



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC SELF-  
EFFICACY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG  
CELPAD STUDENTS**

**BY**

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of university students in Malaysia. A review of relevant literature identified a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance. As a result, this study aimed to examine the correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic performance among CELPAD students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This study used a quantitative approach which is correlation design. The study sample consisted of 171 CELPAD students at IIUM Gombak. Stratified random sampling was used to collect the data. Study results showed that most of the students had a high level of academic self-efficacy. The results also revealed there was a significant positive moderating relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance. However, there were no significant differences in academic self-efficacy based on gender or level of study. Finally, it was found that academic self-efficacy had a significant effect on academic performance. Additionally, the results from this study suggest that future research could reduce the dimensions used to measure academic self-efficacy, and increase, by more than 10 items, those used to measure academic performance. Moreover, further research could also explore the mediation of other variables and involve students' CGPA and passive performance.

## خلاصة البحث

تهدف هذا الدراسة الى استقصاء العلاقة بين مستوى الفاعليه الأكاديمية و الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب في المعهد التحضيري لدراسه اللغة الانجليزية التابع للجامعه العالميه الإسلامية في ماليزيا . تم تبني المنهج الكمي في هذه الدراسة , حيث كانت عينه البحث 171 طالب وطالبة. استخدمت العينة العشوائية الطبقية لجمع البيانات. أظهرت نتائج هذا البحث أن أغلب طلاب المعهد لديهم مستوى عال من الفاعلية الأكاديمية الذاتية، أيضا أوضحت هذه الدراسة أن هناك علاقة ايجابية متوسطة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متغير الفاعلية الذاتية والأداء الأكاديمي. لكن نتائج هذه البحث أشارت إلى عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية في مستوى الفاعلية الذاتية الأكاديمية للطلاب بناء على الجنس أو المستوى الدراسي. كما بينت النتائج أن الفاعلية الذاتية الأكاديمية لها تأثير ذو دلالة على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب . وأخيرا أوصى الباحث إلى اعاده النظر في عدد لأبعاد التي تقيس الفاعليه الأكاديمية، كذلك إضافة عدد الاسئلة من أجل قياس أفضل للأداء الأكاديمي و ادراج متغيرات وسيطة للتنبؤ بنتائج الأداء الأكاديمي.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education Psychology in Education.

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher Education is one of the platforms in helping individuals to acquire desired professions and succeed in life. According to Mbathia (2005), education equips people with specific skills and therefore, enables them to perform their tasks effectively. The better the performance of an individual is, the more competitive and rewarded the individual will be. Self-efficacy is one of the most vital factors that motivate students to continue their efforts all through their learning at universities. As a result, educational psychologists have been interested in academic self-belief and self-perception for almost 40 years (Folk, 2016), because these factors influence the motivation and behavior of an individual.

Internationally, the application of psychological constructs such as academic self-efficacy has been employed to measure academic success, as these constructs have proven to be strong predictors of academic achievement and academic continuance (Stubbs & Maynard, 2017). Some researchers reported that in Asian countries, academic achievement is a highly valued familial and societal norm (Xu, Lou, Wang & Pang, 2017). It has been found that, compared with their European counterparts, Asian students are more stressed and anxious when facing academic test situations (Xu and et al., 2017). Hence, people act in a particular situation depending on the reciprocity of behavioral, environmental, and cognitive conditions, especially those related to cognitive factors to produce desired outcomes in any given situation. In fact, Bandura

(1997) named these expectations as self-efficacy (Feist, Fesit & Robert, 2018). Therefore, self-efficacy plays a significant role in academic behaviors.

Bandura (2001) defined self-efficacy as "...people's beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environment events" (Feist et al., 2018). This means people who believe they can do something that has the potential to alter an environmental event are more likely to act, and more likely to succeed than those who have low self-efficacy.

Numerous studies have shown that self-efficacy can have a positive impact on many aspects including students' academic achievement. For instance, Wan Mohamed (2017) found persons with high perceived self-efficacy try to accomplish more and persist longer at a task than those with low perceived self-efficacy. This is because, those with high self-efficacy tend to have more control over their events and environment, while those who have low self-efficacy tend to fear events, which cause the inability to control their environment. According to Heidari, Izadi, and Ahmadian (2012), students with an elevated level of self-efficacy exhibit a positive and significant relationship with vocabulary learning and memorization strategies compared to those with low self-efficacy. These findings show the importance of nurturing self-confidence in students to ensure the effectiveness of their learning and achievements. Self-efficacy is also an important entity that distinguishes between high achievers, intermediate achievers, and low achievers (Wan Mohammed, 2017).

A study by Bembenutty (2011) also illustrated that there is a positive correlation between homework assignments given by teachers, self-confidence, and the sense of responsibility in students. He stated that assignments are self-learning skills or self-regulated learning that can help students with academic performance while helping them to improve both their time management and learning environment effectively and

at the same time, maintaining the focus on their learning. This in turn, can help the students to improve their efforts in understanding their individual learning system and achieve excellent quality academic achievement. Moreover, self-efficacy also contributes to academic endeavor through leading to more effective use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies (Byrne, Flood & Griffin, 2014).

From time to time, students create changes in their learning approaches permanently, and feel comfortable to practice more concentrated learning over a longer period of time. However, students who have low self-efficacy show no changes in their learning approach (Prat Sala & Redford, 2010). Additionally, this study concluded that students who have low self-efficacy cannot become proficient in the school subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics. Furthermore, it is also concluded that students who have high self-efficacy (in reading and writing) often adopt strategic and in-depth learning strategies, while students with low self-efficacy only practice basic approaches. Thus, the self-efficacy belief contributes to student success by influencing the use of their learning strategies and behaviors in seeking academic assistance when needed.

In fact, the students' confidence in their academic abilities is greatly influenced by their perceptions of the assessment task, whether it is compatible with the planned learning system, and based on validity, reliability, and diversity. All of these has a significant positive effect on the students' self-efficacy and confidence (Alkharusi, Aldhafri, Alnabhani & Alkalbani, 2014). Thus, self-efficacy varies from situation to situation depending on the level of self-efficacy and the competencies required for different activities.

On the other hand, academic performance has become one of the most prominent issues in today's society and has turned into one of the priority goals to be achieved among students, families and other individuals who interact with these stakeholders. It

may be argued that the most crucial academic skills for students to achieve in school are reading, writing and mathematical skills.

In recent years, researchers have shown more attention on the students' self-efficacy over their performance in an academic setting (Ali, 2018). It has been extensively studied. However, as observed by the researcher, the specific relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance received less attention from previous researchers in Malaysia content.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A systematic literature review concerning the four issues central to this study indicated several interesting discoveries.

Related to the first issue, the study conducted by Suraya and Younus (2017) in Malaysia, in which parents, teachers, and principals or head teachers were interviewed, found that some male students struggled with the mainstream academic curriculum and were more likely to lean toward vocational courses. In addition, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, stated that female students consistently outperformed their male counterparts in secondary schools (Suraya & Younus, 2017). Therefore, it is evident that male students are less successful than their female colleagues in academic performance.

The second issue is observed in recent studies, which have focused more on students' self-efficacy and their academic performance in an academic setting. This is verified by an examination of twenty-seven articles conducted by Harold, Corliss, Jorge E and David (2018). Similarly, a study by Hwang, Choi, Lee, and Culver (2015) showed a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievements. In addition, a study by Keşan, C., and Kaya, D. (2018) showed

significant relationships between Mathematics and Science self-efficacy resources and students' academic success levels.

Self-efficacy is not globally established or generalized within an individual as is self-esteem (Feist & Robert, 2018). For example, people can have high self-efficacy in one situation and low self-efficacy in another. Levels of self-efficacy vary from situation to situation depending on the competencies required for different activities. These include competencies related to the presence or absence of other people, especially if they are competitors. Also included are the person's predisposition to attend to failure of performance rather than to success and the associated physiological states—particularly the presence of fatigue, anxiety, apathy, or despondency

Self-efficacy levels are not globally set, and the researcher found that most studies have focused on different types of self-efficacy and the students' academic achievements (CGPA). However, less attention has been paid to academic self-efficacy (Ali, 2018). Hence, it is imperative to address this gap identified in studies reported in the relevant literature.

With reference to the third issue, the researcher found that most studies conducted in Malaysia only investigated the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of students (Suraya and Yunus, 2017; Yui & Hassan, 2015) (Abu Bakar et al., 2016; Muhammad et al., 2015; Choo et al., 2012; Fam et al., 2015; Alias et al., 2016; Zahir et al., 2018). As a result, this study investigates the passive performance of students in the academic setting through three dimensions, namely creativity and critical thinking, the efficiency of resource management, and the application of information.

Finally, most of the studies conducted in CELPAD were on language, either Arabic or English. For instance, the first study was the Arabic-Speaking Skill Learning Strategies (Haron, Ahmad, Mamat, Hassanein & Mohamed, 2010), the second study

was Employing Design and Development Research of Online Arabic Vocabulary Learning Games Prototype that have studied the relationship between writing apprehension and performance (Sahrir, 2012). Thus, there are no studies focused on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance among CELPAD students. Due to the identified gap, there is a need to understand the relationship between these variables.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of CELPAD students at IIUM. It subsequently examines differences in the levels of academic self-efficacy based on gender and level of study, and measures the effect of students' academic self-efficacy and its correlation (gender and level of study) with the academic performance of CELPAD students.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research aspires to address the research objectives in regard to the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of CELPAD students.

1. To identify the level of academic self-efficacy among CELPAD students.
2. To examine the difference in academic self-efficacy level based on the following:
  - a) gender.
  - b) level of study.
3. To ascertain the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance.
4. To identify the predictors of academic performance based on the following:
  - a) academic self-efficacy.
  - b) gender.
  - c) level of study.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of academic self-efficacy among CELPAD students?
2. Is there any difference in the students' academic self-efficacy level based on the following:
  - a) gender.
  - b) level of study.
3. What is the relationship between the students' academic self-efficacy and their academic performance?
4. Do students' academic self-efficacy and its correlation (gender and level of study) predict the students' academic performance?

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A study on the relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and their performance in the classroom is important due to several reasons.

Firstly, the findings from this study will provide CELPAD teachers with valuable information and knowledge pertaining to the role of academic self-efficacy. This information and knowledge are valuable and useful because they enable teachers to identify ways that could help them design more effective classes and improve the elements of academic self-efficacy in the learning process.

Secondly, this study can assist leaders, policymakers, student services provided by the office of deans and directors, diversity officers, academic advisors, student support personnel, and admissions committee members to understand factors that contribute to the academic success or failure of students. Furthermore, it can help those

responsible to upgrade the curriculum and develop courses with an aim to develop students' self-efficacy.

Thirdly, this study will provide information regarding the level of CELPAD students' academic self-efficacy. It is envisaged that counselors and CELPAD administrations would be able to use the information to find appropriate ways to help students increase their levels of self-efficacy. Hence, students will benefit from this study indirectly. It would enable students to improve their learning performances, be more positive towards and focused on achieving better academic results. These outcomes would eventually prevent or significantly reduce the likelihood of student involvement in future discipline problems. In addition, having students with high levels of self-efficacy would assist CELPAD administrators curb discipline problems in classrooms.

Lastly, when students are more focused on their studies, their teachers are more able to implement the teaching and learning process more successfully.

## **1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study only focuses on the CELPAD students' self-efficacy and academic performance. An Academic Self Efficacy Scale (laundry, 2003) was used to measure the academic self-efficacy, and CEVEAPEU that was developed by Gargallo (2009) used to measure the academic performance. The respondents were the students from CELPAD at two different levels, namely Level 5 and 6 at IIUM Gombak.

## **1.7 CONCEPTUALIZED AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

### **1.7.1 Academic Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy refers to the “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997). In this study, the self-efficacy of an academic student is considered multifaceted and comprised of the following facets: self- efficacy for self-regulated learning, self-efficacy for academic achievement, and self-efficacy for career decision-making, which is measured by the College Student Self-Efficacy Scale (Landry, 2003).

### **1.7.2 Academic Performance**

Academic performance: According to Akbaribooreng (2015), academic performance is considered as one of the indicators of students’ success in education and is measured by performance in an examination or a specific skill. In this research, academic performance refers to the passive performance of students in which measure the creativity and critical thinking, efficiency of resource management, and application of information, and is measured by CEVEAPEU a questionnaire that was developed by Gargallo, Suarez-Rodriguez, and Perez (2009).

### **1.7.3 CELPAD**

CELPAD is an institution that is responsible for teaching English and ensuring the students are qualified to enter other schools at IIUM.

### **1.7.4 Level of Study at CELPAD**

The level of study obtained by the students is based on the EPT result. In this study, the research focuses on Level 5 and 6.

## **1.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter begins by providing a background study and problem statement in the present study. The purpose of this study is presented to determine four research questions. The sub-paragraphs ‘The significance of the study’ and ‘the delimitation of the study’ explain the importance of the study. This chapter ends with an explanation of the definition of operational terms used throughout this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the study. The literature review discusses selected elements namely, academic self-efficacy, and academic performance. Chapter two also discusses the theory of self-efficacy, academic performance, and self-efficacy from the Islamic perspective.

#### **2.2 RELATED THEORIES OF SELF-EFFICACY**

This study focused on the constructs associated with the research such as the self-efficacy theory pioneered by Albert Bandera. Scholars have constructed various models related to self-efficacy, such as the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism illustrated by Wood and Bandura (1989) related to the process of goal realization, and self-efficacy with the environment. These models (Redmond Wills, 2013) and other related models include the Reciprocal Determinism Model (Pajares, 2005). This model includes the Self-efficacy perspective on achievement behaviour, social cognitive theory of Organization Management (Bandura & Wood, 1989), and model of perceived self-efficacy and children's goal setting on their academic achievement. In this study, the researcher utilized only two models as they are important for students' development. The two models are the Reciprocal Determinism Model and Sources of Self-Efficacy.

The first model, Reciprocal Determinism of Self-Efficacy (2013) highlights various determinants of students' self-efficacy. These determinants include students' experiences related to achievements in their lives, successes in completing work, and

successes in facing trials and errors. All determinants will raise the students' levels of self-efficacy. Besides, the experience within the society also determines self-efficacy. Observing other people's performance increases one's ability to succeed, and this leads to an increased level of confidence. In *Social Foundation of Thought and Action: a social cognitive theory*, Bandura projected a reciprocal determinism model. This model presents an individual working theory that highlights self-efficacy. According to Bandura (Pajares, 2005), the three factors that interact in human life continuously are people, behavior, and environment.

Environmental factors function to influence self-efficacy while self-efficacy works to influence behavior. The behavior then governs the environment and the active relationship of the person, the behavior and the environmental influences lead to human thought and human action. Thus, the triangulation process shows that an individual is no longer viewed as a reactive organism but as a self-organizing, a proactive and self-regulating organism. For instance, in a school setting, teachers are responsible for improving the confidence and competence of students. According to Pajares (2005), in order to complete the task, teachers can upgrade the student's personal factors (emotions, habits, and thinking), improve the student's behavior (skills in academic and self-regulate) and modify the classroom environment and school atmosphere. Hence, it can be understood that Reciprocal Determinism model proposed by Bandura explained that self-efficacy of the individual is interrelated with their behavior and environment.

Secondly, the source model of self-efficacy by Albert Bandura (1977) presents one key component of the social cognitive theory, the self-efficacy concept. This concept plays a vital role in cognition, behavior, and decisions in human life. In outlining this theory, he mentioned that there are four sources of self-efficacy, which are the performance outcomes, vicarious experiences, variable persuasion, and

physiological feedback. All of these sources contribute to human activities and behaviors. Referring to the school environment, students can develop own self-efficacy through the resources available around the school. An example of one of those sources is the accomplishment of a school task. It refers to a situation where the students develop their self-efficacy at school by completing the tasks assigned by the teachers such as portfolios, homework, presentations, and group projects. Other than that, positive self-efficacy will be developed when the students have the ability to answer the test, perform well in the examination and get a good result. Failure in tests and examinations, on the other hand, will destroy their self-efficacy (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Another source is a wealth of experience, which can be gained either through the students' knowledge or peer modeling.

In adolescence, friends are among the most influential people in the students' lives (Allen, Change, Szewo, Schad & Marston, 2012; Ary, Duncan, Duncan, McGrew, 1986; Dodge & Gonzales, 2010). Observing other people's work, completing assignments in the classroom, and performing well in examinations strengthen the students' beliefs in their own ability. In addition, self-efficacy can be developed through peer modeling. Therefore, as stressed by Aliju and Yahaya (2010), it is important for teenagers to be selective in choosing their friends because peer modeling plays a crucial role in developing the level of self-efficacy.

Persuasion is another source that explains the role played by teachers in school to persuade students to learn and study. Through credible communication and guidance in completing the school task, students are encouraged and motivated to perform well in the classroom (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). The students' beliefs in self-efficacy can also be developed through positive mood and emotions. A peaceful and calm environment in school will always contribute to their positive emotions. However,

teachers and students must be aware of the existence of negative emotions such as anxiety, shame, and hatred. These emotions can contribute to the decrease in self-efficacy (Abang, Othman, Nordine, sam, 2005; Brosnan, 1989; Kire & Saade, 2009; More, 2007). Thus, to overcome all these negative symptoms, counselors and teachers have to play their roles in creating a positive feeling in the students (Margolis & Mccabe, 2006). Therefore, in this study, the researcher relies on the Reciprocal Determinism Model.

### **2.3 ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY**

Self-efficacy is a combination of two words; self, and efficacy. Historically, the word efficacy appeared in the 1520s (Oxford English Reference Dictionary, 2003). It was derived from the Latin word, "efficacia", which is equivalent to "efficac-" which means the capacity for producing the desired effect (The Oxford Dictionary of American Usage & Style, 2000). In fact, the self-efficacy term was firstly introduced by Bandura in 1977 through the article entitles "self-efficacy toward a unifying theory of behavioral change" (Pajares, 1996). Bandura defines self-efficacy as "people's belief about their capabilities to produce a designated level of performance that exercise influences over events that affect their lives". Furthermore, the term can also be understood as confidence in one's capability for organizing and implementing the cognitive, behavioral, social skills which are needed to achieve a goal. The definition was synthesized from Bandera (1986), Schunk (1991), and Zimmerman (1989). The major concern of this theory is to determine the level of confidence, motivation, action, and human performance. However, the students' self-efficacy is connected to the desire to achieve goals, and the willingness to engage and persist in specific subjects or activities (Margolis, 2005). In other words, the students' desires toward gaining achievements