Assessing the Academic Behavioral Confidence of the Secondary School Students

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***Abstract:* Introduction:** *This paper elucidates the Academic Behavioral Confidence (ABC) of the higher secondary school students by using the parental concepts such as self- efficacy and social cognition psychological theories.*
Method: *The academic self - confidence of the students are being assessed by the ABC scale which portraits the variations in teaching preferences and learning behaviors of students. Samples of 106 male and female students of XII standard of a government school were undertaken for study.*
Result: *The study reveals that a significant level (median= 64.50) of confidence prevails among these students unlike other research studies. More than half of the student's (50%) ABC score was above the median score signifying their confidence level to be high.*
Conclusion: *The secondary school student's academic confidence reasons out their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation towards their future because they know that secondary education determine their life.*
Key Words: *Academic Behavioral Confidence, Higher Secondary school students, Learning Behavior, Self – Efficacy, Social Cognition.*

I. Introduction

In any school setting, whether it is elementary, secondary, or higher education, a student's confidence in learning is generally regarded as one of the most critical determinants for the successful schooling. There is a growing interest among the teachers, parents, educational consultants about the variation in confidence which the students possess in their academics. The Academic Behavioral Confidence (ABC) scale used in this study serves as an instrument to assess the confidence level in academics among the students of class XII. The ABC scale is discussed in the theoretical context of Self-Efficacy and Social Cognition Theory.

Academic Confidence refers to a student's conviction in attaining the academic goals confidently by overcoming the academic barriers. Students who are confident in their capability to organize, execute, and regulate their problem-solving or task performance in their academics are exhibiting high self- efficacy. Self-efficacy explains that the behavior of individuals is not always accurately predicted from their capability to accomplish a specific task. However it depends on the individual's belief of how they will perform in academics.

The student's beliefs and attitudes about their self make one's self-concept**.** This concept differs as a result of different central and peripheral concepts and different hierarchical structures arising from different experiences, many of which will be social. The self-concept that the students possess will guide them in their studies in school as well as in their non-academic lives. Their perception towards their academic self will bear a substantial result in their studies.

Closely linked to self-concept are self esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy, which come from self-evaluation of how people feel about themselves. It is likely that the school will affect their self-esteem as academic challenges are faced. This paper focuses primarily on the academic confidence and its behavior which substantiates our attempts in understanding the academic self psychometrically through the Academic Behavior Confidence scale.

1.1) Conceptual Framework:

Academic Behavioral Confidence is conceptualized as being how students behave in the extent to which they have a strong belief, firm trust, or sure expectation in their ability which is determined by their academic self-efficacy. Pajares (2000) summarizes that nearly 2 decades of educational research has revealed that self – efficacy beliefs are strong determinants and predictors of academic accomplishments. Self-Efficacy also influences academic persistence (Lent, Brown &Larkin, 1984) and is related to self-regulated learning variables (3). Self-efficacy reflects how competent people feel about successfully engaging in behaviour.

In accordance with Bandura's (1986) *Social Cognitive theory* "what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave. Their natural and extrinsic effects of their actions, in turn, partly determine their thought patterns

and affective reactions" (p. 25) (1). An individual's actions and reaction in almost every situation is influenced by the actions which that individual has observed in others. People observe others acting within an environment whether natural or social. These observations are remembered by an individual and help shape social behaviors and cognitive processes. This theoretical approach proposes the idea that an individual's learning behavior in the early stages could have a large impact on their mental processes in later stages of development.

This current study is based on these two theories which elucidate the student's confidence level in their academic arena. Interestingly students with high self efficacy and social cognition are confident in their studies rather than students who do not possess it.

II.   Research Methodology

2.1) Aim: To assess the Academic Behavioral Confidence among the Government Secondary School students.

2.2) Research Questions:
1. Are the girl students more confident than male students in their academics?
2. Is there any relation between their age and academic confidence?
3. Do the students of various major subjects differ in their confidence level?

2.3) Objectives:
*   To assess the academic behavioral confidence among the government secondary school male and female students.
*   To know whether gender has any role in the academic confidence of the students.
*   To find out whether students with various major subjects differ in their confident level.

2.4) Operational Definitions:

2.4.1) Academic Behavioral Confidence:
Academic Behavioral Confidence (ABC) is a construct that refers to the students' beliefs that they can perform competently in a particular learning situation It is conceptualized as being how students behave in the extent to which they have a 'strong belief, firm trust, or sure expectation' in their ability to respond to the demands of studying at school. - Sanders and Sanders (2007)

2.4.2) Secondary Education:
It refers to the students who are pursuing schooling in the standards of IX to XII. In this study the researcher has chosen both male and female students of XII standard of major Nutrition, Biology and Economics to know about their academic behavioral confidence.

2.5) Key Variables:
Independent Variables- Age, Family monthly income, Parent's Occupation, Position in the family, Status of community.

Dependant Variables- Academic Confidence, Intrinsic Motivation, studying effectively in own group, studying subjects with understanding, revising subjects taught, attending all classes, internalizing the concepts taught in class, raising questions if concepts are not clear, responding to a question asked by a teacher, clarifying academic doubts after class, framing own timetable, understanding study materials after class, preparing for tomorrow's class, Teaching a small group of fellow students, Performing well in exams, Score good marks in all tests, teacher's appreciation for good academic performance, participate in co-curricular activities with teacher's approval, taking up studies more seriously if motivated by teachers, being optimistic if teacher discourages, Comfortable with teacher's teaching methodology.

2.6) Hypotheses:
Ho1: There is a significant difference in ABC between the different age of students.
Ho2: There is a significant difference in ABC between male and female secondary school students.
Ho3: There is a significant difference between the ABC score and students of different majors such as Nutrition, Biology and Economics.

2.7) Research Design:
The researcher in this exploratory study which intends to explore the phenomena whether the children studying in government schools are confident in their studies and how they behave when they are academically confident uses the descriptive research design for this study wherein it describes the academically confident level of the students.

2.7.1) Universe:

The universe of the study compromises of all the students who are studying in class XII belonging to nutrition, biology and economics group of a Government School, Mathur, Pudukottai district.

2.7.2) Sampling:

Simple Random Sampling is the sampling method undertaken for the study. Lottery method is used to select the samples for the study. From a universe of 130 students belonging to various majors such as Nutrition, Biology and Economics, a sample of 106 students were selected and involved for the study under the guidance of a teacher.

2.7.3) Tools for Data Collection:

The researcher has used semi structured questionnaire in order to study the socio demographic variables and a Academic Behavioral Confidence Scale to measure the academic confidence among the respondents was used. Quantitative Technique such as inferential statistics has facilitated for the study. The questionnaire was translated in Tamil and ensured that the students understood the purpose of the study and the questions.

2.7.4) Academic Behavioral Confidence (ABC) Scale:

The Academic Confidence Scale (ACS) helps to understand variations in teaching preferences and learning behaviors for different groups of students.

Academic Confidence is conceptualized as being how students differ in the extent to which they have a 'strong belief, firm trust, or sure expectation' of how they will respond to the demands of studying at school. This is distinct from their aspirations for their own academic performance, although the two may be related. This 20-item scale measures academic self-efficacy in six areas: studying, grade achievement, attendance, clarification, understanding, and verbalizing. Responses are completed on a five-point Likert scale, from *very confident* to *not at all confident*.

2.8) Data Analysis:

The collected data was analyses using SPSS Statistics 17.0. The ABC scale was scored by taking the mean response of the each of the 20 responses. The possible Academic Behavioral Confidence score ranged from 1 to 5. Students who scored above the median value of the ABC score symbolizes that they are confident in their studies and those who scored below the value says that they are not confident.

Following are the analyses made to the data:

- Calculation of Mean, Median and Standard Deviation for each of the student's responses to the 20 questions.
- One way analysis of variance between age and ABC score.
- T-test between gender and ABC score.
- One way analysis of variance between different groups-biology, nutrition and economics and ABC score.

III.   Results:

3.1) Distribution according to age:

A one-way analysis of confidence level by age group was calculated. There is a level of differences in mean square between groups 135.541 and within groups 126.354. The frequency level of 1.073 and the significance level of behavioral confidence is 0.346 (> 0.05) are indicated below which indicates that is no significant difference between the age group and the ABC score. Hence, the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected and hence it has been inferred that there is no significant difference between the different ages of the students and the ABC score.

3.2) Distribution according to gender:

An independent sample t-test between the gender and ABC score was calculated. The significant value is 0.986 which is greater than the significant level 0.05 and hence there is no statistical significance between the ABC score and the gender of the students. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected and hence it has been inferred that ABC score and the gender of the students are statistically insignificant.

3.3) Distribution according to the different major subjects:

A one-way analysis of confidence level by the student's major subjects was calculated. There is a level of differences in mean square between groups 190.015 and within groups is 125.296. The frequency level is 1.517 and the significance level of behavioral confidence of 0.224 (> 0.05) are indicated below which implies that is no significant difference between the different major subjects such as Nutrition, Biology, Economics and the ABC score. Hence, Ho3 is rejected which says that the major subjects of the students and the ABC score are statistically insignificant.

IV.   *Tables*

Table 1: Distribution according to age

Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	271.083	3	135.541	1.073	.346
Within Groups	13014.427	103	126.354		>0.05
Total	13285.509	106			

Table 2: Distribution according to the student's major subjects

Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	380.030	3	190.015	1.517	.224 > 0.05
Within Groups	12905.479	103	125.296		
Total	13285.509	106			

Table 3: Calculation of Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of the various academic aspects

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Intrinsically motivated to study well.	3.64	4.00	1.409
Studying effectively on your own or in a group.	3.65	4.00	1.380
Study your subjects with understanding	3.50	4.00	1.513
To revise subjects taught daily in the class.	3.23	3.00	1.244
In attending all the classes.	3.25	3.50	1.367
Internalize the concepts taught in the class.	3.31	4.00	1.396
Raise questions in the class if the concepts are not clear and understandable.	3.09	3.00	1.391
Responding to a question asked by a teacher in front of the class.	3.44	4.00	1.303
Clarifying academic doubts after class.	3.00	3.00	1.407
Framing your own time table according to the course deadlines.	3.02	3.00	1.518
Understanding the study materials after class.	3.16	3.00	1.506
Preparing for tomorrow's class.	3.36	4.00	1.513
Teaching a small group of fellow students.	3.21	3.00	1.293
Performing well in your exams.	3.90	4.00	1.203
Score good marks in all your tests.	3.59	4.00	1.153
In getting the teacher's appreciation for good academic performance.	3.28	3.50	1.336
To participate in co-curricular activities with your teacher's approval.	3.43	4.00	1.242
To take up your studies more seriously if motivated by your teachers.	3.92	4.00	1.185
To be optimistic if your teacher discourages you.	3.63	4.00	1.369
Comfortable with your teacher's teaching methodology.	3.77	4.00	1.409

Even though the students exhibit a significant level of academic confidence in their studies there are some academic aspects wherein the students say that they are not at all confident in that. Their mean score were found to be less than 3.20. The areas were raise questions in the class if the concepts are not clear and understandable, clarifying academic doubts after class, framing your own time table according to the course deadlines and understanding the study materials after class.

V. Discussion:

It is evident from the study though the students are from various majors- nutrition, biology and economics there is no significant difference in their confidence level. When inquired the response was that the students put in the same amount of potential to achieve in their studies. They are very much aware that it is the

crucial period in their life which determines their career in future. No major or a significant difference was found between the male and female students in their academic confidence level. More than 50% of the students exhibit moderate and high level of academic confidence. Intrinsic motivation to choose a promising career and Extrinsic motivation got from teachers, parents, friends and relatives are the boosters of these students.

VI.   Conclusion:

Thus, this study has broken the notion that government school students possess careless attitude towards their studies. Assured job with decent salary and living conditions are the foreseen goals of these students. Teachers are symbolized as stimulators and inspiring folks of students. This study will surely help the teachers to understand where do their students stand in their confidence level and act according to it.

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