

Relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic persistence amongst college students

Nishita Sharma^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Like many people in most parts of our country battle hard to gain an access to all basic things and facilities for a fruitful living, students too strive equally hard to gain access to good education and persist to attain clarity not just about the courses they choose for themselves to study in the present but also about the majority of future endeavours that will help make their course of academic learning more fruitful. The present study was done to assess the relationship between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Persistence amongst the students in the age range of 18-25, using standardized measures of Academic Self-Efficacy and The Academic Persistence. The sample was collected from 30 college going students, the findings of the research revealed no correlation between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Persistence. The sample collected for the study though showcases a huge impact of the on-going pandemic on not just the daily academic schedules of the individuals but also on the motivation to participate in the related academic activities.

Keywords: *Academic Self-Efficacy, Academic Persistence, Good Education, Future Endeavours, College students*

In the present times every corner of the nation has a loud call, need and an immense urge for education. It is true that the country is facing a crisis right now not only in terms of the pandemic we are facing, consistent disturbances in the economy, growing unemployment amongst youth and lack of clarity with respect to what subjects to choose for higher studies, career options to choose and pursue. Swami Vivekananda ji once said, “*There is only one purpose in the whole life- education.*” Adolescents with the belief that doing well in school is crucial for their future success, reportedly show higher academic engagement, persistence, and subsequent academic performance (Te Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Identifying with academics as something important for a successful future is a key predictor for sustained academic achievement and positive academic behaviour (Gottfried, 1990). The early researches have suggested academic persistence, as something that depends on the student’s personal characteristics (e.g., skills, past performance, willingness) (Kuh et al., 2006; Tinto, 2006). On the other hand, Academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief (conviction) that they can successfully achieve at a designated level on an academic task or attain a specific academic goal. (Bandura, 1997). Both variables in the study,

¹M.A., Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India

[*Responding Author](#)

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Academic Persistence and Academic Self-Efficacy have suggestible high impact on the academic interests, academic competencies, and academic achievement in the college going students.

Academic Persistence

Academic Persistence is a very important and crucial factor contributing to building the academic competencies of students across the world. Many Psychological, social and environmental experiences have an impact on the Academic Persistence of students attending college, Academic Persistence in particular, strengthens or in fact enable students, to continue engaging in the academic tasks even when faced with challenges. Academic Persistence is also associated with the mastery of skills and content areas (Véronneau, Racer, Fosco, & Dishion, 2014). It is only because of the immense importance of assessing academic persistence in students consistent findings suggesting that academic persistence in students wears out in the adolescent years are cause for concern among scholars and practitioners (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Studies suggest that in particular, adolescents, suffer significant declines in academic persistence which is highly associated with sharp declines in the academic outcomes like academic grades, promotion to higher grades, completing high school and attainment of college-level education (Mendoza-Denton, Pietrzak, & Downey, 2008). Recently many educational models have come up which highlight the role played by the environment, particularly by the institution in the process of academic persistence. This view of persistence changed in the 1970s (Bean, 1985; Tinto, 1975, 2006). The best known of these educational models are those of Tinto (1975) and Bean (1985), which suggest that persistence is a result of a longitudinal process of interactions between the student and the academic and social systems of the institution (Schmitz et al., 2010; Tinto 1975, 1997). Alongside the development of these educational models, many motivational models have emerged which were initially seen as competitors of educational models but are now considered as not just necessary but complementary to the educational models in gaining a better understanding of academic persistence. Motivational Models focus on the prediction of behaviour or behaviour changes by taking into account factors like motivation, self-efficacy and the goal pursued. Today Motivational and Educational Models are often used together in order to better furnish a detailed picture of the persistence process (Burrus et al., 2013; Cabrera et al., 1993; Kuh et al., 2006; Robbins et al., 2004; Sandler, 2000).

Academic Self-Efficacy

Grounded in self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), self-efficacy is explained as individual's confidence in their ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Self-efficacy theory suggests that academic self-efficacy may vary in strength as a function of task difficulty. Rather than being viewed as a stable trait, self-efficacy is comparatively situational in nature. Self-efficacy is often confused with self-esteem or self-concept. Hence it should be noted that self-efficacy is an evaluation which is task-specific, while self-esteem and self-concept reflect more affective and general evaluations of the self. Recent researches suggests, high self-efficacy creates a feeling of calmness while approaching difficult tasks whereas low self-efficacy may result in an individual perceiving a task as more difficult than it actually is, which, in turn, may create anxiety, stress and a narrower idea on how best to approach the solving of a problem or activity (Eccles, 2005). Academic efficacy, hence, can be understood as a student's belief in her/his ability to perform the necessary behaviour in order to perform a certain way to produce the required result. Self-Efficacy in this research was measured using the Self-Efficacy Confidence Scale. Many previous researches have proven a positive correlation

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between the Academic Self Efficacy and Academic Persistence. Although the results in this research show no correlation between the two variables, probably because of the fact that the sample was collected during the period of pandemic where like everything else the academics also got either slowed down or disturbed in the country. Everything has shifted online and just like everything being operated through work from home, students are also staying back at homes and that probably might be causing them to be laid back with the already slowing down academics.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to assess the relationship between Academic Persistence and Academic Self-Efficacy in the college going students.

Hypothesis

Academic Persistence and Academic Self-Efficacy in the college going students will be positively correlated.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Score of students between the age range of 18 to 25 were collected prior to the investigation, resulting in a data pool of 30 valid responses. Most of the participants were the students pursuing college.

Measures

The following standardized tests were used,

- 1. The Academic Persistence Scale (APS):** In this study the primary measure used to measure academic persistence was **The Academic Persistence Scale (APS)** (Thalib et al., 2018). The scale helps yields scores of academic persistence and consists of 45 items. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 4. The items classified as favourable items and unfavourable items. Favourable items were scored as 0,1,2,3,4, where the description was 0 (Very Disagree) to 4 (Very Appropriate) and unfavourable items, were scored as 4,3,2,1,0. For which the description was 4 (Very Disagree) to 0 (Very Appropriate).
- 2. Academic Self-Efficacy 5 - point confidence Scale: Academic Self-Efficacy 5 - point confidence Scale** (Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001) was used to measure Academic Self-Efficacy. Respondents were asked to rate each of all 11 items on the 5 point confidence scale ranging from 1 (No Confidence at all) to 5 (Complete Confidence).

Procedure

The participants were randomly contacted and informed about the purpose of the research which was assessment of the relationship between academic persistence and academic self-efficacy. Questionnaires were filled through Google forms and the students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The sample collection went on from August 2020 to September 2020. The Google forms had both the questionnaires used for the study i.e. Academic Self-Efficacy Confidence Scale and The Academic Persistence Scale along with a brief explanation about the aim of the study and instructions on how to go about filling the questionnaires.

RESULTS

Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlations were worked out to find out the relation between the two variables, i.e. Academic Self-Efficacy & Academic Persistence.

Table 1: Mean & Standard Deviation. N=30

	Academic Self Efficacy	Academic Persistence
Mean	38.77	98.47
Standard Deviation	8.488	12.417

Table 2: Correlation representing the relationship between Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Persistence

	Academic Self-Efficacy
Academic Persistence	-.023

DISCUSSION

The result formulated by working out the test scores to compute Pearson Correlation Significant (2-tailed). N=30 was -.023 i.e. suggesting no correlation between the two variables.

The results of the study suggest that due to the on-going pandemic which has slowed down the normal pace of the world, colleges too have been closed for quite a long time now, which is something very bewildering and unusual for majority of students of the country, staying back home, leads to, lesser clarity on daily academic goals, have a derogatory effect on not just the academic routine of the students but also, on their learning styles, their motivation to learn and achieve new academic goals and the irregularity in assistance from the teachers and academic guides, which is in fact extremely crucial for learning, exploring, persisting in academics and helping students become more efficient, have largely caused disturbances in the academic persistence and academic self-efficacy in the college going students which is reflected in the results of the study.

CONCLUSION

As Abigail Adams quoted once, “*Learning is not attained by chance it must be sought for with ardour and attended to with diligence.*” Every student who opts to go to college in order to pursue his academics must look forward to persistently learn. The Academic Self-Efficacy as suggested is the student’s belief in his academic capabilities which might motivate him to persist in order to learn and perform better in college. The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between Academic Persistence and Academic Self-Efficacy though the results suggest no correlation between the two variables, Though pervious researches examining the relationship between academic persistence and academic self-efficacy have shown suggestible high correlation between the two variables, the results in this research might show no correlation between the two variables, probably because of the fact that the sample was collected during the period of pandemic where like everything else the academics also got either slowed own or disturbed in the country. And hence different results might be expected if the study is performed in a situation which is more stable and less disturbing as compared to that of the situation during the pandemic which has initiated a lot of disturbances in the student’s routine on multiple levels. A relatively less disturbing environment might also motivate more students to participate in the study and give a chance to assess the relationship between the two variables on a relatively larger population than that in the present study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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