



THE BEHAVIOR OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT:

The concept of Self-Efficacy was firstly introduced by Albert Bandura in his Social Learning Theory as a person's belief that he/she is capable of performing a particular task successfully. On psychological grounds the concepts have been refined time to time and redefined as how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. The concepts of Self-Efficacy are mostly remained and researched under the roof of psychology and the influence of various parameters of Self-Efficacy remains hidden in workplace scenario. Self-Efficacy is closely related with a person's experiences, competencies and developmental task in various domains at workplace. This research paper will be based on secondary studies and will elaborate the concepts of Self-Efficacy. The research paper will also try explain the behavior of Self-Efficacy in organizational settings.

KEYWORDS: *Self-Efficacy, organizational behavior.*

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of self-efficacy was originated by one of the great psychologist Albert Bandura in his seminal article titled- "*Self-Efficacy: Toward an Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change*" in which he describe self-efficacy as "*people's judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances*" (Bandura,1986). One face of this definition explains that Self-Efficacy is a conviction about one's perceived capabilities and other face explore the task and situation

specific beliefs (Artino,2006). The role of self-efficacy in an individual's life is very much important. People with low sense of efficacy, may avoid a task or have a low commitment but individuals with higher self-efficacy are much more committed and participated willingly. Whenever an individual succeed in his/her life, it boosts the self-efficacy and once the self-efficacy beliefs become stronger in an individual then that person does not experience failure that much (Schunk,1991). Albert Bandura in

1994 mentioned that people with higher inner belief or confidence in their capabilities have the ability to perform better during task. Self-efficacy is based on how people think, motivate themselves and behave in a particular situation. These beliefs can affect major processes in an individual such as cognitive, motivation, affective and selection process and named it as perceived self-efficacy (Ramachaudran 1998). The principle of self-efficacy on which it works is “I believe I can do” rather than I believe I will do (Maddux, 2000). There are two phases of self-efficacy beliefs- 1. Action self-efficacy (pre-intention), 2. Coping self-efficacy (post-intention). Action self-efficacy have a direct impact on imagine success scenario, potential outcomes of strategies and hoe to adopt a new behavior whereas coping self-efficacy deals with one’s capability to deal with barriers that will arise in future during task achievement process (Schwarzer and Renner, 2000).

Self-Efficacy not only affect motivation and achievement in academic field but also have direct impact on engagement and commitment in organizational settings (Bryant, 2017). The four pillars of self-efficacy are: 1. Mastery Experience- on the basis of past performance, it guides an individual to tackle new and challenging situations. Successful past performances increase their self-efficacy levels and past failures will show negative impact on self-efficacy beliefs (Arsalan, 2013). Self-efficacy of an individual also based on the difficulty level of task achieved and also on the level of efforts to achieve that task. Minor

or less challenging task will not boost individual self-efficacy to that extent as major or more demanding tasks (Hendricks, 2015). 2. Vicarious Experience- it is based on social models that strengthens the individual inner belief when he sees other person success of same profile (Bandura, 1994). Individual draws conclusion by observing others actions in obtaining success and thinks that he/she too possess the capabilities to achieve goals. These observations also perform similar activities in case of failure (Gangloff and Mazilescu, 2017). 3. Social Persuasion- is based on the expression through words. Positive words for an individual can boost the confidence that motivates and enhance the belief in self-capabilities to achieve the particular target. (French, Edmunds and Ashford, 2015). It is actually the manipulation in belief patterns of an individual through words (Law, Hui and Bancy, 2011). 4. Emotional and Physiological State- the last source of self-efficacy is based on the particular situation in which the capability of the domain in question is demand treated (Eden, 2016). It is the physiological and affective state of an individual that guides him/her to handle a stressful situation. How to handle a particular situation is totally based on moods, emotional states, physical reaction and stress level of that individual (Hickton, 2016).

The role of self-efficacy is not just confined to one domain of life but the concepts are much more than we expected and even hidden. Self-Efficacy beliefs helps to account on various mechanism such as coping

behavior, stress regulations, refractory behavior, resignation and despondency to failure experiences, career development and many others (Bandura, 1982). Management need to understand the importance of self-efficacy in organizational settings in order to improve quality of work life of its employees. and overall organization in all aspects. Self-Efficacy boosts morale of an employee that further enhances productivity, familiar work environments, human resource practices and many others (Mensah and Lebbaeus, 2013). The three dimensions of self-efficacy are *strength*, *magnitude* and *generality*. Magnitude of an individual reflects beliefs that he/she can perform a task. Strength is the enhancement in confidence when an individual completes the first phase of a task and generality is the extent to which self-efficacy on one task generalizes to the other task (DeNoyelles, Hornik and Johnson, 2014).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To throw the light on the evolution and history of the concept of Self-Efficacy.
2. To identify the various parameters of Self-Efficacy those majorly influence the organizational settings.
3. To know about the suggestive actions to boost Self-Efficacy of employees in organizational settings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The nature of the current study is descriptive. The study is based on secondary data sources which includes various magazines, journals, reports, books and other printed data form.

SELF-EFFICACY: EVOLUTION AND CONCEPT

It was all started in 1930's from Yale Institute of Human Resource where the experiments on social learning theories begin under the direction of Mark May and the supervisor of the whole process was Clark Hull. The experiments were started to unfold the key aspects of Fruedian's theory such as dependency, aggression, identification, conscious formation, and defense mechanism (Zimmerman and Shunk, p.5-6). Meanwhile Albert Bandura received his master degree in psychology in 1951 and doctorate degree in

clinical psychology in 1952 from University of Iowa (Nolen, 2020). Albert Bandura conducted Bobo Doll Experiments during 1961-1963, and study revealed that children who viewed aggressive human and cartoons films have twice the aggressive behavior than that those were not exposed to such aggressive human or cartoon films (Bandura and Ross, 1963). Bobo doll experiments revealed that individuals can learn or intimate behavior on modelling provided by others (McLeod, 2014). Generally, it has been observed that Social Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Theory are same, but the theories are different. Scholars distinguishes learning theories as Behaviorism, Social Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Learning Theory. Social learning theory is based on the idea that we learn from interactions with others in society and get involves in the process of simulation by observing others (Bandura, 1977). Based on attention, motivation and memory Social Learning theory dominates all theories of learning and development and various scholars referred this theory as a overpass between behavior learning theories and cognitive learning theories (Muro and Jaffery, 2008).

Self-Efficacy and Triadic Reciprocal Determinism were the two terms that Albert Bandura explained in his book titled *Social Cognitive Theory*. Albert Bandura explored several domains of self-efficacy in his article published in 1977 titled *Self-Efficacy: toward an unifying of behavioral change*.

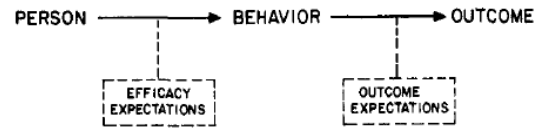
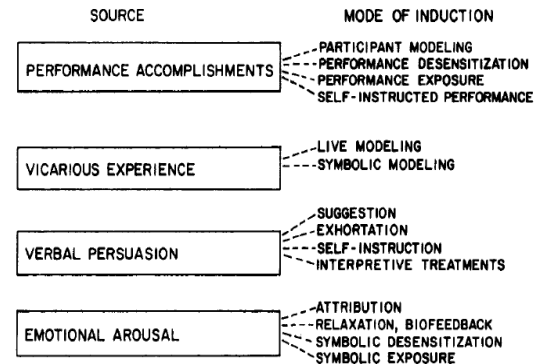


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the difference between efficacy expectations and outcome expectations.

Source: Self-Efficacy: toward an unifying of behavioral change.



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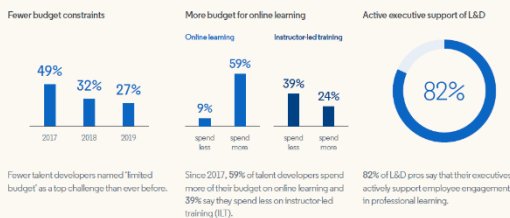
It is a challenge for organizations in 21st century is to maintain positive organization culture. Various approaches and domains have been identified by organizations to keep their work environment positive. Researchers are trying to find out the role of self-efficacy in maintaining a positive organizational culture (Luthans and Youssef, 2007). Albert Bandura's *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* explained in detail that how self-efficacy act in organizational settings. Specific Self-Efficacy is a state-based expectation that works in organizational settings during task performance. Another theory conceptualized self-efficacy as a trait and generalized self-efficacy reflects the

expectations and ability to perform given task in variety of achievement situations (Gardner and Pierce, 2001).

DETERMINANTS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ORGANIZATIONS:

1. *Self-Efficacy and Workplace Learning and Innovation*

With the rapid change of technology in the workplace environment, we see an eminent shift in the thinking of leaders and managers towards organizational learning and innovation. Talent developers are now focusing more on developing soft skills and scaling learning of employees, as these two are the most important skills in the present scenario and will impact bigger in future. According to 2019 *Workplace Learning Report*, organizations are spending more on online learning techniques and also enhancing active executive support on learning and developing (Udemy for business, 2019).



A lot of research has already been done on self-efficacy as a predictor of performance, goal setting and leadership in organizational settings but still some of the dimensions are hidden or researched little. The determinants that influence creative self-efficacy in

descending order are a) job related factors-based on autonomy, b) self-related- based on learning and c) leadership factors that focused on transformational leadership style. (Slatten, 2014). The effect of both Creative self-efficacy and Social Cognitive Theory can be seen on employee innovative behavior for two reasons: a. individual with high creative self-efficacy choose to engage in innovative behavior as he/she is confident in his/her skills and on ability by cognition; b. they feel confident to face the challenges during task and well equipped cognitively (Newman, Tse, Schwarz, Nielsen, 2018). Individuals those who inclined more towards learning and innovative behaviors have a positive orientation, but those who believed in risk activities have negative consequences (Prieto, 2009).

2. *Self-Efficacy and Cross-Cultural adaptation:*

Cross-cultural psychology is not new to the world. Numerous studies have already been done on this particular field and both self-efficacy and culture are important dimensions of our life. It is generally seen that collectivist cultures are realistic and individualistic cultures are too optimistic in their ratings of self-efficacy. Ployharts and Bliese's I-ADAPT theory is actually based on a dispositional tendency or we can say *adaptability theory* and this concept has three constructs: a) based on thoughts and actions b) managed image c) readiness to change in order to survive; and these three constructs are directly proportional to learning and self-efficacy of an individual (Hua, Fan, Walker,

Hou, Zhang, Debode, 2018). Cross-culture is a multidimensional concept that is based on Metacognition, Cognition and Motivation, and Behavioral capabilities (Ang, Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, Chandrasekar, 2007). General self-efficacy is based on past experiences with success and failure of an individual in variety of situation and is one of the prominent factors in cross culture adaptation (Harrison, 1996). The effect of four different factors was seen on cross-cultural adjustment; *a) extrinsic motivation* (money, bonus and job security) that attracts foreigners to adapt in new culture *b) workplace learning* (sharing of knowledge, skills) environment and organizational culture *c) employer trust* and *d) self-efficacy*-individual with higher level of self-efficacy tends to adjust and adapt in new culture more easily (Dang and Chou, 2019).

3. Self-Efficacy and Employee Well Being:

According to United Kingdom Workplace Stress Survey, 79% of people experience stress in workplace which is 20% higher than 2018 findings. The major findings of the report are:



Source: UK Workplace stress survey,2019



Source: UK Workplace stress survey,2019

Since Covid -19 outbreak, 65% employees in Singapore said that they are feeling more anxious and 64% said they are under stress. 26% said that their mental health has declined during this time according to the new survey by Qualtrics corp.

From this data we came to know the importance of employees well being in organizations. Employee well being is going to be a game changer in this century to attract, engage and retain talent (Kulkarni,2020). World Health Organization predicts that one in four people will be affected by mental and emotional disorder and in future mental health will took center stage in corporate wellness program. Multidimensional wellness is the new wellness program that covers a broader range of dimensions in organizations for their employees.

There have been a lot of discussions before and we came to know that self-efficacy relates directly and positively to mental health and physical well-being. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy have a very little impact on mental health than those having low level of self-efficacy. Self-

efficacy is going to play a major role in the future corporate cultures in reducing stress and enhancing employee well-being (Siu, Lu, and Spector, 2007). Creative Self-Efficacy is a type of self-efficacy that can play an important role in feeling psychologically well in workplace. Employees with higher level of creative self-efficacy are going to play with higher level of well-being at work. Employees those have higher level of creative self-efficacy can find more creative solutions to solve problems at work during their working hours and thus their well-being not get damaged as compare to those who have low level of creative self-efficacy (Ocel, 2016).

4. *Self-Efficacy and Employee Engagement:*

It was Dr. William Kahn who used the term employee engagement in 1990 and describes that people engage at work at three levels physically, emotionally and cognitively (Lalwani, 2019). A Gall Up study found that businesses those have eminently engaged work cultures have almost 21% more profit. Past researches already explored the influence of self-efficacy in employee engagement. Self-efficacious employees invest themselves more in work through their cognitive, emotional and physical energy. Employees with this kind of mind-set actively indulge themselves in businesses, sports and cultural events (Chhajer, Rose and Joseph, 2018). In a research, it is found that Occupational Self-Efficacy Confidence, a dimension in Indian context of Self-Efficacy is found to be a strong predictor of employee

engagement. Managers have to develop interventions for self-efficacy so that employee engagement get enhanced in Indian organizations (Chaudhary, Rngnekar and Barua, 2012). It is very much important for employees to maintain their work life balance. It becomes easy for self-efficacious employees to distinguishes and maintain a proper balance between their private and professional life. Self- efficacy also manages an employee facing role conflict. Employees those who have intensified belief in their capabilities may result in higher level of work engagement and performance (Garg, Sethi and Gupta, 2017). Organizations with formal structure affects self-efficacy in a positive way and while centralized affects it in a negative way. Past researches also showed that low autonomy and empowerment is associated with low motivation that leads to block mastery experience of an individual (Mustafa, Glavee-Geo, Gronhaug and Almazrouei, 2019).

ACTIONS TO BOOST SELF-EFFICACY OF EMPLOYEES IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS:

Both theoretically and empirically, self-efficacy has a broad range of applications for organizational behavior. Self-efficacy opens the gate that lead an individual to recognize his/her capabilities and a way to align these capabilities with performance. At each and every level, the influence of self-efficacy can be seen in an organization (Gist and Gist, 2016). There are several ways by which the

level of self-efficacy can be enhance in employees.

1. Managers should be in a constant dialogue with employees related to the task and should motivate them to attain task. Employees should tell how much their work is going to be impactful and meaningful to the organization. Interdependence and freedom in decision making can also be useful in enhancing the self-efficacy levels of employees. Some of the organizations are now taking support of Job Craft seminars to boost self-efficacy level of its employees.

2. An employee should know his/her limits to attain success because it will affect the decision making when it comes in selecting a task. Trying new things, facing new challenges and accepting failures are the techniques that boost self-efficacy of employees. To ignore short term loses and to focus on achievements is the most important quality of an employee with higher self-efficacy.

3. By adding complexity in task is also a way to enhance self-efficacy. Generally, it is seen that individuals who do not involve themselves in new task or challenge often face boredom and that leads to decrease in their self-efficacy levels. Managers should learn to appreciate small successes and motivates him/her to achieve bigger.

4. Managers should seek to create an environment that welcomes new ideas in

order to reduce anxiety among newcomers. Promoting collective innovative behavior in organization is another way to enhance self-efficacy. Directly rejecting an idea can lead to discouragement in an employee and next time may he/she will not feel confident and this whole process can diminish self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION:

It is for sure that self-efficacy is going to play an important role in organizations in future. Organizations already started to find out various techniques to enhance self-efficacy. “What’ obvious needs no proof”, as mentioned in the past researches, self-efficacy is driving force behind employee performance, innovative cultures, well-being and various others. Despite of Bandura’s work, the role of self-efficacy was unclear in organizational settings and very few past researches were there related to this. But as of now not only the researches have increased in this particular field but some of the organizations even started incorporating the techniques to enhance self-efficacy of its employees. World’s organizations are now shifting their focus from products to process and for this all they need a deeper understanding of innovation and creative performance. For these two reasons, organizations need to boost creative self-efficacy of employees and to unfold the mechanism behind this.

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