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# ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

College life marks a pivotal transition from adolescence to independent adulthood. It gives students numerous opportunities and significantly contributes to personal development and identity formation. During this phase, there is a noticeable shift toward self-directed learning, where individuals take greater responsibility for their educational journey. College's primary objective is to attain a meaningful education that lays the foundation for future success. Numerous studies in this domain highlight various factors that impact college achievement, among which academic self-efficacy is frequently emphasized. The investigators used a simple random sampling technique for selecting the sample. The Self-Efficacy Scale was developed by Michael Jeya Priya,E.,& Maria Saroja, M (2022) was used for the present study. Data were collected from 250 college students in Thoothukudi District. Mean, SD, 't'- test,and $\chi$ 2 was used for analysis of the data. The study concluded that students with higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit stronger academic motivation and adopt adaptive coping mechanisms when faced with stress. These students are also more likely to set ambitious goals and utilize effective strategies to manage academic challenges.

**Keywords:** Academic Self-Efficacy, College Students, Academic Motivation and Achievement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Achieving academic success is crucial to college life, as it has a profound impact on a student's future. Among the numerous factors that affect academic performance, academic self-efficacy is recognized as a particularly important contributor. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute specific tasks or perform certain actions (Bandura, 1997). This concept has been explored across various domains, leading to the emergence of subtypes, including social self-efficacy (Smith & Betz, 2000), career self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 2006), and technological self-efficacy (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). Among these, academic self-efficacy derived from Bandura's theory relates explicitly to students' confidence in their ability to succeed in academic tasks (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).Academic self-efficacy plays a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation and cognitive engagement in the learning process. It affects how learners respond to academic challenges and their persistence in completing tasks (Bandura, 1997). The formation of this belief is influenced by several contextual factors, including the support provided by family members, peers, and educational institutions. Schunk and Pajares (2002) emphasized that changes in students' environments and interactions with

influential figures, particularly teachers, significantly shape their academic self-efficacy.Teachers are particularly crucial in influencing students' confidence in their academic abilities. Banfield (2015) found that negative behaviours from teachers can reduce students' self-efficacy, whereas constructive feedback and encouragement have a positive impact on students. For instance, when students receive affirming feedback after a setback, it may reinforce their belief in their abilities, leading to improved academic outcomes (Zimmerman, 2000).Therefore, academic self-efficacy represents students' internal belief in their capacity to fulfil educational expectations (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of difficulties, adopt effective learning strategies, and demonstrate resilience. Conversely, those with lower self-efficacy tend to struggle with academic performance and may exhibit a lack of commitment to their academic responsibilities (Pintrich& De Groot, 1990; Pajares, 1996). According to social cognitive theory, both environmental and personal factors play a vital role in shaping a student's engagement in learning activities (Bandura, 1986). Among the personal factors, self-efficacy stands out as a key determinant influencing how actively students participate in the learning process. Learners with strong self-efficacy beliefs are generally more engaged, as they trust their ability to develop skills and are motivated to take part in educational tasks (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Research has shown a clear positive association between academic self-efficacy and sustained academic engagement, as well as overall achievement (Zhen et al., 2017).

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

A considerable body of research has examined the role of academic self-efficacy in influencing students' academic outcomes and psychological well-being. Academic self-efficacy, rooted in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, refers to students' beliefs in their capacity to perform academic tasks successfully. This belief system significantly affects their motivation, learning behaviors, and performance.Lee and Larson (2000) and Misra and Castillo (2004) noted that academic responsibilities such as examinations and graduation are among the most common sources of stress among university students. This is particularly evident in Asian contexts—such as China, Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong—where Confucian cultural values emphasize academic excellence and filial piety (Chen & Wong, 2010).Several studies have demonstrated the protective role of academic self-efficacy against academic stress. Chemers et al. (2001) found that students with high self-efficacy experience lower stress levels and greater academic satisfaction. Zimmerman (2000) and Pajares (2002) further reported that students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to engage in self-regulated learning behaviors, such as goal setting, persistence, and effective time management.Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991) conducted a meta-analysis that revealed a strong positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance. Robbins et al. (2004) confirmed this finding, reporting that academic self-efficacy significantly predicted college GPA. Similarly, Richardson, Abraham, and Bond (2012), in their review of 241 studies, found that among 50 academic variables, self-efficacy had the strongest correlation with students' academic success.

In educational research, Schunk (1981, 1991) emphasized that academic self-efficacy not only enhances motivation but also influences how students approach learning tasks. His work suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are formed through mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, social modeling, and emotional arousal.Usher and Pajares (2008) explored these sources among middle school students and found that mastery experiences had the strongest influence on academic self-efficacy. Their findings supported the multidimensional development of self-efficacy, influenced by both internal and external factors. Likewise, Zhen et al. (2017) found that students with higher self-efficacy were more engaged in classroom learning, more resilient under stress, and more likely to succeed academically.Collectively, these studies highlight that academic self-efficacy is a critical determinant of student engagement, resilience, and academic achievement. The literature supports the implementation of educational strategies that foster self-efficacysuch as personalized feedback, opportunities for mastery, and peer learning modelsto improve student outcomes and reduce academic stress.

## 3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Education is a vital component of an individual's life, significantly influencing various other dimensions of personal and professional development. However, students often encounter numerous challenges in their pursuit of academic success, making educational achievement a complex issue. The academic journey of individuals, as well as the broader educational systems within different countries, are shaped by multiple factors. When students enter academic environments, they are frequently exposed to high levels of pressure. While classroom learning can provide positive

experiences, academic demands such as tests, assignments, online classes, projects, and virtual examinations often contribute to increased stress levels among students. Self-efficacy, as a personality trait, holds a significant influence within academic settings by shaping how students perceive their capabilities and manage academic responsibilities. It reflects the confidence individuals have in their abilities to handle particular academic tasks and demands (Bandura, 1997; Jordan & Carden, 2017). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs influence human behavior through cognitive, motivational, emotional, and decision-making processes. In educational contexts, these beliefs are primarily associated with students' perceptions of their capacity to plan and successfully execute the tasks and activities required for academic achievement. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory posits that an individual's belief in their abilities significantly influences their capacity to complete tasks and achieve desired academic outcomes. It emphasizes individuals' perceptions of themselves in contexts that demand academic success. Academic self-efficacy, a key component of this theory, refers to the belief that one possesses the necessary skills and competence to perform academic tasks effectively. For instance, when a student is confident in their ability to complete a task, this belief enhances their performance.Anike, Marire-Nwankwo, and Ezeanya (2020) asserted that students with high levels of self-efficacy often demonstrate greater confidence when engaging in academic activities. Similarly, Husain (2014) examined factors influencing academic achievement, including gender and self-efficacy, and found that academic self-efficacy was positively associated with both academic performance and motivation.

Academic self-efficacy refers to a student's confidence in their ability to effectively accomplish academic tasks, which positively influences their behaviour and academic outcomes. Based on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is shaped through the interaction of personal, environmental, behavioural, and cognitive elements. In this context, the current study explores how students with strong academic self-efficacy tend to approach difficult academic tasks with greater persistence, resilience, and effort. When such students encounter failure, they often attribute it to a lack of effort or external conditions. However, when they succeed, they are more likely to credit their capabilities and confidence rather than external factors (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura (1986) identifies four main sources that contribute to the development of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal encouragement, and emotional or physiological responses. Among these, mastery experiences are the most influential, as personal successes strengthen self-efficacy, while repeated failures may weaken it—depending on how individuals interpret their abilities. Vicarious experiences involve observing peers with similar abilities succeed, which can enhance one's own belief in their capabilities. Verbal persuasion, such as encouragement and positive feedback, helps individuals trust in their competence to perform a task. Emotional and physical states also play a role in self-efficacy development; for instance, positive emotions tend to reinforce self-efficacy, whereas negative emotions may reduce it (Bandura, 1986).

Evidence suggests that self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of academic achievement than skill alone, as it influences cognitive processes, motivation, and behavior (Tenaw, 2013). Although previous successes can elevate self-efficacy, it is the individual's perception of those experiences that truly determines future performance (Tenaw, 2013). Perceived self-efficacy often forecasts future academic success more accurately than past performance (Bandura, 1986; Chemers et al., 2001). Since these beliefs shape students' thought patterns and motivation, fluctuations in self-efficacy based on past experiences can directly affect academic outcomes (Tenaw, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to examine the academic self-efficacy of college students in the Thoothukudi District.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To find out the level of academic self-efficacy among college students.
2) To find out whether there is any significant difference between the academic self-efficacy among college students concerning the locality of residence, stream of study, type of residence, type of family, and social media usage.
3) To find whether there is any significant association among college students in their academic self-efficacy concerning the father's educational qualification and the mother's educational qualification.

## 5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- Academic self-efficacy among college students is moderate.

- There is no significant difference between college students in their academic self-efficacy concerning the demographical variables namely locality of residence, stream of study, type of residence, type of family, and social media usage.
- There is no significant association between college students in their academic self-efficacy concerning the demographical variables namely the father's educational qualification and mother's educational qualification.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

The investigators used a random sampling technique and selected 250 college students in Thoothukudi District. The investigators used the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASE) Scale developed and validated by the investigators *Michael Jeya Priya, E & Maria Saroja, M (2021).* Mean, Standard Deviation, 't' test, and ANOVA were the statistical techniques used to carry out the study.

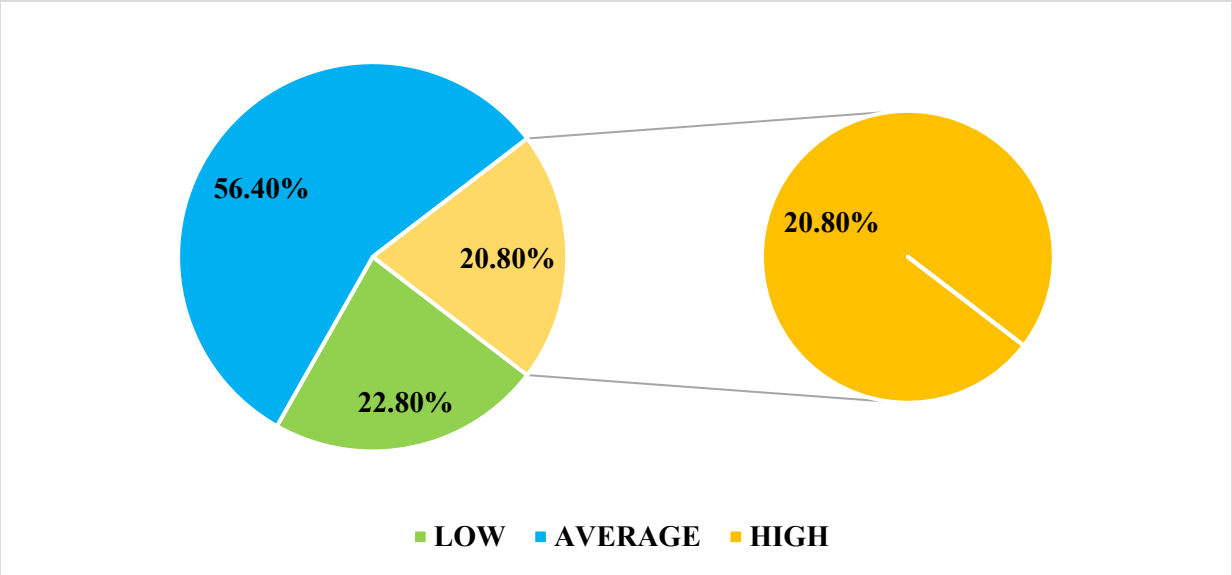
## 7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Ho1- Academic Self-Efficacy among college students is moderate.

***Table 1- shows the Level of Academic Self-Efficacy among college students***

| Variable | Low | | Average | | High | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| *Academic Self-Efficacy* | 57 | 22.80 | 141 | 56.40 | 52 | 20.80 |

***Figure.1. showing the percental level of Academic Self-Efficacy of college students***




***Interpretation of Table -1***

It is revealed from the above table that among the college students 22.8% of students show a low level, 56.40% have an average level and 20.8% of them showed a high level of academic self-efficacy.

***Table 2- shows the difference between male and female college students in their academic self-efficacy***.

| *Variables* | N | *Mean* | *SD* | *Calculated 't' Value* | *Table Value* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 177 | 61.83 | 7.09 | 1.76 | 1.96 | NS |
| | Female | 73 | 60.33 | 5.67 | | | |

***Interpretation of Table -2***

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated *t* value is lower than the critical table value at the 5% level of significance, indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female college students in terms of their academic self-efficacy. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that gender may not significantly impact students' self-perceived academic capabilities (Pajares, 2002).

***Table3- shows the difference between urban and rural college students in their academic self-efficacy.***

| ***Variables*** | | **N** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***Calculated 't' Value*** | ***Table Value*** | ***Remarks*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locality of Residence | Urban | 132 | 62.83 | 6.17 | 3.62 | 1.96 | S |
| | Rural | 118 | 59.79 | 6.99 | | | |

***Interpretation of Table -3***

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated *t* value is less than the critical table value at the 5% level of significance for 248 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant difference between urban and rural college students in their academic self-efficacy. The mean score of urban college students (M = 62.81) is higher than that of rural students (M = 60.91), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that environmental and contextual factors such as access to educational resources and exposure to competitive academic settings may contribute to urban students' stronger self-efficacy beliefs. This result is in contrast to the findings of Parven and Jan (2023), who reported no significant difference in academic self-efficacy between rural and urban students. However, similar findings were observed by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001), who highlighted the role of institutional and environmental support in shaping academic self-efficacy.

***Table 4- shows the difference between arts and science college students in their academic self-efficacy***.

| ***Variables*** | | **N** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***Calculated 't' Value*** | ***Table Value*** | ***Remarks*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stream of Study | Arts | 120 | 61.62 | 6.80 | 0.51 | 1.96 | NS |
| | Science | 130 | 61.18 | 6.69 | | | |

***Interpretation of Table -4***

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated *t* value is less than the critical table value at the 5% level of significance for 248 degrees of freedom. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no statistically significant difference in academic self-efficacy between college students from the arts and science streams. This suggests that the stream of study may not be a determining factor in shaping students' beliefs about their academic capabilities, aligning with prior research emphasizing that self-efficacy is more closely related to individual motivation and learning strategies than academic discipline (Pajares, 1996).

***Table 5- shows the difference between joint and nuclear-familycollege students in their academic self-efficacy.***

| ***Variables*** | | **N** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***Calculated 't' Value*** | ***Table Value*** | ***Remarks*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Family | Joint | 63 | 62.81 | 6.08 | 2.07 | 1.96 | S |
| | Nuclear | 187 | 60.91 | 6.89 | | | |

***Interpretation of Table -5***

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated *t* value is less than the table value at the 5% level of significance for 248 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant difference between college students from joint families and those from nuclear families in their academic self-efficacy. The mean score of joint-family college students (M = 62.81) is higher than that of nuclear-family college students (M = 60.91), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that family structure may play a role in shaping students' confidence in their academic abilities, possibly due to differences in emotional support, guidance, and collaborative learning environments available in joint families.

***Table 6- shows the difference between social media users and social media non-users in their academic self-efficacy.***

| *Variables* | | N | *Mean* | *SD* | *Calculated 't' Value* | *Table Value* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media Usage | Yes | 133 | 61.71 | 7.41 | 0.80 | 1.96 | NS |
| | No | 117 | 61.03 | 5.89 | | | |

***Interpretation of Table -6***

It is inferred from the above table that the calculated *t* value is lower than the critical table value at the 5% level of significance for 248 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in academic self-efficacy between college students who use social media and those who do not. This suggests that social media usage, in itself, may not have a direct impact on students' perceptions of their academic capabilities.

***Table 7 shows the association betweenthe academic self-efficacy of college students and their father's educational qualifications.***

| *Variables* | | Mean | *df* | *Calculated* $\chi^2$ | *Table Value* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Father's Educational Qualification | School Level | 61.66 | 4 | 7.60 | 9.49 | NS |
| | College Level | 62.36 | | | | |
| | Professional level | 60.49 | | | | |

***Interpretation of Table 7***

It is revealed from the above table that there is no statistically significant association between the academic self-efficacy of college students and their fathers' educational qualifications. This implies that the educational background of the father does not appear to influence the students' beliefs in their academic capabilities within the context of the present study.***Table 8 shows the association betweenthe academic self-efficacy of college students and their mother's educational qualifications.***

| *Variables* | | Mean | *df* | *Calculated* $\chi^2$ | *Table Value* | *Remarks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mother's Educational Qualification | School Level | 61.10 | 4 | 13.40 | 9.49 | S |
| | College Level | 62.36 | | | | |
| | Professional level | 59.83 | | | | |

***Interpretation of Table 8***

It is revealed from the above table that there is a statistically significant association between college students' academic self-efficacy and their mothers' educational qualifications. This finding suggests that a mother's level of education may positively influence students' beliefs in their academic capabilities. However, this result contradicts the findings of Ilgar et al. (2020), who reported no significant relationship between parents' educational qualifications and

the self-regulated learning skills of prospective teachers. Despite this contradiction, the current study underscores the potential role of maternal educational background in shaping students' academic self-perception.

## 8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Academic Self-efficacy among college students is moderate.
- There is no significant difference between male and female college students in their academic self-efficacy.
- There is a significant difference between urban and rural college students in their academic self-efficacy.
- There is no significant difference between arts and science stream college students in their academic self-efficacy.
- There is a significant difference between joint-family and nuclear-family female prospective teachers in their self-regulated learning
- There is no significant difference between social media and non-social media-using female prospective teachers in their self-regulated learning.
- There is no association between the self-regulated learning of female prospective teachers and their father's educational qualifications.
- There is a significant association between the self-regulated learning of female prospective teachers and their mother's educational qualifications.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Academic self efficacy refers to a student's belief in their ability to successfully complete academic tasks or achieve educational goals, and it plays a vital role in shaping their academic and professional development. This belief significantly influences students' motivation, persistence, level of engagement, aspirations, and interest in lifelong learning. Those with high self efficacy are more likely to embrace challenges, exert consistent effort, and remain resilient in the face of academic difficulties. Conversely, students with low academic self efficacy may struggle with motivation and are at risk of academic underperformance. To address this, higher education institutions should provide targeted support through personalized learning environments, individualized instruction, regular feedback, and mentorship. Creating a positive and encouraging academic atmosphere helps boost students' confidence, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and perform to their full potential.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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