

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Nathan Deutsch Development Fund

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Proposal Title: Self-efficacy behavior in University students

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Department of Psychology and Counseling

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Department of Psychology and Counseling**

Scope and significance of the project

In the field of education, many components from individual differences in human learning to motivational factors are thought to play a role in students' academic performance. One construct that has been heavily researched is Self-Efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's perceived capability in performing necessary tasks to achieve goals. Researchers in the area of Educational Psychology have investigated some of the mediating potential of self-efficacy in regards to educational achievement and the effects it appears to have when paired with factors such as family background and personal motivation. Meilstrup, et al. (2016) evaluated the mediating effects of socioeconomic status (SES) and emotional symptoms on Self-Efficacy in adolescents and Tate (2015) examined the role of parental education level as a mediator for self-efficacy. The purpose of this study was to take a closer look at proposed associations between parental education and student self-efficacy in college students. In particular, this research examined the relationship between parental education and offspring self-efficacy in three specific areas: academic, research, and social self-efficacy. We were interested in whether higher academic achievement levels attained by the participants' parents significantly increased the likelihood of self-efficacy behaviors related to academic achievement in students. Four hundred and seventeen undergraduate college students completed an online survey in which they responded to demographic questions such as level of parental education (Trade, 2yr., or 4 yr.) Participants also completed the Graduate Education Self-Efficacy Scale; GESES (Williams, 2005). The GESES is designed to assess college students' perceptions of their levels of academic, research, and social self-efficacy. All data were collected, aggregated, and analyzed for statistical significance. The data was sorted into three groups according to the combined educational attainment status of the participant's parents. Participants whose parents completed trade school were identified as "First-Generation College Students, (FGCS). Participants who had at least one parent attend a four-year institution of higher education were classified as "Continuing Generation College Students (CGCS) and

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participants whose parents attended a combination of trade school, a two-year college or one parent pursued the previous two types but one did not pursue higher education at all, were classified as Partial Exposure to College Students (PECS). A one-way between group multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with FGCS, CGCS, and PECS, serving as levels of independent variables (Parental Educational Level) while the scores on the three self-efficacy scales were used as the dependent variables. Preliminary assumption testing revealed limited violations. Results yielded statistical significance for the main effect of self-efficacy and parental educational level, $F(6, 824) = 2.070$, $p = .054$; Wilks' Lambda = .971; partial eta squared .015, Power = .751. A closer look at the individual self-efficacy scales, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .009, indicated statistical significance for only one dependent variable: Social Self-Efficacy, $F(2, 8) = 2.922$, $p = .055$, partial eta squared = .014. Pairwise Comparison identified statistically significant mean differences between PECS ($M = 6.464$, $SD = 1.746$) and CGCS ($M = 6.874$, $SD = 1.605$).

Benefit to Astate and contribution to the field

This project examines if students' belief in their ability to perform in college is related to their parent's academic attainment. In particular, all of the project authors are first-generation college student. This research question is very important because of the implications it could have for first-generation college students. Acceptance of this project for presentation at a national conference highlights the quality of work we do here at Arkansas State University and in particular in our college and department.