Investigating the Impact of Self-Efficacy on Academic Motivation Among Afghan Adult Learners in India

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India. The research uses a descriptive quantitative design. This study's sample includes 204 Afghan learners enrolled in universities across Gujarat, New Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The participants were chosen using a purposive selection technique. The data was collected using standardised scales of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). The relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation was assessed using inferential statistics, namely Spearman's correlation. Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate self-efficacy and academic motivation between male and female learners. SPSS software was used to analyse the data and visualise it. The analysis found a moderate positive connection $\rho = 0.436$, p = 0.001) between self-efficacy and academic motivation, showing that stronger self-efficacy leads to greater motivation. However, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant differences in self-efficacy (p = 0.242) or academic motivation (p = 0.768) between male and female Afghan learners. The data indicated that, while self-efficacy is important for increasing academic motivation, gender had no significant influence on either measure in this population. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in increasing academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India. However, gender differences in self-efficacy and motivation were not of statistical significance.

Keywords: *Self-efficacy, academic motivation, Afghan learners, higher education, learner experience.*

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Introduction

Academic motivation is a crucial driver of learning (Deci & Ryan, 2015; King, 2016). When learners are motivated, they experience a stronger sense of accomplishment, show persistence in their studies, display resilience in the face of failure, and develop a deeper interest in specific subjects (Hidi, 2000; Katz & Stupel, 2016). Conversely, students with low academic motivation often struggle to engage meaningfully in the learning process, making motivation an essential factor for academic success in higher education. Research suggests that many learners, including Afghans, face challenges due to low academic motivation, perceiving education as a requirement rather than a fulfilling pursuit (Hidajat et al., 2020; Cannard et al., 2016). This perception can lead to disengagement, skipped learning opportunities, and inconsistent participation. To address these challenges, learning must be designed to be interesting, interactive, and engaging. Afghan learners who lack motivation are more likely to procrastinate, give up when confronted with difficulties, and perform poorly in academic tasks. Several external factors - such as parenting styles, teaching practices, family and peer support - contribute to variations in student motivation (Boonk et al., 2020; Chen, 2015; Egan et al., 2021; Guay et al., 2017). However, internal psychological factors also play a critical role.

Among these internal factors, self-efficacy has emerged as a significant determinant of academic motivation (Hidajat et al., 2020; D'Lima et al., 2014). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize, regulate, and execute actions required to achieve specific goals. It develops through the interaction of environment, personality, and self-assessment (Ormrod, 2006), and is closely tied to self-evaluation of performance (Slavin, 2006; Schunk, 1991). Learners with higher self-efficacy approach academic tasks more productively and confidently, which, in turn, enhances their motivation. Previous studies confirm a positive association between self-efficacy and academic motivation (McGeown et al., 2014; Talsma et al., 2019). This relationship can be explained by the fact that students with strong self-efficacy tend to adopt effective learning strategies, persist in the face of challenges, and actively seek opportunities to expand their knowledge. In the Afghan context, learners who believe in their ability to manage their studies are more likely to engage in lectures, adopt suitable learning approaches, and pursue their academic goals with greater consistency. A positive attitude towards learning further reinforces competence development and knowledge acquisition. While much evidence points to the positive role of self-efficacy in sustaining academic motivation, some studies have reported conflicting findings. Therefore, further research is necessary to deepen our understanding of how self-efficacy influences academic motivation, particularly among Afghan learners who face unique cultural and educational challenges.

Research Questions

1. How does self-efficacy affect academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India?
2. Is self-efficacy a significant predictor of academic motivation among Afghan learners?
3. Do gender and academic level influence the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India.
2. To assess the differences in self-efficacy between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.
3. To evaluate the differences in academic motivation between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

Research Hypothesis

H0 1. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India.

H0 2. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

H0 3. There is no significant difference in academic motivation between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

Delimitation of the Study

1. The study is delimited to Afghan adult learners in India.
2. The study is delimited to four Indian states: Gujarat, Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive quantitative research approach in which numerical data is collected and analysed systematically to analyse trends and patterns in self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India. This method will assess the relationship between variables and gives statistical information about how self-efficacy affects academic motivation.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select a sample of 204 Afghan learners from universities in Gujarat, New Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Research Tools

Survey will serve as the primary data collection tool by employing following scales.

1.	The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), originally developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), assesses people's confidence in their ability to overcome barriers and achieve goals. It consists of ten items scored on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Not true, 4 = Exactly true), with higher scores indicating stronger self-efficacy. The scale is very reliable (Cronbach's α = 0.76-0.90) and has been extensively validated.

2.	The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), developed by Vallerand et al. (1992), based on Self-Determination Theory, this test assesses learners' intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. It consists of 28 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater drive. The AMS is very reliable (Cronbach's α = 0.70–0.86) and commonly used in educational studies.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally visited the sampled states in India. The data collection began with distributing tools on self-efficacy and academic motivation to each learner in person.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis for the study was done using inferential statistics to analyse the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation using Spearman's correlation. Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare self-efficacy and academic motivation between male and female learners. SPSS software was used to analyse and visualise the data.

Objective 1 - To examine the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India.
H0 1. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India.

The Spearman's correlation test was used to investigate the relationship among Afghan adult learners' self-efficacy and academic motivation. This non-parametric test was chosen because it violated the normality and linearity assumptions, making it appropriate for determining the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables.

Table 01 - Spearman's Correlations for Self-efficacy and Academic Motivation

Correlations				
Spearman's rho			**Self-efficacy**	**Academic Motivation**
	Self-efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.436
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.001
	Academic Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	0.436	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	.

The analysis assessed the relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India. Spearman's rho correlation revealed a slight positive relationship ($p = 0.436$), indicating that better self-efficacy is linked to higher academic motivation. Furthermore, the significance value ($p = 0.001$) fell below the 0.05 level, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The null hypothesis, which indicated that there is not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic motivation, is rejected because the results demonstrate a significant relationship.

Objective 2 - To assess the differences in self-efficacy between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

H0 2. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare self-efficacy levels among male and female Afghan adult learners. This non-parametric test was chosen because it is suitable for comparing two independent groups when normality assumptions are violated.

Table 02 - Mann-Whitney U Test Rank for Self-efficacy

Ranks			
Self-efficacy gender	**Number**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**
Male	181	104.22	18864.00
Female	23	88.96	2046.00
Total	204		

Table 03 - Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics for Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy Test Statistics	
Mann-Whitney U	1770.000
Wilcoxon W	2046.000
Z	-1.171
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.242

According to the Mann-Whitney U test results, the mean rank for male learners (104.22) appears to be greater than that for female learners (88.96), but the statistical analysis does not show a significant difference in self-efficacy between the two groups. The Mann-Whitney U value of 1770.000 results in a p-value of 0.242, which is greater than the standard 0.05 level for significance. As a result, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in self-efficacy between male and female adult Afghan learners in India. These data indicate that, within this sample, gender had no significant influence statistically on learners' self-efficacy levels.

Objective 3 - To evaluate the differences in academic between male and female Afghan adult learners in India.

H0 3. There is no significant difference in academic motivation between male and female adult Afghan learners in India.

To investigate gender differences in academic motivation among adult Afghan learners, the Mann-Whitney U test was used. This non-parametric test was chosen because it effectively compares two independent groups when the data does not have a normal distribution.

Table 04 - Mann-Whitney U Test Rank for Academic Motivation

Ranks			
Academic motivation gender	**Number**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**
Male	181	102.93	18631.00
Female	23	99.09	2279.00
Total	204		

Table 05 - Mann-Whitney U Test Statistics for Academic Motivation

Academic Motivation Test Statistics	
Mann-Whitney U	2003.000
Wilcoxon W	2279.000
Z	-0.294
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.768

According to the Mann-Whitney U test, male learners have a slightly higher mean rank (102.93) than female learners (99.09), but the difference is not statistically significant. The test statistic (U = 2003.000) gives a p-value of 0.768, which exceeds the standard alpha limit of 0.05. Therefore, we do not reject the null hypothesis, which suggests that there is no significant difference in academic motivation between male and female Afghan adult learners in India. So, gender does not appear to have a significant influence on academic motivation in this group.

Findings and Discussion

The study found a moderate positive relationship ($\rho = 0.436$, p = 0.001) between self-efficacy and academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India. This finding suggests that learners with higher self-efficacy are more academically inspired. This evidence is consistent with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which states that belief in one's abilities promotes goal-directed behaviour and persistence. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates self-efficacy as a significant predictor of academic motivation, highlighting the importance of interventions to boost learners' self-belief. According to a previous study (Schunk & Pajares, 2009), high self-efficacy promotes confidence, resilience and intrinsic motivation, whereas poor self-efficacy can lead to anxiety and disengagement. Given the cultural and transition issues that Afghan adult learners confront in India, mentorship programmes, peer support and academic counselling may help them feel more capable and motivated.

Gender differences were not statistically significant for self-efficacy (U = 1770.000, p = 0.242) or academic motivation (U = 2003.000, p = 0.768). While male learners had slightly higher mean ranks, the differences were not significant, despite several studies that indicate male learners had stronger self-efficacy (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). Instead, these data indicate that cultural adaptation, institutional support and personal resilience are more important in influencing self-efficacy and motivation than gender alone. Overall, the study emphasises self-efficacy as a key driver of academic desire while challenging gender stereotypes.

Implications of the Study

The study's findings have practical and theoretical consequences for educators, governments, and institutions that help Afghan adult learners in India.

1. Academic and Institutional Support

•   Universities should conduct mentorship programmes, skill development seminars and academic counselling sessions to boost learners' self-efficacy, as it greatly impacts academic motivation.

•   Providing structured orientation programmes can boost Afghan adult learners' confidence in their academic ability, leading to improved motivation and performance.

2.   Gender-Neutral Interventions

•   The study identified no significant gender differences in self-efficacy and academic motivation, indicating that academic interventions should prioritise general learner empowerment over gender-specific programmes.

•   Educators should use inclusive teaching methods that address varied learner needs, regardless of gender.

3. Psychological and Emotional Support

•   Universities should provide psychological support services like counselling, stress management courses, and self-efficacy training to enhance motivation.

•   Encourage peer mentoring and faculty-learner engagement to help Afghan adult learners gain confidence in their academic ability.

4.   Policy Considerations for Afghan Learners in India

•   Universities and government agencies should provide scholarships, financial aid and institutional support to boost self-efficacy and academic motivation.

•   Policies should prioritise creating culturally sensitive learning environments that address the unique challenges faced by Afghan learners in Indian universities.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of self-efficacy in increasing academic motivation among Afghan adult learners in India and looked at gender inequalities in

these factors. The findings indicated a moderate positive relationship between self-efficacy and motivation, supporting the idea that learners who trust their own talents are more likely to remain motivated and succeed in their studies. However, gender differences were found to be statistically negligible, implying that personal, cultural and institutional factors had a greater influence on self-efficacy and academic motivation than gender. The findings of this study emphasise the importance of self-efficacy in learner performance, arguing that institutions should actively develop conditions that encourage self-confidence, resilience and motivation among Afghan learners. Given the challenges that these learners face, like language barriers, cultural adaptation and financial constraints - targeted interventions, such as structured mentorship programmes, academic counselling and psychological support services, can play a critical role in increasing self-efficacy and motivation. Universities should also prioritise peer mentoring programmes, faculty participation self-regulation and goal-setting courses to ensure that learners have the tools they need to successfully handle academic hurdles.

Furthermore, the lack of significant gender differences in self-efficacy and motivation suggests that educational initiatives should be inclusive and accessible to all, rather than gender specific. Future research should look into additional underlying elements that affect self-efficacy and motivation, such as socio-economic status, language competence, cultural identity, and institutional support mechanisms. Further studies might look at how self-efficacy and motivation change over time, offering more insight into the long-term impact of various support systems. Addressing these concerns is not only critical for Afghan adult learners' success in India, but it also helps to create a more diversified, internationally aware and culturally rich educational landscape.

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