SOURCES OF SELF- EFFICACY IN MATHEMATICS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Individuals form their self-efficacy beliefs by interpreting information from four sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasions and physiological or affective states (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Efficacy beliefs influence whether people think erratically or strategically, optimistically or pessimistically. Predictive power of academic self-efficacy is attested by ample researches (Locke, Frederick, Lee & Bobko, 1984; Schunk, 1984) but few efforts have been made to investigate sources underlying these beliefs (Pajares & Urdan, 2006). This study examined the heuristics students use as they form their mathematics self-efficacy from these and other sources. The study also made attempt to look into more about the factors relating to self-efficacy. Attempts were made to study the influence of the experiences students get in developing their self-efficacy beliefs. The questionnaire was administered to 100 students of 8th grade of both Sarvodaya Schools and Public Schools in Delhi. Results were analyzed quantitatively using t-test and correlation coefficient. Results suggested mastery experiences, to be the most powerful source in affecting self-efficacy beliefs whereas the physiological factors showed a negative correlation. The present study can be further extended to give implications for student's higher education and career choices in the future.

KEYWORDS: Self-Efficacy, Sources of Self-Efficacy, Mastery Experiences, Vicarious Experiences, Social Persuasions, Physiological State.