

Course work on self-efficacy

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



Self-efficacy can be defined as “ people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994). The level of a person’s self-efficacy can influence their motivations and behavior, as they will act according to their perception of their own ability. If someone has high self-efficacy, then they are more likely to participate in activities and behavior that will further their goals and desires. On the other hand, those with low self-efficacy doubt their ability to perform many tasks, and often lack commitment and motivation to perform tasks. In this essay, the different processes by which one’s self-efficacy is determined are explored.

Self-efficacy often comes from experiences which end in success – a prior success sets a precedent for a person that makes them more confident in the future. However, this only really works if they have to work hard at that success; those who have success easily will not be willing to work as hard to experience future success. When they encounter something that does not give them results right away, failure can have an especially adverse affect on their self-efficacy.

Social models can also provide experiences by which self-efficacy is determined. Experiencing success vicariously through others similar to them gives them the belief that they can do it too. As they are considered alike to that person they are witnessing, they attribute these abilities they possess to themselves as well. In the event that someone sees someone unlike them accomplish something, it will not have the same effect.

Someone's emotional state will determine their self-efficacy; if someone experiences stress or aches and pains, they can perceive them as weaknesses or vulnerabilities in their character, and thus less able to accomplish things. When someone is in a good mood, they will be more constructive with their appraisal of themselves; the same is true of someone in a bad mood, as they will not have the best opinion of their abilities. If a stressed person can find a way to reduce that stress and rid themselves of perceived vulnerabilities, they can improve their self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy affects cognitive processes, which detail the thoughts that go through an individual's mind regarding their abilities. These come through one's anticipation of how a scenario will end; thinking about a positive solution to a problem will lead to a positive sense of self-efficacy, and vice versa. Motivational processes are also affected, as a high self-efficacy will leave an individual more motivated to perform an action; they are more confident they will succeed in said action, and thus are less reticent to do it. Affective processes, like stress and depression, are affected by self-efficacy; if one feels they cannot perform an action, they will experience extreme anxiety arousal (Bandura, 1994). Selection processes (the things that people choose to do and pursue) are also determined by self-efficacy; the level of involvement a person feels comfortable with in an activity will decide what activities they will participate in.

In conclusion, self-efficacy is determined by a great many causes, and can affect many aspects of one's personality. Knowing whether or not you can do something can be determined by one's environment, life experiences, and

level of depression or confidence. What's more, self-efficacy can affect ability and focus, creating a vicious cycle where, if someone experiences a failure which lowers their self-efficacy, they will be less able to perform that action in the future.

References

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998).