

# SELF EFFICACY: A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT HEALTH

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**Abstract:** *Self-efficacy beliefs are concerned with one's experiences which contribute to further judgements and information of what one can do with her/his personal and work experiences. Self-efficacy influences individuals' choices, goals, emotional reactions, effort, coping, and persistence and it changes as a result of learning, experiences and feedback. Those people who are more likely to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they are capable of executing them successfully, implies that they have high self-efficacy. Psychological and behavioural change are determined mostly by the individual's sense of personal mastery or self-efficacy. The research paper provides a review of researches and psychological theories on adolescents' efficacy beliefs on their health.*

**Key Words:** *Self efficacy, Health Psychology, Adolescence.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Theoretical foundations of self-efficacy roots from learning, cognitive, and social cognitive theories and were able to trace the nature, sources, and psychological processes concerned in the formation of self-efficacy beliefs. Social Cognition theory marks human functioning as the dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral and environmental influences. Self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize the motivation, cognitive resources, and action needed to gather given situational needs. Hence, it becomes essential to be able to identify such issues and take steps for building high self-efficacy during adolescence.

## 2. THEORETICAL MODELS: HOW SELF-EFFICACY AND HEALTH ARE RELATED:

Self-efficacy is a comprehensive judgment of perceived capability for performing a specific task, second, it is a dynamic construct, as judgments change over time as new information and experiences are acquired and third, that efficacy beliefs involve a mobilization component. Thus, people who have the same skills may perform differently depending on utilization, combination and sequencing of skills in an evolving context. Self-efficacy influences individuals' choices, goals, emotional reactions, effort, coping, and persistence and it changes as a result of learning, experiences and feedback. Those people who are more likely to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they are capable of executing them successfully, implies that they have high self-efficacy. The Theory of Planned Behaviour Ajzen, 1991 The theory states that attitude, subject norms, and perceived behavioral control, together shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors. The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska et al., 1992) is a dynamic theory of change based on the assumption that there is a common set of change processes that can be applied across a broad range of health behaviours. An integrative theory that assesses an individual's readiness to act on a new healthier behaviour, and provides strategies, or processes of change to guide the individual. Theory in health psychology known as Health Action Process Approach is health behaviour change, given by Schwarzer. This proposes that engaging in healthy behaviour consists of two processes: forming an intention (motivation phase), followed by a stage of planning to act and action (volition phase). All these theoretical models emphasize that when people observe a model performing a behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviours. Self-efficacy plays a vital role in life of an adolescent. Self-efficacy decides the ways to recognize and handle with pressure and its influence on mental and physical health. Self-efficacious adolescent is able to deal with tough situations with calmly and conveniently which diminish the harmful crash of stress on health.

## 3. SELF EFFICACY AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIOUR:

Research studies conducted by O'Dea and Wilson and Zabinski et al. emphasize on body weight of adolescent based on many factors like age, gender, food availability, dietary habits, body mass index and nutrition affect on weight of individual. Systematic reviews of adolescent studies by Mc Clain et al., 2009 specify modeling is steady related to high intake of fibre, green leafy vegetables, fruits, low consumption of fat, sugar and sweetened beverage. Modeling is key base of self-efficacy beliefs.

#### **4. SELF EFFICACY AND CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT:**

Morisky et al and Grey et al., (2000-2001) Systematic reviews on Adolescent diagnosed with tuberculosis and type-1diabetes. They are given group based intervention to adolescent where self efficacy beliefs for completion of medication and improving their adherence to a recommended lifestyle for recovery.

Barlow and Ellard (2004) Research studies on Psychosocial intervention for adolescent suffering from chronic illness(e.g.,Epilepsy,diabetes,asthma,chronic pain) interventions based on self efficacy techniques which includes family variable,physical health, mental health, wellbeing, management and understanding of disease.Main aim of this intervention is fostering beliefs about ability to manage chronic disease.

#### **5. SELF EFFICACY AND ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUR:**

The main challenge for those who are dependent on these substances such as substance use, alcohol consumption and drugs. Alcohol, smoking and drug abuse are highly prevalent problems that exact heavy personal and social costs. Many health-compromising behaviours are consistent and addictive making them complex way of life to smash. Addiction occurs when one becomes physically or psychologically dependent on a substance. It involves tolerance, which leads to craving, which is nothing but a strong desire to continue consuming substance. Self-efficacy plays an important role in psychological adjustment and dysfunction, and in mediating the effects of therapeutic intervention for emotional and behavioural problems. Self-efficacy is both a personal and a social construct, as individuals operate individually as well as collectively..According to Jellinek (1960) alcoholism is a disease characterized by craving, compulsion and quick loss of control. Craving presumably drives one to the bottle and drinking even a small amount of alcohol metabolically triggers a complete loss of control. The findings of Young, Oei, and Crook (1991) suggest that the relative importance of different aspects of self-regulative efficacy may change depending on the phase of problem drinking. Self-efficacy helps to some extent to overcome this problem by making people aware of the benefits of quitting the intake of alcohol. Self-efficacy predictors include perceived capability to manage social and intrapersonal stressors without recourse to alcohol as well as interpersonal pressures to drink. Hence, efficacy beliefs predict success in controlling alcohol consumption. Herein too when a self-efficacious person perceives a health threat or risk due to problem drinking, his motivational intentions to quit drinking lead to planning such actions which lead to behaviour change.

#### **6. SELF-EFFICACY AND NUTRITION:**

Good health depends upon healthy food habits in the form of good nutrition. In the words of Sir Robert McCarrison, one of the best known nutritionists, "The right kind of food is the most important single factor in the promotion of health, and the wrong kind of food is the most important single factor in the promotion of disease" (Bakhr, 2003). The human body builds up and maintains healthy cells, tissues, glands and organs with the help of various nutrients that are supplied to it Nutrition does begin with food, but it is more than food. It is a process in which food is digested and its nutrients are absorbed and distributed to all the parts of the body where they are utilized in all metabolic activities. Food is associated with every human emotion it symbolizes joy or sorrow, comfort or fear and security or conflict. An individual's nutritional status is an essential aspect of one's total health, which implies not only freedom from disease but physical, mental and emotional fitness as well. Over the past several years, people have become aware of the importance of good health and are trying to eat and adopt healthy food habits. In the early 1930's, family food surveys showed that one third of the diet habits of people were ranked as 'poor'. In the 1960's one in ten diets were classified so, but today with the advancement in knowledge and skill people are trying to overcome it. Media is also playing an important role in encouraging people to change one's food habits by announcing new forms of common foods, combination of well-known ingredients, processing methods and new ways of serving familiar dishes. In the United States, the department of Agriculture indicates a considerable shift in eating habits. There has been a steady decline in the use of potatoes and cereal grains and an increase in the consumption of milk, vegetables, fruits and meats. It is noticed that this change has taken place in the diets of children and young adults, whereas the older generation have shown the least amount of change (Martin, 1964). It is believed that one can easily change the food habits of children and young adults as they are more keen to adopt healthy life styles. Now a- days, young homemakers are adopting new meal patterns and encouraging their families to adopt new eating habits in order to lead a healthy and disease free life. This is beneficial in the prevention of various diseases namely: cancer, obesity, constipation, anemia, ulcers, general muscular weaknesses and malnutrition problems (Uppal, 2004). It is well documented that the well-nourished as compared to the poorly-nourished behaves differently in relation to disease. A well-nourished tends to resist and overcome infections whereas a poorly-nourished tends to be susceptible to disease and even delays the process of recovery. Thus, good nutrition offers protection in dealing with diseases and even makes a positive difference in the structure and size of the body of the individual. Good nutrition increases longevity, as statistics show that people in the 1900's were expected to live upto 48 years; in 1956 this went up to 67 years

(Martin, 1964) but today one could expect to live upto 80 years and beyond, because people are maintaining a high level of health that enables one to remain productive and enjoy life. It is believed that a good nutritional diet is one of the most important factors in determining the life style of an individual. Nutrition has its roots in many fields of research including medicine, physiology, chemistry, anthropology and psychology. Psychologists are showing more interest in their quest for knowledge for the advancement of the modern science of nutrition and personal health. Self-efficacy helps an individual to incorporate a rich nutritional diet in one's food habits in order to live a healthy life. It is directly related in the maintenance of health and is associated with the desire to become conscious of what is a healthy life-style as contrasted to an unhealthy one. High self-efficacy beliefs helps individuals in adopting nutritive food habits, resist temptations and adopt a healthy life style (Schwarzer, 1992). It makes people aware of the importance of good and balanced nutritive food and to resist unhealthy or temptations for fast foods.

## 7. SELF EFFICACY AND PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS:

Cross sectional studies on Adolescents suffered Psychosomatic distress Natvig et al (1999), Anxiety and affective disorders (Muris 2002), Posttraumatic stress disorder (Saigh et al.1995) investigating efficacy beliefs on adolescents. it shows that concurrence of higher efficacy beliefs helps to maintain individual's strong will power which helps in recovery process. It makes individual mentally strong and develop a optimistic outlook.

## 8. SELF EFFICACY, STRESS & COPING:

Higher self-efficacy was related to higher perceived coping effectiveness. During adolescence major source of stress school related, career, peer pressure and various bodily changes. Self efficacy beliefs and techniques was used to deal this problems. Stress management trainings organized for adolescent resulted in increase of self-efficacy beliefs (Hampel et al., 2008)

## 9. SELF EFFICACY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Self efficacy is the belief that one can perform a specified behavior in a specified situation (Bandura, 1994, 1997) and reflects a level of confidence that the outcomes of the behavior will produce the benefits predicted (Hofstetter, Hovell, &Sallis,1990). Bandura (1997) argued that self-efficacy beliefs define an individual's capacity to carry out actions and to make decisions that are part of success in progressing to positive outcomes. Spruiji-Metz and Saelens(2006) asserted that self efficacy for physical activity would include an individual's ' level of confidence for competently engaging in sports. Several studies of Adolescent have reported the level of self-efficacy was empirically linked to sports(Davidson,Simen-Kapeu, Veugelers, 2010;Strauss et al.,2001)

Previous studies have supported the notion that among adolescent, self efficacy are important factors affecting physical activity levels (Luepkar,1999) Schwarzer and Luszczynska (2006) maintained self efficacy is not only reflective of current levels of adolescent physical activity but also a very strong predictor of future activity among adolescents.

## 10. CONCLUSION:

Self-efficacy beliefs are developed by mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and emotional states.Bandura asserts that most human behavior is learned through observation, imitation and modeling. The theories presented in research paper suggest that the effectiveness of self efficacy beliefs in individual life and how it impact on every domain. Adolescence is period of growth. It is necessary for them to develop higher self-efficacy beliefs and maintain physical & mental health and develop optimistic outlook towards future. Self-efficacy beliefs enhance human accomplishment and wellbeing, influence the choices people make and the courses of actions they pursue. Individuals tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid others in which they do not. Self-efficacy beliefs help to determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persist when confronting obstacles and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations. The higher the sense of efficacy, the greater will be the effort, persistence and resilience on the part of the individual. Self-efficacy beliefs also influence thought patterns and emotional reactions. Efficacy beliefs are presented differently in different individuals.

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