CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY, ACADEMIC HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND ACHIEVEMENT AMONG POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS

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Abstract: This correlational research examined relationship between academic self-efficacy, academic help seeking behaviour and student achievement in one of polytechnic in the state of Johor. Respondents were 132 second year diploma students from two courses. The respondents were given a set of questionnaires to find out the relationship between the variables. Pearson correlation coefficients has been computed to examine the correlations between academic self-efficacy, academic help seeking behaviour and student's achievement. Academic self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in an academic situation. Academic help-seeking behaviour is seeking others help at the time when one faces difficulties or uncertainty during his/her education in classroom. Achievement is the accomplishment or acquired proficiency in the performance of an individual with respect to a given knowledge or skill. Implications and recommendations of the study are also included.

Keywords: Academic self-efficacy, Academic help-seeking behaviour, Achievement
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Introduction

Academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief (conviction) that they can successfully achieve a designated level on an academic task or attain a specific academic goal (Bandura, 1997; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Elias & Loomis, 2002; Linenbrink & Pintrich, 2002a; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Academic self-efficacy can be very important to students as it will give an impact to them in term of their behaviour where the confidence and self-belief that they have in them will make them produce some specific performance attainments.

Academic help-seeking is an important learning strategy which should be used when students are facing with difficult problems. Adaptive help seeking involves a student asking for hints about the solution of a problem, examples of similar problems or clarification of the problem (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). On the other hand, avoidance help-seeking refers to instances when a student needs help but does not seek it. When students do not garner help when it is needed, they put themselves at a disadvantage for learning and performance (Ryan & Pintrich 1997).

Problem Statement

In learning process, help seeking behaviour can be very important to the students as one way to succeed but they were students who refused to seek help. Referring to this matter, many factors have been identified to be the cause of not to seek help in learning. Thus, students need to build their own initiative as to seek help from lecturers when they feel support is needed. The lecturers normally will help the students and encourage them to understand. Most of the adolescents believed that they could best solve their problems by themselves.

Furthermore, their goals to achieve well in studies become unimportant to them anymore as they do not want to seek for help as one of the ways to self-regulate themselves. The self-regulation may contribute to learning process but they preferred to be passive in classroom rather than asking questions from teachers or peers. Students who remain silent in groups of ten or more will contribute actively to discussions when the size of the group is reduced to five or three. Type of communicative task can also influence students' willingness to speak" (Nunan, 1999). According to Richard-Amato, "In classrooms in which mutual respect is lacking, differing values can lead to conflicts between student and teacher, and between student and peer" (2003). The classroom size and the size of group are to be carefully considered.

In addition, students do not realize that by seeking help they may put themselves at an advantage for learning and performance. On top of that, they refused to seek help which according to them there are threats such as they might be laughed by their friends if they ask too many questions and afraid to be said as having less ability in particular subject. Due to this phenomenon, these kinds of students tend to plagiarize when doing assignment and cheating in test or exam. Thus, these may affect students' motivation and competence as their performances in studies will depend on their help seeking goals.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and help-seeking behavior of polytechnic students.
2. To examine the relationship between student achievement with academic self-efficacy of polytechnic students.
3. To examine the relationship between student achievement with help-seeking behaviour of polytechnic students.
4. To examine the differences in gender in terms of student achievement and help seeking behaviours.

Literature Review

Within an academic context, self-efficacy (SE) is frequently described in terms of Academic Self-efficacy(ASE) which defines learner judgements about one's ability to successfully attain educational goals.(Elias & MacDonald,2007). A wealth of literature exists that highlights the importance of ASE for learning and subsequent academic performance. This relationship has been studied in a range of learning environments including early years (Joet, Usher & Bressoux,2011), high school (Alivermini & Lucidi,2011) and university populations (Robbins et all.,2004).

Karabenick and Dembo (2011) described eight steps in the help seeking process. The steps are to determine whether there is a problem, to determine whether help is needed or wanted, decide whether to seek help, decide on what type of help to get, decide on whom to ask, solicit help, obtain help and process the help received.

Effective implementation of these steps requires cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that can be taught to students who may lack the needed skills (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011) Students with a social intimacy goal orientation are more likely to seek help because they appreciate the opportunity to interact and are less concerned with potential loss of social status. However, a recent experiment to measure college students' attitudes about asking for help revealed very low agreement with the statement "I would not want my friends to know if I ask a librarian for help" (Black & Krawczyk, 2017, p. 280). But this finding that students had little concern about peer's opinions may have been due to self-reporting of behavior that may not be reflected in real life. Moreover, the existence of relevant reviews on the relationship between ASE and performance (Richardson et al., 2012; Robbins et al., 2004; Usher & Pajares, 2008), no review of available research exists that has investigated the influence of ASE on academic performance, while including the mediating and moderating factors thought to impact on this relationship in a university population.

It is important to note that significant heterogeneity in effect size was found across studies where several moderator analyses were conducted to explore the source of the heterogeneity, including the outcome measure used to measure academic achievement, the use of self-reported outcome measures versus those obtained through official university records, study design, and the measure of ASE used. Such variables were selected based on findings from existing literature, which highlights their impact on correlations between ASE and academic achievement (Bandura, 1997; Richardson et al., 2012).

Krumrei-Mancuso et al. (2013) provide insight into potential lengths of time in which this relationship may exist with findings that ASE measured at one time-point significantly predicted semester 1 and 2 performance, after controlling for previous semester performance. Given the traditional academic year does not span a full calendar year, ASE may be limited to predicting academic performance within a similar time frame.

Help-seeking behaviour
Whether students are willing to seek help depends on motivational factors such as their interest in the subject matter, their academic goal orientation, and their self-perception of abilities (Newman, 1998a; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). Help seeking is defined in the literature as a communication process with others, focusing on a specific problem or emotional pain which needs to be handled and which creates enough distress to seek either formal or informal sources of help (Gourash, 1978; Offer, Howard, Schonert, & Ostrov, 1991). Formal help seeking refers to help from professionals such as social workers, psychologists, family doctors and school teachers. Informal help seeking refers to help from family-based sources (parents, siblings, relatives), and peer group-based sources (best friends, adult friends, youth instructor/guide) (Offer et al., 1991; Schonert-Reichl, & Muller, 1996; Raviv, Sills, Raviv, & Wilansky, 2000). Moreover, previous studies have shown that adolescents in general prefer informal help seeking (Boldero J, Fallon B.;1995, Benson PL.; 1990, Schonert-Reichl KA, Offer D, Howard KI; 1995). Adolescent peer norms and values may encourage help-seeking within the informal network of friends and family instead of formal help-seeking.

Besides, help seeking is defined as ''an achievement behaviour involving the search for and employment of a strategy to obtain success'' (Ames & Lau, 1982, p. 414). It assists students in dealing with complex concepts that they either do not understand or feel that they are unable to comprehend on their own (Butler & Neuman, 1995; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).The help-seeking process has been delineated into sequential stages: recognizing there is a problem, deciding that help is needed and seeking help (Saunders, Resnick, Hoberman, & Blum, 1994). Schonert-Reichl and Muller (1996) reported that older adolescents tend to consult professional support sources more than younger adolescents who tended to consult their friends and mothers. However, Boldero and Fallon (1995) found that older adolescents tended to seek help from friends, whereas younger adolescents tended to seek help from family. Rickwood et al. (2005) reported differing developmental trends for male and female Australian adolescents in relation to specific types of help sources. They found that over the high school years girls increasingly turn to friends rather than parents and family and slightly increase their use of formal help sources.

There is also an acknowledgment that adolescence is a time when patterns of service use are developed which tend to continue throughout adult life: if young people have positive early experiences of accessing help from professionals they are more likely to continue seeking help when they need it throughout their lives (Department of Health, 2004)

Age is another personal factor that has been studied in relation to help-seeking. Dunn, Rakes, and Rakes (2014) found in a study of distance education students, there was an inverse relationship between age and help-seeking. Older students were less likely to seek help than younger students. In a study of online students (N = 26), perhaps unsurprisingly, students preferred using digital technologies to seek help from both instructors and fellow students. Nearly all students preferred method to contact instructors was by email (92.3%) when seeking help about subject matter content. Less common was calling via phone (19.2%) and posting a question on the class discussion board (15.4%). Live chat and face-to-face meeting was very seldom used (Koc & Liu, 2016).

Help seeking and self-efficacy

Furthermore, self-efficacy, defined as perceptions of one's capability for performing an activity, such as completing schoolwork, is highly correlated with help-seeking behaviours. Unlike low self-efficacious students, those with high self-efficacy beliefs about their academic capabilities are less likely to interpret their need for help due to lack of ability, and therefore they tend to seek help more frequently (Newman & Goldin, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Ryan et al., 1998). Lastly, teachers' qualities may also influence students' help seeking behavior. Instructors who are characterized as warm, caring, being available and affectionate stimulate help seeking in the classroom (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

Additionally, teacher activities such as providing descriptive praise when students ask questions, which increases the overall number of questions asked by students (Glover & Zimmer, 1982), and clearly explaining what resources are available (Ames & Lau, 1982) leads to higher levels of student help seeking. In synopsis, research suggests that help seeking is influenced primarily by classroom goal structure (student perceptions and teacher approaches to instruction) and social climate rather than specific course content. It was expected that student achievement would be positively correlated with the amount of help seeking and academic self-efficacy, and negatively correlated with perceived threat to seek help. Given that

help seeking is correlated with academic achievement (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000).

Methodology

Research design

This research is a correlational research that has been done to 132 semester 3 diploma students at Politeknik Tun Syed Nasir Syed Ismail, Pagoh. This study has employed the quantitative technique. Questionnaire has been used to collect data on students' help seeking behaviours. Questionnaires have been sent to the students and explanation on how to answer the questionnaire has been given to the students.

Sampling

One hundred and thirty-two (132) participants has been recruited for the study. Participants were diploma students (semester 3) from one polytechnic in south zone of Malaysia. The decision of using 132 respondents is associated with the table of sample size designed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Cohen (1969). Random sampling has been used to determine the samples. All the participants involved in this study were from two different courses in the polytechnic.

Instruments development

The format of all items in this study is a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All items were on students' general concerns in polytechnic, without any reference to a particular subject.

Analyses

The data collection from the questionnaire was coded and processed with the use of SPSS Version 26.0 Programme. Pearson correlation coefficients was computed to examine the correlations between achievement, academic self-efficacy and academic help-seeking behaviour.

Analysis and research findings

Research Question 1:

Is there a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and adaptive help-seeking with avoidance help-seeking behavior of polytechnic students?

Table 1: Correlations between Academic self-efficacy and Help Seeking with Adaptive and Avoidance Help Seeking

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p
Adaptive help-seeking	.97**	.00
Avoidance help-seeking	.09	.33

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the result of correlation analysis between academic self-efficacy with adaptive and avoidance of help seeking. From the two independent variables only one variable which is adaptive help-seeking was significantly correlated with academic self-efficacy. The analysis also shows that there is no significant relationship between avoidance of help-seeking behaviour and academic self-efficacy.

Research Question 2:
Is there a significant relationship between student achievement with academic self-efficacy of polytechnic students?

The result of correlation analysis between student achievement and academic self-efficacy shows that there is no significant relationship between the variables.

Research Question 3:
Is there a significant relationship between student achievement with help seeking behaviours of polytechnic students?

Table 2: Correlations between student achievement with help seeking behaviours

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p
Adaptive help seeking	.18*	.04
Avoidance help seeking	- .06	.48

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 shows the result of correlation analysis between academic achievement of students with adaptive and avoidance of help seeking. From the two independent variables only one variable which is adaptive help-seeking was significantly correlated with student achievement. The analysis also shows that there is no significant relationship between avoidance of help-seeking behaviour and student achievement.

Research Question 4:
Are there any significant differences in gender in terms of student achievement and help seeking behaviours of polytechnic students?

An independent sample T-Test has been conducted to compare gender towards student achievement, adaptive help seeking and avoidance help seeking behaviour. From the result, there is no significant difference in gender for the variables mentioned above. It can be concluded that male students and female students adopt equal adaptive and avoidance of help seeking behaviour as well as in their achievement.

Discussions and Implications
The findings of the study have shown that academic self-efficacy is significantly correlated with adaptive help-seeking behaviour. To understand the academic behaviour of the students, educators or lecturers must begin by understanding the factors that can motivates students to engage in such behaviours. The educators also can play a role to nurture the self-efficacy beliefs of the students. Furthermore, educators must also engage students in active help seeking as one

way to face with feelings of failure where it can be very beneficial to students in developing their efficacy belief.

In order to encourage students seeking for help in learning process, the lecturers or the instructors should play their parts. They should be sensitive to the students feeling as well as their condition especially when they are in large classes which are relatively seemed impersonal. Challenges facing by the majority of students due to the problem in class, can be one of the reasons the lecturers should have different approaches in order to stimulate seeking help from the students.

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