy is necessary in addition to basic skills to improve the chances of success for students who are still struggling to maintain and pursue their first choice of course in college.

Nordin (2016) suggested that parents are one of the major sources of self-efficacy during a student is undergoing some adjustments. Coping with academic challenges are crucial for them that may lead to decrease of efficacy if not guided properly. He added that parental involvement has been proven to foster positive beliefs about students' perception and capabilities. Thus, it is important for parents to be present whenever their child is in the peak of adjustments.

Level of self-efficacy is also considered to be a product of socialization (Kalantari, 2013). Being in a satisfying relationship consistently has been associated with better physical, mental and emotional health. Conversely relationship distress and break up have been linked to poor mental and emotional health. Since self-efficacy is known to be a product of social factors and environment, there were claims that self-efficacy of those who live in rural communities have weaker self-efficacy than those who live in the city. Kawser (2016) mentioned that living in a city encompasses a lot of demands and distractors that the rural residencies have. Individuals who grew up in city socialize with those who is said to be liberated and risk takers. Students living in rural areas are simple and afraid to do new things. This kind of environment they were living cause for their self-efficacy to be in lower level.

Self-efficacy has different indicators if it was high or low base on the behaviors of an individuals as mentioned by Cherry (2018). The article claims that those who have a high sense of self-efficacy see difficult problems as tasks to be accomplished, develop a deeper interest in the activities they engage in, develop a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities, and bounce back quickly from failures and setbacks. In contrast, those who lack self-efficacy always get rid of the difficult tasks, thinking they are incapable of handling demanding situations, concentrate on their own shortcomings and unfavorable outcomes, and quickly lose faith in their own talents.

According to social cognitive theory, there are a number of circumstances in which they may co-vary even across different functional domains. From this theoretical perspective, self-efficacy is viewed as the product of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. This is the concept of Triadic Reciprocal Causation. Under these domains were mediating and moderating factors identified in terms of measuring the Self-efficacy Scale of students such as learning process, comprehension, memory, curricular activities, time management, teacher-student interaction, examination and time management (Schwarzer, 2014). This following factor serves as an indicators that can reflect self-efficacy of students.

As Seifert (2011) aptly states, the course of action directly influenced by self-efficacy is "shown in full" at the early stages of development once individuals choose their line of expertise early on and map their futures.

Tojari (2016) study showed that there is a significant and meaningful association between age, gender, and self-efficacy. The findings of the study found out that gender has greater correlation to self-efficacy than age with multivariate regression analysis was applied ($P < 0.05$). The study uses the freshmen college students who were graduates of k-12 program and gender were classified only as male and female. Izmail (2017) conducted a study that examines the relationship between self-efficacy of students and GPA grade scores. Self-efficacy scale used in this study was adapted

from the previous scale particularly to measure GPA grades scores of the students. The study used Pearson's R and showed that there was a strong positive correlation between two variables in self-efficacy male and female students and GPA grade scores $r = .67$, $n = 39$, $p < .01$ for male students and $r = .85$, $n = 21$, $p < .01$ for female students. However, the study implied that the level of stress may influence students who predict lower than excellent scores. Koseoglu (2015) [5] affirmed on his study using Mancova that students with high self-efficacy preferred mastery goals which entailed challenges and new knowledge that results to a better performance. Moreover, with the use of interviews, the study also revealed that students with low self-efficacy were inclined to believe that intelligence is inherent and cannot be changed.

Similarly, Strelnieks (2013) [9] explored the relationship of student's domain specific self-concepts and self-efficacy to academic performance of minority students. The researcher found that self-efficacy could influence student academic performance depends on some external factors like gender and socio-economic status of the students.

Adeyemo (2017) examined the moderating influence of emotional intelligence on the link between self-efficacy and achievement among undergraduate students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. After analyzing the results, the study revealed a significant and positive correlation between self-efficacy with academic achievement ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$).

Holmquist, Gable and Billups (2013) endeavored to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and persistence in adult remedial education. The survey investigated demographic characteristics related to general self-efficacy, academic confidence, motivation, and persistence. It was found out that there was no significant correlation between the demographic characteristics and general self-efficacy, academic confidence, motivation, or persistence, nor was there any significant correlation among the variables except for general self-efficacy and academic confidence, which did have a significant correlation. Academic confidence garnered significant relationship with self-efficacy, as it was found out that students who had a generally positive outlook on their skills (self-efficacy) tend to accept more projects and tackle lessons more efficiently, with far fewer mistakes.

Wairimu and Macharia (2016) investigated the relationship between parental involvement and self-efficacy in their study using tertiary students of Nyeri, Kenya. Emphasis was put on establishing the relationship between parental involvement in the perspective of autonomy, competence, and relatedness and development of self-efficacy among adolescents. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to establish the strength of association between the two variables and use the same instrument the present study applied.

Differences of beliefs of college students was explained by Keller and Murray (2012) in their study. Keller and Murray (2012) have suggested that the culture of rurality differs in the overall culture of the city. Students who move from rural hometowns to colleges located in the city, face particular difficulties. In other words, rural students may experience something akin to culture shock upon arriving at university. This kind of culture shock leads them to a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in one's familiar environment that requires adjustment that leads to a lower self-efficacy.

Different writings are being emphasized showing great

support to the expected output of the study wherein it was mentioned that there is a great need to produce such studies that give highlights to college students who faced a lot of adjustments compared to younger ones. Previous researches and literatures agreed that at the age of 18 students were exposed to different stressors and self-efficacy tends to be vulnerable especially those with low levels. First year and second year levels of college, are the ages more prone to attrition or weakening mindsets and self-efficacy due to pressure. Formulation of activities such as enhancement program has been seen as needed during the first-year level of college.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to prepare a Self-Efficacy Enhancement Program for Sustaining Course Choice of Freshmen College Students. Specifically, it seeks answer to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of freshmen college students in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Course and Course Persistency
 - 1.4 Academic Performance
 - 1.5 Parental Involvement
 - 1.6 Civil Status
 - 1.7 Location of the School Proper
2. To what extent are the following self-efficacy indicators manifest among students?
 - 2.1 Personal Indicators
 - 2.2 Environmental Indicators
 - 2.3 Behavioral Indicators
3. How do measures of self-efficacy relate the profile variables? Is the relationship significant?
4. Based on the analysis, what Self-Efficacy Enhancement Program for Sustaining Course Choice of Freshmen College Students may be prepared?

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive and correlational methods of research was employed in this study under quantitative design. For this purpose, triangulation method was utilized in obtaining relevant data from the questionnaire, unstructured interview and document analysis as the tools of data gathering.

Subjects of the Study

The participants of the study were 345 freshmen college students of Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology of three (3) campuses who were considered to be the first batch of K to 12 graduates in the Philippines. Sample size taken using Raosoft Calculator was 345. They range from the legal age of 18 - 21 years old, regardless of gender and courses. The sampling technique used was purposive as only college freshmen student with K to 12 experiences batch 2017-2018 will be able to provide necessary data for the study.

Data Gathering Instrument

Several instruments were used for collecting data of the present study. Among those measures will be demographic characteristics of the sample and self-efficacy scale for

students. Academic performance of the respondents will also be gathered with the permission of the school administrators for the conduct of the study. Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire of Academic Self-Efficacy, unstructured interview and documentary data serves as tools for data gathering

Results and Discussion

Among the indicators, the least that manifest among freshmen college students was the behavioral indicators with the composite mean of 3.28. This indicates that students are experiencing difficulties in terms of adjusting and managing their time and goals whenever they are facing obstacles in their study. It greatly supports the study of Al-Qaisy (2010)^[1] on which adjustment is one of the factors that a student may face during transition period from secondary to tertiary level that may decrease their self-efficacy. These problems encountered may give them difficulties in establishing a goal and maximizing their time (Bong, 2012).

Environmental indicators were found to obtained the highest mean manifesting among freshmen college students. This is consistent with the study of Martin (2010)^[8] who claims that this kind of interaction towards their friends, develops belief in their abilities. Similarly, this result confirms the assumptions of Hamilton (2016)^[4] that adolescents with high self-efficacy, intention was independent of support while those with low self-efficacy, receiving friend support partly compensated for lack of self-efficacy. Having a moderate level of self-efficacy in terms of student-teacher relationship simply shows that teachers of MinSCAT establish high expectations and belongingness that fosters relationship to students that causes to create positive environment helping individuals to enhance their self-efficacy which was claimed by Wubbels (2012)^[11].

Parental involvement obtained the strongest positive correlation of .686 in behavioral indicators. This indicates a great impact of parental involvement towards a high level of self-efficacy of a student. Parallel to these findings of Khalil (2014) that parental involvement improves both academic and emotional functioning by promoting motivational development. It was further explained that parents are the major contributor of self-efficacy since they are the one who provide support and care whenever there is an existence of psychological states due to unwanted failures and academic demands.

In addition, age and academic performance shows a positive correlation towards the level of academic self-efficacy. This means that as age increases, self-efficacy also increases and the higher the self-efficacy is, the higher the academic performance will be. This greatly supports the study of Coraline (2014)^[3] that development of self-efficacy beliefs continues throughout life as people learn, experience and develop into more complex human beings. It may increase or decrease as a human age. Correlations found between academic performance and self-efficacy is parallel to the result of the study conducted by Koseoglu (2015)^[5], Yazon (2014)^[12] Strenieks (2013) Li (2012) & Lampert (2011)^[6] wherein they also found positive correlations between academic performance and self-efficacy. It was also found that the relationship between self-efficacy and GPA was partially mediated by effort-regulation that simply explains the result indicated in the table. This indication is also similar to the claims of Zorbakhsh (2015)^[13] that people who have high level of self-efficacy tend to manage their time wisely

and more productive resulting to a higher academic performance.

Course Persistency shows a negative correlation. This signifies that as student stays on the first choice of course, the level of self-efficacy is either obtained its moderate or high extent compared to those who shifted that decreases their level of self-efficacy this can be due to their confusion and experience of failure. This is similar to the claims of Williams (2010) ^[10] that students with positive self-efficacy are those who tends to show involvement and allow to develop their talents and skills. Martin (2010) ^[8] supports this claim in his study by finding that prosocial individuals have a better academic performance and low vulnerability of negativism and change of mind.

No significant relationship is found existing between self-efficacy to the variable gender identity, course, relationship status and location of the school proper. These implies that these demographic characteristics of the respondents do not influence in any way their self-efficacy.

The present study shows that freshmen college students obtained a moderate level of self-efficacy. Hence every educator must not be confident enough with this result but rather aim to strengthen the self-efficacy for the students to be more persistent regarding their selected course choice and enhance academic performance. Since freshmen college students who age 18-19 obtained the least level of self-efficacy, the prepared self-efficacy enhancement program must be given before the academic year started at the time most of them was in the transition stage.

Conclusion

1. Freshmen college student of MinSCAT were predominantly female, young, single, had an average academic performance, and living in a dormitory.
2. Students are having difficulties in terms of adjusting and managing their time and establishing goals whenever they are facing obstacles in their study making their self-efficacy vulnerable.
3. Self-efficacy is a good predictor of student's course persistency. Thus, if enhance may increase their self-efficacy leading to higher academic performance.
4. The self-efficacy enhancement program should cover all the addressed areas to help the students in sustaining their course should. The enhancement program must be provided with different activities that will help them discover insights, enhance their personal aspect of self-efficacy, develop their environmental aspect of self-efficacy and strengthen their behavioral aspects of self-efficacy.

Recommendations

1. Review of the prepared self-efficacy enhancement program may undergo for further improvements.
2. Implementation of the prepared self-efficacy enhancement program for freshmen college students will help in decreasing the number of shifters every semester.
3. As there were limitations to this study, further investigation and researches would be beneficial focusing on other factors that affect the self-efficacy of students.
4. Adaptation of Commission on Higher Education on self-efficacy enhancement program to enforce in different institutions will help in decreasing the shifting rates of students.

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