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Self-Efficacy Sources and Academic Motivation: A Qualitative Study of 10th Graders

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The NAEP (2016) report shows that the performance of the country's highest achievers is increasing in reading while the lowest-achieving students have lower scores than previous reports and are performing worse than ever. Not only are these students expected to succeed academically, these students must know how to problem solve, work in teams, and be creative. The longstanding issue of how to motivate students is not new. Motivation consists of the factors that stimulate the desire to attain a goal. Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in one's capabilities to carry out, organize and perform a task successfully (Bandura, 1997). Both are the driving forces that make people pursue a goal and overcome obstacles. Students with high senses of efficacy have the capacity to accept more challenging tasks, higher abilities to organize their time, increased persistence in the face of obstacles, exhibit lower anxiety levels, show flexibility in the use of learning strategies and have a high ability to adapt with different educational environments (Elmotaleb and Sahalof, 2013). High school students and entry-level college students are struggling to maintain the self-efficacy and motivation needed to accomplish rigorous and challenging tasks in both high school and college. This study addressed the deficiencies in the literature by providing an understanding of 10th grade students developmental self-efficacy sources, self-efficacy source experiences, and academic motivation.

A total of 18 student participants in a 10th grade public school at a rural community in a southeastern state in the United States were interviewed for this study. A high school principal, three 10th grade teachers, and a high school guidance counselor also participated in the study. The study employed a qualitative methodology that focused on student's voices to gain a better understanding of the development of self-efficacy sources and the effects on academic motivation.

The findings revealed that students depicted their personal perceived self-efficacy based on the self-efficacy source development that had occurred in each student's life, particularly the amount of mastery source experiences that students had successfully completed. Another finding indicated that the student participants based their personal perceived self-efficacy source development on how successful or unsuccessful they had been in school with special emphasis on students persuasion and physiological and affective source development. Evidence also supported that student participants academic motivation was based on the students personal perceived academic self-efficacy relating to all four mastery sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective). This research provides practitioners and stakeholders with a better understanding of students self-efficacy source developments and the impact that self-efficacy has on student academic motivation.

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"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reports that only thirty-seven percent of United States high school seniors are prepared for college-level coursework in math and reading, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card or NAEP. The NAEP (2016) report also shows that the performance of the country's highest achievers is increasing in reading while the lowest-achieving students have lower scores than previous reports and are performing worse than ever. This information is based on the 2015 assessment of a national representative sample of thousands of 12th grade students from 740 schools, including private institutions. Camera (2016) from U. S. News World Report, interviewed Peggy Carr, acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics for the Department of Education, and found that there is currently a gap between the highest and lowest performing students. According to the data, students performing in lower percentiles are performing worse than before. Not only are these students expected to succeed academically, these students must know how to problem solve, work in teams, and be creative.

According to Tough (2014), writer for New York Times magazine, attests that more than 40% of American students who start at four-year colleges do not earn a degree after six years. When community-college students are included in that tabulation, the dropout rate is more than half, worse than any other country except Hungary. A study ascertains that students not only have financial and academic obstacles when first entering college, they also have issues with doubts and fears of the capabilities needed to

make it (Tough, 2014). The United States now ranks 12th in the world in the percentage of young people who have earned a college degree (Lewin, 2010). Tough (2014), also a mentor at the University of Texas, suggests that the only way to solve the problem of college completion is to get inside the mind of a college student. According to William and William (2011), five components are needed to increase student motivation: (1) classrooms and schools that are learning habitats, (2) teachers who are managers of student learning and classroom environments, (3) content that is useful and relevant, (4) classroom structure and institutional method that enables student self-regulation, (5) and an accessible environment.

The longstanding issue of how to motivate students is not new. Motivation consists of the factors that stimulate the desire to attain a goal. Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in one's capabilities to carry out, organize and perform a task successfully (Bandura, 1997). Both are the driving forces that make people pursue a goal and overcome obstacles. Students with high senses of efficacy have the capacity to accept more challenging tasks, higher abilities to organize their time, increased persistence in the face of obstacles, exhibit lower anxiety levels, show flexibility in the use of learning strategies and have a high ability to adapt with different educational environments (Elmotaleb & Sahalof, 2013). High school students and entry-level college students are struggling to maintain the self-efficacy and motivation needed to accomplish rigorous and challenging tasks in both high school and college.

A student's level of efficacy impacts the amount of effort applied and the degree to which he or she will persevere through a difficult task (Hibbs, 2013). People with higher self-efficacy and motivation do not easily give up when confronted with

difficulties (Ersanla, 2015). Wernersbach, Crowley, & Bates (2014) suggest that individuals who are doubtful about their capabilities are easily discouraged by struggles and failures, whereas individuals with more confidence persist despite obstacles until they find success. According to Sparks (2014), a substantial number of American teenagers remain spectacularly unmotivated and unengaged in schooling. If learners do not form positive self-efficacy beliefs early in academic careers, not all is lost. Schools may still provide opportunities to foster and increase those positive self-efficacy beliefs.

Albert Bandura's (1977, 1986) Social Cognitive Theory includes a self-efficacy belief component that is formed from various sources. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as people's judgments of the capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Self-efficacy theory postulates that people acquire information to evaluate efficacy beliefs from four primary sources: (a) enactive mastery experiences (actual performances); (b) observation of others (vicarious experiences); (c) forms of persuasion, both verbal and otherwise; and (d) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997). Bandura's theory will be utilized as a central component of the framework of this research.

The purpose of this phenomenological, qualitative study is to provide in-depth data descriptions of 10th grade students self-efficacy source developments. The study took place at a rural high school, in northeastern Tennessee. The four primary self-efficacy sources from Bandura will be examined from the students earliest academic memories and experiences. Bandura (1977) posits that later failures in students careers may not negatively impact efficacy beliefs to the same extent as earlier failures.

When individuals attempt to exercise control over more technology-mediated learning environments, strong self-efficacy beliefs will be needed. Investment in the education of children's non-cognitive skills, such as motivation, perseverance, and self-efficacy, is a cost-effective approach to increasing the quality and productivity of the workforce (Brackett, Divecha, & Stern, 2015). Information technologies continue to revolutionize teaching and independent learning (Halverson & Smith, 2010). With an increase in independent learning and new technology for educating students, individuals who are resilient and possess constructive self-efficacy beliefs will become even more of a necessity for success.

Statement of the Problem

Infants and young children are propelled by curiosity, driven by an intense need to explore, interact with, and make sense of their environment. Children enter into Pre-K and kindergarten programs with expectations of success. However, research has demonstrated that motivation decreases as students proceed through each grade level (Applegate & Applegate, 2010; Capen, 2010; Froiland, Oros, Smith, & Hirchert, 2012). Bandura (1997) suggests later failures in life may not negatively impact efficacy beliefs to the same extent as earlier failures. Many types of experiences occur in students early academic careers to form students self-efficacy source beliefs. Often the crucial factor that accounts for cases like these is the students own motivation to learn.

According to the Center on Education Policy (2012), motivation is a central part of a students educational experience from preschool onward, but it has received scant attention amid an education reform agenda focused mainly on accountability, standards and tests, teacher quality, and school management. Education reform could benefit from a

robust conversation about the overlooked element of student motivation (Center, 2012). Bergin (2013) states, "If students do not have the confidence to work through a difficult task, how will they be the innovative leaders of the future?" (p.2). Academic self-efficacy appears to be the most important form of self-efficacy to investigate (Joseph & Baker, 2014). A higher motivation to learn has been linked not only to better academic performance, but also to greater conceptual understanding, satisfaction with school, self-esteem, social adjustment, and school completion rates (Center on Education Policy, 2012).

Bergen (2013) conducted a literature review study of eighteen articles from 1970-2010 on varying levels of self-efficacy. The study specifically focused on how students persevere when tasks are difficult, and how self-efficacy can be a predictor of academic achievement. A search from one search engine revealed 60 initial studies before inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Eighteen articles utilizing various research methods were found. The results were as follows: Qualitative Method-one; Mixed Methods-one; Research and Literature Review Methods-five; Quantitative Methods-eleven. Out of those 18 studies, only four studies were conducted using a sample of students in grades 8^{th}-12^{th}. More qualitative research should be conducted in order to fulfill the gaps of non-cognitive skills that explain high school students willingness to perform and be successful. Many quantitative studies using self-efficacy ratings scales for middle school students, teachers, and college students are reported. However, little qualitative research exists on why and how high school students develop self-efficacy source beliefs, and how those beliefs foster academic motivation. The goal of this qualitative research is to study a relatively small number of individuals in rural settings while preserving the

individuality of each student. Other self-efficacy studies have focused on collecting data from urban settings with large samples and aggregating the data across individuals or situations (Maxwell, 1996). Using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy source framework, this study will provide rich, thick descriptions of rural students first-hand experiences from an early academic career and how those experiences have shaped self-efficacy judgment beliefs and motivation (Creswell, 2012).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe how rural 10th grade students develop and utilize early self-efficacy source experiences. At this stage in the research, the development of students personal self-efficacy source experiences will be generally defined in the following categorical framework: mastery sources (actual performance), vicarious sources (modeling), persuasion sources (verbal and otherwise), and physiological and affective sources at the time of the experiences (student capabilities and strengths) (Bandura, 1997).

Central Research Question

Central Question: What early self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) do 10th grade students develop and experience to foster academic motivation?

Sub-Questions

1) How do 10th grade students describe early academic self-efficacy source (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) experiences?
2) How do 10th grade students develop and define academic self-efficacy beliefs?

3) How do self-efficacy sources enhance or diminish academic self-efficacy and academic motivation?

Significance of the Study

This study will increase the body of knowledge surrounding the understanding of student self-efficacy source development beliefs. With teacher, student, and school accountability, the findings of this study will also be significant for understanding student self-efficacy sources at the secondary level. Policy makers are not addressing some of the educational issues that affect student performance. The only measures of performance are with norm-referenced assessments that are administered at most one time per year. A growing amount of classroom strategies are identified in an effort to improve student motivation, but little information exists on self-efficacy source beliefs for high school students. The findings will add to the literature to enhance teaching strategies and program planning for students. Teachers, parents, and students can learn to recognize and understand the framework of self-efficacy source experiences and foster those experiences in order to increase motivation and provide the stamina needed to complete tasks. It may also be useful to incorporate support for academic self-efficacy into courses and other programming related to student retention (Wernersbach, Crowley, & Bates, 2014).

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations that add focus to the study are location, sample of the study, and its purpose. This research will only be conducted at one site and may not be generalized to all high school students (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The selected site, a rural school in Jamestown, Tennessee in a southeastern state in the United States. Participants

in the study included only 10th grade students at one cite who volunteered to participate. Finally, the study was delimited by the purpose of the study, which is the exploration of how students developed perceived self-efficacy source beliefs and how those self-efficacy beliefs affect academic motivation. The delimitations of the study, which were controlled by the researcher, narrowed the scope and focus of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study that were not under the control of the researcher were limitations of the research strategy and issues with sample selection. The research strategy could have potential impact on the findings because it focused on the students voices rather than the large data sets of a quantitative research strategy and may not provide the results needed to answer the research questions. To overcome this limitation for future research, a case study research strategy could be employed where a researcher could observe students for periods of time along with interviewing students. Next, sample size could be a methodological limitation to the study due to the amount of students willing to participate with parental consent. To overcome this limitation for future research, the research could be conducted at multiple cites or across more than one grade to increase participation.

Overview of the Study

Students who are more confident and self-assured are more likely to attain higher levels of academic performance, which implies that the beliefs of self-efficacy seem to play an important role in predicting academic achievement (Köseoğlu, 2015). In particular, self-efficacy appears to invoke the employment of various metacognitive strategies and resources that are indispensable for academic performance (Schunk,1991).

Sparks (2014) believes there is hope for students and reports that in spite of tightening budgets and schedules, many schools are renewing a focus on non-cognitive pieces of learning, like motivation. The purpose of this phenomenological, qualitative study is to provide in-depth data descriptions of 10th grade students self-efficacy developments at a rural high school. Personal transcribed interviews will provide the data needed to understand how students develop personal self-efficacy beliefs. A pre-screening instrument will be used to determine both efficacious students and inefficacious students. Based on the pre-screening instrument results, students who exhibit high-self efficacy beliefs, average self-efficacy beliefs, and low self-efficacy beliefs will be utilized in the interview process. The study will provide in-depth, descriptive, interview transcription data of the students experiences using the framework of Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy sources (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social experiences, and physiological and affective experiences). Tenth grade students were chosen for the study because previous studies have not included sophomore students. Many high schools offer support for students in freshmen academies for transitioning from middle to high school. However, in many schools, that support diminishes for 10th grade students. A rural, exclusively state funded school was chosen as the sample. Many previous studies conducted regarding self-efficacy judgments are conducted in urban schools, middle schools, magnet schools, universities, or schools for gifted students. Scant self-efficacy research exists for rural public school students with low socio-economic situations and parents with little education.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

1. Academic Self-Efficacy: students confidence in mastering academics (Chemers, Hu, and Garcia, 2001).

2. Academic Motivation: choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions (Zimmerman, 2000).

3. Mastery Experiences: actual successful student performances (c); and (d) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997).

4. Modeling: student observation of others (Bandura, 1997).

5. Physiological Affects: states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997).

6. Self-Efficacy Sources: four primary sources: (a) enactive mastery experiences (actual performances); (b) observation of others (vicarious experiences); (c) forms of persuasion, both verbal and otherwise; and (d) 'physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura,1997).

7. Self-Efficacy Belief: people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986).

8. Self-Efficacy Theory: personal judgments of one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain designated goals (Bandura, 1977a, 1997).

9. Social Cognitive Theory: personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events, behavioral patterns, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bi-directionally (Bandura, 1999).

10. Vicarious Experiences: forms of persuasion, both verbal and otherwise (Bandura, 1997).

Summary

In summary, this research will address how adolescents develop and experience self-efficacy source beliefs and how those self-efficacy beliefs foster academic motivation. Scarce qualitative research exists on the topic of adolescent student self-efficacy beliefs and academic motivation. By expending Bandura's (1997) theoretical framework for self-efficacy development, personal student interviews will allow first-hand access to the rich, thick descriptions that give insight into teenage students self-efficacy source beliefs. Students self-efficacy beliefs will be examined to determine the link between self-efficacy beliefs and student academic motivation. The data from this

study will assist students by providing insight for educators and assist teachers with program planning to enhance student self-efficacy and academic motivation. Focusing on social cognitive constructs will educate the whole child which can only enhance our educational systems, families, work forces, and communities.

CHAPTER 2

SELF-EFFICACY SOURCES

"Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established" (Bandura, 1994a, p. 2). The self-efficacy component of Bandura's social-cognitive theory has had a profound impact on the study of motivation and achievement in academic settings. Self-efficacy is a domain-specific belief in one's ability to successfully perform a task, which influences engagement in and successful completion of a task (Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman, McKim, & Zumbrunn, 2013; Klassen, 2002; Pajares, 2003). Academic self-efficacy is defined by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) as "students confidence in mastering academic subjects" (p. 56). Students with high self-efficacy beliefs are more willing to participate in difficult tasks, persist longer, and work harder (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000;). Results from a meta-analysis of more than 100 empirical studies conducted over the last 20 years found that of nine commonly researched psychosocial constructs, academic self-efficacy was the strongest single predictor of students academic achievement and performance (Artino, 2012).

Perceived student self-efficacy is informed by four sources: mastery experience, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological states (Bandura, 1994, 1997). Mastery experience, the most prominent source, develops over time as students experience successes and failures. Overall, success resulting from overcoming obstacles produces positive mastery experiences and higher levels of efficaciousness. Social persuasion is developed as students interact with the individuals around them. For instance, verbally encouraging parents and teachers can raise a student's self-efficacy.

Vicarious experiences occur as students view the successes and failures of others. A student's sense of self-efficacy is more positively impacted by others who experience success, if common characteristics are shared such as age, gender, and perceived similar abilities. Lastly, as students are judging capabilities, emotional states are also relied upon. For example, Hibbs (2012) attests that anxiety and stress lowers self-efficacy while excitement and positive mood increases self-efficacy.

Pajares and Schunk (2002) contend that self-efficacy beliefs impact students in a variety of ways. Self-efficacy plays a role in academic self-motivation (Bandura, Martinez-Pons, & Zimmerman 1992). Students with high self-efficacy tend to perceive themselves as capable of regulating learning and are apt to set challenging personal goals. More efficacious students are able to be more resistant to negative affective impacts of failure (Bandura, 1986). Students make choices based upon what they are confident in attempting. For instance, efficacious students will select rigorous coursework having the confidence to complete challenging material. Students with low self-efficacy may even perceive a task as more difficult than it really is and will give up prematurely. Williams and Williams (2010) attest that while students with high self-efficacy feel motivated to approach complicated tasks, students with low self-efficacy develop anxiety and nervousness.

A study conducted by Bjornebekk, Diseth, and Ulriksen (2013) investigated the achievement motives, self-efficacy, achievement goals, and academic achievement at multiple stages of post-secondary education. The primary intention of the researchers was to develop an analysis into the understanding of the factors behind the combined effects of achievement motives, self-efficacy, and achievement goals in

enhancing student performance. The researchers found that naturally the longer students were in the program, the more successful they felt which increased students self-efficacies. However, the students performances were based on the fear of failure. The research findings indicated that the self-efficacy was negatively related to fears of failure in examinations. Science students who feared failing in exams found it difficult to cope with regard to finding confidence in themselves to achieve better results. The study also found that science students who took part in the research were fond of drawing motivation towards improved performance from academic achievement. Hence, the promise of attaining a degree is what drives the motivation of science students towards excellence in achievement (Bjornebekk, Diseth, & Ulriksen, 2013). The research found that in actual sense it is fear that drives motivation of individuals to perform by avoiding failure. Moreover, as individuals graduated from one level to the next the closer they got to academic achievement. It is the promise of academic achievement at the end of the degree course that was found to develop motivation among students to better their performance in academics (Bjornebekk et.al., 2013). Based on the findings of the study by the scholars it was apparent that as individual students graduated from one level to the next the more their goals became focused towards academic achievement.

Bong, Cho, Ahn and Kim (2012), conducted a study to investigate the trend between students in elementary school and those in middle school. Students in elementary school were subdued by those in middle school in terms of their level of confidence in mathematics subjects was higher among middle school students as compared to students at elementary level (Bong, Cho, Ahn, & Kim, 2012). Primarily, the common element between Bjornebekk's et al. (2010) study and Bong's et al. (2012)

study is that both advances that level of experience in students inspires confidence. In this regard, the higher the level of education a student is the higher their level of confidence as self-belief that they can achieve better performance results and vice versa. In respect to the assumption that students at a higher level have more levels of confidence, higher self-efficacy is more among older students in higher levels of learning than among younger students in lower levels of learning.

Gore (2006) suggested that academic self-efficacy beliefs can be used to predict college students academic performances and persistence by examining first-year college students, their ACT scores, and a self-reported self-efficacy survey. The results however may not be a predictor of college success and could be partially dependent on "(a) when self-efficacy beliefs are measured, (b) what aspect of self-efficacy is being measured, and (c) what college outcome one wishes to predict" (Gore, 2006, p. 112). Gore's (2006) results also suggested that students need feedback on their performance (both social and academic) before they can realistically assess their ability to achieve academic goals.

Schunk (1991) emphasizes that students who possess high self-efficacy recognize the importance of academic goals, getting superior grades, surpassing other students, embracing new experiences, and diligently proving intelligence through schoolwork. Against this, there are students with lower self-efficacy who assume that intelligence is an entity that offers no possibility of improvement, who feel unable to succeed, and therefore are less likely to target any kind of goal, mastery or performance. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that individuals form self-efficacy beliefs based on the interpretation of information from the environment, specifically from the four crucial sources (mastery experiences, social experiences, vicarious experiences, and physiological experiences),

and attests that the most powerful source of information is interpreting one's own previous performance, or previous mastery experience (Klassen, 2004; Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007; Usher & Pajares, 2006).

Self-Efficacy Source: Mastery Experiences

Bandura (1977,1994) posits that mastery experiences, or personal performance accomplishments, are the most effective way to create a strong sense of efficacy. With mastery experiences and personal performance accomplishments being the most efficacious source of self-efficacy, little qualitative research exists with secondary students. Most recent research is focused on teachers, middle school students, and college students. Research with mastery experiences as a source is conducted quantitatively in various forms.

Arslan (2012) found that the factor "performance accomplishments" was the strongest predictor of the students self-efficacy beliefs for learning and performance. The data accounted for 36.7% of the change in the students self-efficacy beliefs for learning and performance. Therefore, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion accounted for only 2.1% of the total variance.

Jenson, Petri, Day, Truman, and Duffy (2011) found that STEM classes added to students overall sense of accomplishment and self-confidence as they made their way through college. Representative statements include, "Success has made me more confident," and, "I didn't think I could, but I got through it." The most frequent response to clicker questions about academic confidence (i.e. earning good grades in STEM courses, getting help with class work, and working with faculty on accommodations) was, "I am certain I can do it." Students reported that several factors contributed to

mastery experiences in college, ranging from the role of instructors, family, friends, and classmates to the assistance of the college's academic and disability support offices. Having opportunities to apply learning was also reported as valuable. As one student noted, "When I work with other people and accomplish a goal, that teamwork makes me feel successful." Students also reported that personal attributes such as perseverance, self-confidence, and an unwillingness to fail contributed to these mastery experiences. One student discussed the connection between a course and confidence: "I took speech class and worked on becoming more comfortable talking in front of people and am now more confident." Students recognized self- responsibility in content mastery. Students generally did not consider struggle to be the fault of the instructor and success was attributed to studying and going to class. The participants credited instructors as having the most impact on their ability to experience success in their classes. Several students told of instructors who went out of the way to provide extra support: "We had class two days a week, but we convinced the teacher to host extra study sessions once a week." Another student associated attention from a teacher with an increased ability to be engaged in class: "When I was going through [personal] ... drama in 2007, I was in a math class. The teacher stayed after class and talked to me. [This] helped me not to hesitate to ask questions." Instructors created a valuable culture for learning in a class that students appreciated and that promoted mastery experiences. The post-secondary participants reported, not only did mastery experiences improve students self-efficacy beliefs, but another self-efficacy source, social/persuasion, proved to be beneficial for the students.

Self-Efficacy Source: Social /Persuasion

Klassen and Lynch (2007) conducted interviews with 8th and 9th graders with learning disabilities. Both individual and focus group interviews were conducted. Two quotes particularly captured how students beliefs can affect motivation towards a task. "Well, if you have no confidence, you're not going to be able to do anything at all" (Klassen & Lynch, 2007); and from a 14 year old boy, "Somebody with low confidence levels might just think, 'Oh, I can't do it' and then not do it at all—or just half[hearted]ly" (Klassen & Lynch, 2007). The feedback that teachers give to students and the manner in which it is presented is a very important source of self-efficacy, even if you do not think it is significant at the time. Students commented that when a teacher gives praise or encouragement, "You don't really think it helps at the time, but when it comes down to it, it does" (Klassen & Lynch, 2007). Based on all the literature reviews conducted in the study, Bergen (2013) attests that a major focus of instruction should move towards improving students level of self-efficacy, providing a shift in delivery and instruction. "If we can improve how a student tackles and prepares for things by providing them with a more realistic view of their skills (calibrating), we consequently bolster their belief and actual ability to tackle a problem. This is the best life skill to internalize and generalize" (Bergen, 2013, p. 7). As noted, in Bergen's (2013) research, few qualitative studies have been conducted and few studies focus on the teachers interactions with students and how those early interactions can improve or impede the formation of sufficient self-efficacy.

Jungert and Andersson (2013) examined the role that self- efficacy had in mathematics, native language literacy, and foreign language in students with and without

learning disabilities. The data revealed that children in the non learning-disabled group had significantly higher self-efficacy in mathematics than children in both the MD (mathematics disability) only and MD-RD (mathematics disability and reading disability) groups with $p < .001$ (Jungert & Andersson, 2013). The MD-only children displayed lower self-efficacy in mathematics, completely accounted for by lower mathematic achievement. The lower self-efficacy for children with learning disabilities may primarily be explained by the history of low achievement interpreted as failures and emphasis on negative appraisals (Jungert and Andersson, 2013). Improving a student's ability to accurately depict abilities in a content area will improve performance. According to Jungert and Andersson (2013), specific content programs and meaningful teacher interactions with students may improve self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1994, 1997) also explains that vicarious experiences through observance of social models also influence one's perception of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy Source: Vicarious Experiences

Types of Modeling

Research shows that models can have profound effects on self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement. The vicarious source where students may increase self-efficacy through modeling has the highest volume of research. However, most recent studies involve the self-efficacies of teachers and the effects teachers have on students. Earlier case study research focuses on the different types of modeling for students and the most efficacious modeling types. The Vicarious/ Model sources encompass different types of modeling such as cognitive modeling, confident and pessimistic modeling, coping and peer modeling, self-modeling and group modeling.

Cognitive Modeling

Schunk (1981) provided low-achieving children with either cognitive modeling or didactic instruction. Cognitive modeling and didactic instruction raised self-efficacy equally well. However, modeling led to greater gains in division skill and to more accurate perceptions of capabilities as the children's efficacy judgments corresponded more closely to actual performances. Didactic subjects sometimes overestimated performance. Regardless of treatment condition, self-efficacy related positively to persistence and achievement.

Confident and Pessimistic Modeling

Other achievement research supports the influence of models on self-efficacy. Zimmerman and Ringle (1981) had children observe a model unsuccessfully attempt to solve a puzzle for a long or short time and verbalize statements of confidence or pessimism, after which children attempted the puzzle themselves. Observing a low-persistent but confident model raised self-efficacy. However, children who observed a pessimistic model persist for a long time lowered their self-efficacy. Relich, Debus, and Walker (1986) found that exposing low-achieving children to models explaining mathematical division and providing them with feedback while stressing the importance of ability and effort had a positive effect on self-efficacy.

Perceived similarity to models is an important attribute. Observing similar other students success can raise observers self-efficacy and motivate them to try the task. If they are apt to believe that if others can succeed, they can as well (Schunk, 1987). Similarity may be especially influential when individuals are uncertain about their capabilities, such as when they lack task familiarity and have little information to use in

judging efficacy or when they previously experienced difficulties and have doubts about performing well. Weibell (2011) also suggests that the most important factor determining the strength of influence of an observed success or failure on one's own self-efficacy is the degree of similarity between the observer and the model.

Coping and Peer Mastery Modeling

Similarity may be varied through the use of coping and mastery models. Coping models initially demonstrate the typical behavioral deficiencies and possibly fears of observers but gradually improve their performances and gain self-confidence. These models illustrate how effort and positive thoughts can overcome difficulties. Mastery models demonstrate faultless performance from the outset (Schunk, 1987).

Schunk and Hanson (1985) had low-achieving children observe videotapes of three different models explaining and demonstrating subtraction operations. The following models were used: peer mastery, coping models, or adult teacher models. Peer mastery models solved problems correctly and verbalized statements reflecting high self-efficacy and ability, low task difficulty, and positive attitudes. Peer coping models initially made errors and verbalized negative statements, but then began to verbalize coping statements such as 'I need to pay attention to what I'm doing' and eventually verbalized and performed as well as mastery models. Teacher models displayed mastery behaviors. Other children did not observe models. Following this modeling phase, all children judged self-efficacy for learning to solve problems, received subtraction instruction and practice solving problems over sessions, and a post-test on self-efficacy and skill.

Peer models increased self-efficacy for learning. Post-test self-efficacy results also increased better than the teacher model or no model. The teacher-model children outperformed no-model students. All model conditions displayed higher motivation than did no-model subjects based on the number of problems solved during the instructional sessions. Schunk and Hanson (1985) hypothesized that subjects might perceive themselves more similar to coping models, but the mastery and coping model conditions did not differ. Subjects may have recalled instances of prior successful performance in subtraction and believed that if the models could learn, they could too.

Schunk, Hanson, and Cox (1987) employed a similar methodology but used an arithmetic task (fractions) on which children had experienced few previous successes. These researchers also tested the idea that multiple models are better than a single model because multiple models increase the likelihood that students will view themselves similar to at least one model(Schunk, 1989). The first study showed that benefits of coping models were obtained with a more-difficult task: Observing a coping model enhanced self-efficacy for learning, motivation, and posttest self-efficacy and skill, more than did observing a mastery model. Children who observed single models judged themselves more similar in competence to coping than mastery models. Benefits of multiple models were not due to perceived similarity in competence, which suggests that similarity may be important when students have few cues to assess efficacy.

In a follow-up study, Schunk and Hanson (1989a) further explored variations in perceived similarity by exposing average-achieving children to one of three types of peer models. Mastery models easily grasped arithmetic operations and verbalized positive beliefs such as ‘I know I can do this one.’ Coping-emotive models initially experienced

difficulties and verbalized negative statements such as 'I'm not very good at this,' after which they verbalized coping statements such as 'I'll have to work hard on this one' and displayed coping behaviors. Eventually the students performed as well as mastery models. Coping-alone models performed in identical fashion to coping-emotive models but never verbalized negative beliefs. Coping-emotive models led to the highest self-efficacy for learning. Mastery and coping-alone subjects perceived themselves as equal in competence to the model; coping-emotive subjects viewed themselves as more competent than the model. The belief that one is more talented than an unsuccessful model can raise efficacy and motivation. Following the instructional program the three conditions did not differ in efficacy or skill, which shows that actual task experience outweighed initial vicarious model effects.

Results of a study by Lirgg and Feltz (1991) conflict with the earlier evidence on the benefits of peer models compared with adult models (Schunk & Hanson, 1985). Lirgg and Feltz (1991) exposed 6th grade girls to a skilled teacher, or unskilled teacher, or peer videotaped model demonstrating a ladder-climbing task. Controls demonstrated poorer performance than those exposed to models. Among the latter, children who viewed a skilled model (adult or peer) performed better than those who observed an unskilled model. Skilled-model subjects also judged self-efficacy higher.

Self-Modeling

The highest degree of model-observer similarity is attained through self-modeling, or behavioral-change that occurs from observing one's own behaviors (Dowrick, 1983). Typically one is viewed while performing a task and subsequently views the tape. Self-model tapes allow for review and are especially informative for tasks

one cannot watch while performing, such as a golf swing or tennis serve. When performance errors occur, commentary by a knowledgeable individual during tape review helps to prevent performers from becoming discouraged (Hosford, 1981). The expert can explain how to execute the behavior better the next time. Tapes can convey to observers that they are becoming more skillful and can continue to make progress, which raises self-efficacy.

Schunk and Hanson (1989b) found support for these points during acquisition of arithmetic (fraction) skills. Subjects were children who had been identified by school personnel as working on below-grade-level material. Children received instruction and problem solving practice. Self-modeling subjects were videotaped while successfully solving problems and were shown the tapes, others were videotaped but not shown the tapes until after the study was completed (to control for potential effects of taping), and those in a third condition were not taped (to control for effects of participation). Self-modeling benefits were obtained as these children scored higher on self-efficacy for learning, motivation, and post-test self-efficacy and skill, than did children in the other two conditions. There were no differences between mastery self-model subjects who viewed tapes of their successful problem solving and progress self-model children whose tapes portrayed their gradual improvement as they acquired skills, which supports the point that the perception of progress or of mastery can build efficacy (Schunk, 1989).

In summary, models teach skills and are vicarious sources of self-efficacy information, and perceived similarity to models affects self-efficacy and motivation. The latter effect may be especially pronounced among students who have had difficulty acquiring skills. Also, the belief that one is more competent than a model can raise

efficacy. Benefits of multiple models presumably occur because one can identify with at least one of the models and because many peers accomplishing the task imply that it must not be too hard. Self-model tapes convey progress and allow for close observation of behavior, which is especially important when progress is difficult to gauge or one cannot observe one's actions while performing.

Self-Efficacy Source: Physiological and Affective States

Maddux and Meier (1995) attest that a strong sense of self-efficacy also helps individuals approach challenging situations without experiencing incapacitating anxiety and confusion. Perceived self-efficacy is the belief individuals have about what they can do in different situations with whatever skills they have rather than a measure of skill (Bandura, 1997). People who demonstrate a strong sense of efficacy enhance their accomplishments and personal well being (Bandura, 1994) because of the high assurance in the capabilities and approach difficult tasks as challenges to be conquered and not avoided. Additionally, these individuals recover quickly from adversity and setbacks. On the other hand, individuals who doubt capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, which are viewed as personal threats. Instead of concentrating on performing successfully, inefficacious people have low aspirations, a weak commitment to pursuing goals, dwell on personal deficiencies and obstacles encountered, readily give up when faced with a difficult situation and often experience potentially adverse outcomes. These individuals have a hard time recovering their sense of efficacy after failure or setbacks (Bandura, 1994, 1997). Bandura (1997) believes that self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four main sources of information.

> Enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability; vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with attainment of others; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capabilities, strengths, and vulnerability to dysfunction (p. 79).

Academic self-efficacy refers to students confidence in the ability to carry out academic tasks such as preparing for exams and writing term papers (Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005). Furthermore, as partial mediation analyses reveal, due to the fact that students with high self-efficacy are better able to control natural impulses when studying challenging material or when they are distracted, it is likely for those students to receive higher grades. Being self-motivated, such students perform well academically and probably manage more easily without seeking help neither from peers nor from instructors. When under stress, students with self-efficacy seem to maintain self-discipline, uphold motivation and adjust efforts under taxing circumstances (Schunk, 1991).

Developing Self-Efficacy Source Beliefs

Cultivating students academic self-efficacy is a worthwhile goal for any educator. The major goal of formal education should be to equip students with the intellectual tools, efficacy beliefs, and intrinsic interests needed to educate themselves in a variety of pursuits throughout their lifetime (Bandura, 1997). In many cases, however, educational researchers have inaccurately measured self-efficacy due, in a large part, to their misunderstanding of the construct (Pajares, 1996; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 2006).

Judgments of self-efficacy are task and domain specific; global or inappropriately defined self-efficacy assessments weaken effects (Pajares, 1996). A researcher attempting to predict or explain an academic outcome is more likely to find a strong relationship between self-efficacy and the outcome of interest if the efficacy scale follows two theoretical guidelines: (a) it assesses specific aspects of the task and (b) the specificity corresponds to the characteristics of the task being assessed and the domain of functioning being analyzed.

Although it is clear that task and domain-specific measures of perceived efficacy have greater predictive power than global measures of the construct, Bandura (1997) warned that it is incorrect to believe that self-efficacy is concerned solely with specific behaviors in specific situations, and posits that domain particularity does not necessarily mean behavioral specificity. Bandura (1997) distinguished among three levels of generality of assessment. The most specific level measures self-efficacy for a particular accomplishment under a narrowly defined set of conditions. The next level measures perceived efficacy for a class of performances within the same domain and under similar conditions. Finally, the most general level measures belief in personal efficacy without specifying the activities or the conditions sharing common properties. As discussed before, however, undifferentiated, context less measures of perceived self-efficacy have meager predictive power. Bandura (1997) advises that the optimal level of generality at which self-efficacy is assessed varies depending on what the researcher seeks to predict and the degree of foreknowledge of the situational demands.

Academic self-efficacy has been consistently shown to predict grades and persistence in college (Bandura, 1989; Lane & Lane, 2001; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora,

McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs affect college performance outcomes by increasing students motivation and persistence to master challenging academic tasks and by fostering efficient use of acquired knowledge and skills (Bandura, 1993). Efficacy beliefs are thought to be so important to academics that Bandura (1997) stated, "Perceived self-efficacy is a better predictor of intellectual performance than skills alone" (p.216). Bandura's (1963) social cognitive theory has linked students self-efficacy and motivation in academic settings. Moreover, there is extensive research literature showing that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic performance (Pajares, 1995) and emotional adaptation, such as adjusting to a new academic environment, is aided when a person has a strong sense of self-efficacy about their abilities and competence (Bandura, 1986). Finally, self-beliefs can be developed through experiencing physiological and emotional states, such as exhilaration, anxiety, or other mood states (Bandura, 1977; Usher & Pajares, 2007). Bandura's (1994) research shows that people who doubt their capabilities more easily fall victim to stress and depression. Expectation alone will not produce desired performance if the component capabilities are lacking. Given appropriate skills and adequate incentives, however, efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and of how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations (Bandura, 1977). Engagement is viewed in the literature as very important for enhanced learning outcomes of all students (Schlechty, 2001; Woolfolk & Margetts, 2007). Motivation is seen as a pre-requisite of engagement and a necessary element for student learning.

Self-Efficacy and Academic Motivation

Motivation research has identified the self-efficacy construct of Bandura's social cognitive theory as a fundamental component of academic motivation. A socio-cognitive perspective assumes that individuals are self-regulating, and possess self-beliefs that influence their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 2003). Bilge, Cetin, and Dost (2014) examined high school students levels of burnout and school engagement with respect to academic success, study habits, and self-efficacy beliefs. The results suggested that students with low self-efficacy beliefs had higher burnout levels. In addition, students with inadequate study skills and those with low self-efficacy beliefs were at higher risk of losing their beliefs. Another finding was that students with high academic success also had high self-efficacy. Unexpectedly, students with inadequate study skills and low self-efficacy beliefs were found to have high self-efficacy. Students with adequate study skills and high self- efficacy beliefs also had high school engagement levels. While providing viable information, this study was quantitative and relational, examining relationships between the variables.

Sinan and Jongur (2016) examined the relationship between mathematics performance and academic self-efficacy and found that there was a strong positive correlation between academic self-efficacy of students in mathematics and the performance of students in mathematics among secondary school students. Another study conducted by Dogan (2015) aimed to explore the relations among student engagement, academic performance, self-efficacy, and academic motivation in middle and high school students and to reveal whether student engagement, self-efficacy, and academic motivation predict academic performance. Findings included a relationship between the

students academic performances and student engagement sub-dimensions (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral), academic self-efficacy, and academic motivation, as well as how these variables predict academic performance. Dogan (2015) found that academic self-efficacy and academic motivation are positively changing variables, whereas the behavioral dimensions of student engagement and academic performance are negatively changing variables. Moreover, Doing's (2015) research findings suggest that academic motivation meaningfully predicts academic performance and these two have a positive and meaningful relationship.

Consistently, studies attribute low self-efficacy beliefs to lower school engagement levels as well as higher self-efficacy beliefs to high motivational levels. However, little qualitative research provides rich, thick description for development of low self-efficacy or high self-efficacy beliefs in adolescent students.

In another quantitative study conducted by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001), academic self-efficacy was shown to be a major factor in academic performance. Participants were first year college students who were given surveys near the end of the first quarter and at the end of the last quarter of the year. Chemers et al.(2001) used the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale to measure self-efficacy. Researchers found that students with high academic self-efficacy also had higher grade point averages (GPAs). In addition, students with higher high school GPAs demonstrated higher academic self-efficacy, academic expectations, and academic performance in college compared to students with lower high school GPAs (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001).

Vuong, Brown-Welty, and Tracz (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effects that self-efficacy had on academic performance improvement of first-generation

college sophomore students. The researcher's definition of first-generation sophomore college students refers to those students who were first ever to attain college education in their families heritage. Students who had a history of generations of parents who had attended college showed better results in their performance as opposed to those who were first-generation college students. Hence, the more the generations a student came after, the higher the chances that such a student would outperform a first-generation student who joined the same college (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010).

Gadbois (2011) relates the findings that Vuong et al. (2010) developed in regards to poor performance of first-time or first-generation sophomore college students to academic self-handicapping or ASH. Academic self-handicapping (ASH) is taken to mean the opposite of academic self-efficacy that causes disbelief in oneself rather that belief in oneself that is an attribute of self-efficacy. In essence, the lack of self-belief among first-generation college sophomores causes them to belittle their skills and capabilities in regards to academic achievement. Therefore, poor performance is directly attributable to a lack of belief of achieving good results in academic performances (Gadbois & Sturgeon, 2011).

Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls, and Williams (2012) conducted a study on 165 undergraduate students investigating the relationships among academic self-efficacy and students class participation, examination performance, and GPA. Galyon et al. (2012) found a stronger relationship between academic self-efficacy and exam performance than with class participation. However, academic self-efficacy levels were relatively the same among students with high, medium, and low GPAs (Galyon et al., 2012). Additionally, Robbins, Lauver, Le, Davis, Langley, and Carlstrom (2004) did a meta-analysis on over

109 studies on psychosocial and study skill factors that affect GPA. Robbins et al. (2004) tested multiple academic factors including academic self- efficacy. They found academic self-efficacy to be the most influential factor on GPA (Robbins, Lauver, Le, Davis, Langley, & Carlstrom, 2004).

Ramos-Sanchez and Nichols (2007) conducted a study on 192 freshman students to examine differences in academic self-efficacy levels between first generation (i.e., students without a college graduate parent) and non-first generation college students (i.e., students who have a college graduate parent), and the possible impact on academic performance (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). They found that non-first generation college students had higher levels of academic self-efficacy and outperformed first generation college students academically. This indicates that some students may enter college better prepared and, as a result, have higher levels of self-efficacy, allowing them to perform better than their peers (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007).

Aguayo, Herman, Ojeda, and Flores (2011) found similar results between 408 Mexican American immigrant (i.e., born in Mexico) and non-immigrant (i.e., born in the United States) students. They found that self-efficacy was strongly correlated with academic performance for non-immigrant students. However, there was no significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance for immigrant students (Aguayo et al., 2011). Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, and Larivée (1991) found that high school students with high self-efficacy for problem solving demonstrated greater performance monitoring and persistence than did students with lower self-efficacy. Students who harbor negative beliefs about themselves limit the potential for achievement. They feel they are unable to perform as well on a task or not good enough

to perform above expectations hence mediocrity is maintained (Rice & Dolgin, 2008). Students are said to use strategies in school to portray themselves as unable to do school work. According to Rice and Dolgin (2008) these strategies include; procrastinating, deliberately not trying, allowing others to keep them from studying, and using other self-defeating strategies, students can thus convey that circumstances, rather than lack of ability, as the reasons for poor and mediocre performance.

Long, Monoi, Harper, Otterbein, and Murphy (2007) conducted a study with a primarily poor, urban, African American, adolescent sample. The data revealed the following findings. First, students expressed moderate levels of all three motivational variables (i.e., self-efficacy, domain interest, and personal goal orientations) in both 8th and 9th grades, but grades were significantly lower in high school. Second, levels of efficacy and learning goals strongly predicted domain interest in both grades. Third, self-efficacy consistently contributed to achievement at either grade level. Fourth, although interest's contribution to achievement could have been masked by self-efficacy and goal orientation in middle school, interest emerged as a significant but negative contributor to achievement in high school. Fifth, the negative effect of work-avoidant goals on achievement became prominent in high school. Sixth, gender's affect on motivation and achievement varied between grades.

Li (2012) attests that research proves that attitude, self-efficacy, effort and academic achievement are positively correlated with one other. However, even though they are related to one another, it is found that attitude and self-efficacy can significantly predict effort. However, when attitude, self-efficacy and effort are considered as independent variables while academic achievement is considered as the dependent

variable, it is discovered that effort cannot predict academic achievement. Therefore, effort can only be regarded as an indirect factor that can influence both attitude and self-efficacy, but not necessarily academic achievement.

Stennis (2016) measured the self-efficacy of different ethnic groups at Southern Adventist University and findings concluded that there was no difference in self-efficacy and academic performance among ethnic groups. Additionally, the results showed that neither academic discipline nor age affects self-efficacy, higher GPA is associated with higher self-efficacy and that gender plays a role in self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy and Gender

Decades ago, Erikson (1968) posited that girls and boys interpret accumulated experiences differently. Girls, Erikson argued, tend to define their developing identity in terms of satisfaction in relationships. Others observed that men typically look to accomplishments and successes when defining and developing a voice, whereas women tend to describe and develop a voice in terms of connections to others or a relational web (Gilligan, 1982). The self-efficacy beliefs of girls may be strongly informed by the messages received from teachers, peers, family, and significant others. These messages may be more meaningful to girls than boys. Boy are often more preoccupied with personal accomplishments than with relational persona. Chiungiung (2011) conducted a computerized search of the ERIC and ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Databases. The data showed a meta-analysis of 187 studies containing 247 independent studies on gender differences in academic self-efficacy. The data indicated an overall effect size of 0.08, with a small difference favoring males. Females displayed higher language arts self-efficacy than males. However, males exhibited higher mathematics, computer, and social

sciences self-efficacy than females. Gender differences in academic self-efficacy also varied with age. The largest effect size occurred for respondents aged over 23 years old. For mathematics self-efficacy, the significant gender differences emerged in late adolescence. The finding that males had higher mathematics self-efficacy than females after early adolescence may be explained by age trends in the magnitude of gender difference in mathematics achievement. The study revealed that practical implication of programs designed to improve the academic self-efficacy of girls is needed, especially for female adults.

Arslan (2013) conducted a quantitative, correlational study with 984 secondary school students in Zonguldak, Turkey on self-efficacy sources and gender. The study investigated the relationship between students opinions about the sources of self-efficacy beliefs, gender, academic achievement, grade level, socioeconomic status (SES), and learning style. Fifty-one percent of the students were composed of females and 48.9% of males. Various studies were conducted in order to determine whether or not students means as to sources of their self-efficacy beliefs change depending on their gender. The results of the study indicated significant relationships between students opinions about sources of self-efficacy related learning and performance and gender, academic achievement, SES, grade level, and learning style. Later, sources of self-efficacy were designated as a predictor of self-efficacy belief related learning and performance. At the end of study, it was found that students opinions about the sources of self-efficacy belief changed depending on gender. Female students stated more often than male students that mastery experience, social persuasion, and physiological state increased self-efficacy beliefs related to learning and performance. Female students stated more often than male

students that social persuasion increased self-efficacy beliefs related to learning and performance. While mastery experience and vicarious experience predicted the self-efficacy related learning and performance significantly for both male and female students; social persuasion was a predictor for only male students. Physiological state was not a predictor for either male or female students. The findings revealed that mastery experiences and vicarious experiences are appropriate in increasing the self-efficacy beliefs of both male and female students; social persuasion is appropriate for male students; and that physiological state is not appropriate for female students or male students.

Burgel, Raelin, Reisberl, Baile, and Whitman (2010) conducted a study on the self-efficacy in female and male undergraduate engineering students at four different institutions. With the exception of academic self-efficacy, which is significantly higher among males, the results revealed significant differences by gender. Women were found to have higher career self-efficacy and benefit far more from mentorship. Women also exceeded the scores of male counterparts in five support dimensions: more support from professional clubs and associations, more involved in campus life, take more advantage of living and learning communities, and receive more support from friends.

Self-Efficacy and Grade Levels.

Limited research exists with just pre-school and kindergarten age students and self-efficacy sources. Most research is conducted on grade levels in middle school years to the secondary grade levels. A recent longitudinal study conducted in the Netherlands by Reed, Kirshner, and Jolles (2015) focused on students from 6th grade and 9th grade. The study investigated the extent to which self-beliefs mediate the relation between math

performance at the end of 6th grade and the end 9th grade in a highly differentiated early tracking educational system. While 6th grade students compare themselves to classmates of all ability levels, the highly differentiated tracking structure of Dutch secondary education means that 9th grade students, who are established in ability-homogeneous tracks, compare themselves to classmates in the same track as themselves. Findings suggested that self-efficacy in 6th grade and math self-concept in 9th grade both uniquely mediated the relation between math performance in 6th grade and in 9th grade, but self-efficacy in 9th grade only added to the mediation effects in the lowest track. Math self-concept was the most influential mediator, explaining nearly a quarter of the total effect of math performance in 6th grade on math performance in 9th grade. Causality was not assumed and the findings suggested that higher math performance at the end of primary school may positively influence math self-concept, which, in turn, may be conducive to math performance in the lower secondary grades. Unexpectedly, higher self-efficacy in 6th grade was negatively related to 9th grade math performance in the highest track and for girls. When students are confident about academic abilities at the end of primary school, this may lead to lower math performance at the end of lower secondary school.

Self-Efficacy and Parental Involvement

When children are very young, their parents self-efficacies are important (Jones & Prinz, 2005). Children of parents who have high parental self-efficacies perceive their parents as more responsive to their needs (Gondoli & Silverberg, 1997). Preliminary evidence seems to suggest that parental self-efficacy beliefs arise, at least in part, from childhood experiences (Grusec, Hastings, & Mammone, 1994). Holloway, Yamamoto, Suziki, & Mindnich (2008) conducted a longitudinal study in Japan on the influence of

parental involvement in early education. The correlation analysis revealed that mothers who reported being more involved in monitoring homework and communicating with the teacher also made a larger financial investment in their children's supplementary lessons. Mothers who were more involved in monitoring and communicating were more likely to report engaging in cognitive stimulation. Financial investment in supplementary lessons was not associated with engagement in cognitively stimulating activities, but they also found that mothers with higher aspirations for children expressed greater parenting self-efficacy. Mothers' perceptions of the school were not related to self-efficacy or aspirations.

Research conducted on college going parent and grandparent influence shows a correlation among students positive self-efficacies and those students whose parents have achieved a college degree. Primarily, the research conducted by Vuong, Welty, & Tracz, (2010) provides crucial evidence to the fact that self-efficacy is more among students who have a parent that has achieved a college degree. Therefore, students who are subsequent generations to parents and grandparents who have had the privilege of acquiring college education find it easier to possess a higher self-efficacy as compared to first generation sophomore college students.

Gabois (2011) attests that self-inflicted barriers to achieving better academic performance among first-generation students is directly correlated to their lack of self-belief (efficacy) that they can achieve good academic results. Joseph and Baker (2014) reported parental influence as a source of positive academic efficacy. Participants felt the need to live up to high parental expectations. They also reported that parental encouragement impacted their beliefs in their academic abilities. If parent encouragement

was constant, then that was a motivator for students to perform even harder and it provided the confidence for them to be successful. Coleman and Karraker (1997) suggest that "mothers and fathers need to learn to have faith in their own abilities" (p. 47). Once parents internalize a sense of competency in the role, satisfaction and pleasure in parenting become attainable even under marginal ecological conditions (Coleman & Karraker, 1997). Moreover, parents should develop a high-self efficacy for parenting in order to increase child self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy and Peer Relationships

Steinberg, Brown, and Dornbusch (1996) conducted a 10-year project that studied several thousand adolescents from when they entered high school until their senior year. These researchers found developmental patterns in the influence of peer pressure on academic motivation and performance. "Peer pressure tends to rise during childhood and peaks around Grade 8 or 9 but declines somewhat through high school. A key period is between ages 12 and 16, a time during which parents involvement in their childrens activities often declines thereby enhancing the strength of peer influence" (Schunk and Meese, 2005, p. 86). Joseph and Baker (2014) investigated factors that influenced the academic self-efficacy of Caribbean overseas students attending universities in the United States. One theme that emerged from their perceptions of variables impacting their academic self-efficacy. A couple of participants reported that the academic and social support of fellow Caribbean students who were in the U.S. prior to their arrival and those who arrived around the same time helped them adjust to the new academic environment. The support and adjustment, they reported positively impacted their belief that they could be academically successful. Adolescents who associate with peer groups that are not

academically motivated tend to experience a decline in academic self-efficacy (Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004). Adolescents who watch their peers succeed, however, experience a rise in academic self-efficacy (Schunk & Miller, 2002). One study found that greater social and academic self-efficacy measured in people ages 14 to 18 predicted greater life satisfaction five years later (Vecchio, Gerbino, Pastorelli, Del Bove, & Caprara, 2007).

Self-Efficacy and Teacher/ Student Relationships

Teacher-student relationships are important in transition years; the years when students transition from elementary to middle school or middle to high school (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). Studies of math competence in students transitioning from elementary to middle school have found that students who move from having positive relationships with teachers at the end of elementary school to less positive relationships with teachers in middle school significantly decreased in math skills (Midgley et al., 1989). For students who are considered at high risk for dropping out of high school, math achievement is significantly impacted by the perception of having a caring teacher (Midgley et al., 1989). Furthermore, students who went from low teacher closeness to high teacher closeness significantly increased in math skills over the transition year, from elementary to middle school (Midgley et al., 1989). These studies show that relationships with teachers in the later years of schooling can still significantly impact the academic achievement trajectories of students (Midgley et al., 1989).

Mojavezi and Tami (2012) attest that teacher self-efficacy also plays a crucial role on student motivation. A study investigated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and students motivation and achievement. The analyses revealed that there is a

reasonably positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and students motivation. Thus, it can be argued that teacher self-efficacy positively influence students motivation.

Sophomore Students

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of a representative panel of 15,362 sophomore students. From 1972-2009, student dropout choices increased with students developing more reasons for dropping out of school. Based on the results, students who drop out of school experience push, pull, or falling out factors that affect student dropout decisions (Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1994). The key differences between push, pull, and falling out factors has to do with agency. With push factors, the school is the agent whereby a student is removed from school as a result of a consequence. With pull factors, the student is the agent, such that attractions or distractions lure them out of school. Finally, with falling out factors, neither the student nor school is the agent. Instead, circumstances exist that neither the school nor the student can remediate, and as a result, the connection students have with school gradually diminishes. The causes for the increase reflected more areas of students educational experience. In addition, a special emphasis on new factors with No Child Left Behind that reflected higher expectations over students and of schools, such as *Could not keep up with schoolwork, Thought could not complete course requirements*, and *Thought would fail competency test*. To this end, students reported that dropout resulted mainly because of school-related reasons. Secondly, additional factors included *Missed too many school days* and *Was getting poor grades/failing school* ranked highest among all dropout causes and is consistent with the ABCs (Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance). The survey results exhibited low self-efficacy push factors that

schools can address early in students high school careers. In the United States, the drop out age limit is different from state to state. Out of 51 states, 30 states currently allow students to legally drop out of school at ages 16 or 17. Therefore, addressing push, pull, or falling out factors with sophomore students who are not of age to make decisions about dropping out school would decrease the nations' drop out rate. High School sophomore students who are contemplating dropping out of school still have time to gain credits if failing classes are a push factor. Additionally, typical ages of sophomore students are fourteen to fifteen. Many students at this age are unable to acquire drivers' licenses or are unable to work before the age of sixteen. These factors are also considered to affect academic performance at school. In many schools, freshmen students typically have the support of a small learning community such as a freshmen academy where students are able to re-do low grades, have freshmen only classes, often have a separate building for classes, and are provided with more teacher support. As the students progress to sophomore status and are considered as upper classman, that extra support diminishes leaving many students failing.

Summary

Bandura's social-cognitive theory has had a profound impact on the study of motivation and achievement in academic settings. Perceived student self-efficacy is informed by four sources: mastery experience, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and physiological states (Bandura, 1994, 1997). Few research studies have investigated how students develop self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares & Usher, 2007), and research on the developmental path of self-efficacy beliefs is needed (Klassen, 2002; Usher & Pajares, 2006). Based on the review of the literature, the gap in the knowledge of the development

of high school students self-efficacy beliefs is needed and has yet to be studied. The research historically and most recently, focuses on quantitative, self-rating surveys of students current self-efficacy beliefs, or teachers self-efficacy beliefs and the effects on students. Again, as Pajares (1996) pointed out judgments of self-efficacy are task and domain specific, global or inappropriately defined self-efficacy assessments weaken effects. Scant research is provided on the development and sources of students self-efficacy beliefs. A qualitative research design using first-hand teenage experiences will provide educators with an in-depth understanding of how self-efficacy source beliefs develop in students academic careers. This research aims to add to the literature on self-efficacy source development and secondary students by exhausting all literature sources, conducting one on one interviews with students, teachers, an administrator, and a guidance counselor. With an exhaustive literature review and first, hand descriptive data from students and triangulation with the adult participants, this research will assist educators in focusing on the social cognitive well-being of students in order to enhance learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

Research should focus on the wholeness of experience and a search for essences of experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenological research, the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. The purpose of the phenomenological study was to describe how rural 10th grade students develop and utilize self-efficacy source experiences. The development of students personal self-efficacy source experiences was generally defined in the following categorical framework: mastery sources (actual performance), vicarious sources (modeling), persuasion sources (verbal and otherwise), and physiological and affective sources at the time of the experiences (student capabilities and strengths) (Bandura, 1997). The researcher sought to understand the self-efficacy source experiences of students, studying a small number of twenty-subject subjects, both students and adults, through extensive interviews in order to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

Research questions should "explain specifically what your study will attempt to learn or understand" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 67). The research questions related to the researcher's goals explored how study participants developed personal perceived self-efficacy source beliefs, how students utilized those developed beliefs, and how self-efficacy beliefs affected academic motivation.

Central Question

What early self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) do 10th grade students develop and experience to foster academic motivation?

Sub-questions

1) How do 10th grade students describe early academic self-efficacy source (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) experiences?
2) How do 10th grade students develop and define academic self-efficacy beliefs?
3) How do self-efficacy sources enhance or diminish academic self-efficacy and academic motivation?

Why a Qualitative Design?

A qualitative methodology was employed to conduct research on students in 10th grade at a rural high school in northeastern Tennessee. Based on the gap that was discovered through review of the literature, the problem statement mandated a qualitative study as the best approach for the research. Qualitative research should be conducted in order to fulfill the gaps of non-cognitive skills that explain high school students willingness to perform and be successful. Many quantitative studies using self-efficacy quantitative rating scales for middle school students, teachers, and college students are reported. However, little qualitative research exists on why and how high school students develop self-efficacy source beliefs and how those beliefs foster academic motivation. Using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy source framework, the study provided rich, thick descriptions of 10th grade rural students first-hand self-efficacy source experiences from early academic years to present and how those experiences shaped self-efficacy source

beliefs and motivation (Creswell, 2012). Use of a qualitative research design addressed the gap in the literature and the problem statement in several ways. First, the research design focused on the quality of students voices and perceptions rather than quantitative data such as students grades, survey data, or GPAs. Secondly, the goal of the researcher was to investigate how students self-efficacy beliefs developed. Thirdly, the research design allowed flexibility through the use of the semi-structured interview questions that permitted follow-up questions if study participants made comments that needed further probing to gain insight into realities and meanings. Further, the researcher was the primary instrument for the interviews and data gathering. Lastly, the findings included a rich description to assist in understanding the students educational journeys, their perceptions of self-efficacy, and the perceptions of academic motivation. Teachers, an administrator, and a guidance counselor participated in the interview process in order gain triangulation and to enhance the validity of the study. By employing a qualitative research design as the methodology, the researcher was able to address the problem statement created from the review of the literature.

Tradition Overview

A qualitative phenomenological study collected data from interviews to highlight first-hand experiences of the self-efficacy phenomenon using Bandura's (1997) theory framework of self-efficacy source development. The phenomenological tradition of interviewing the students, teachers, an administrator, and guidance counselor focused on the lived experiences and how those experiences developed specific and common self-efficacy source beliefs (Patton, 1990). Those experiences were transcribed and described to combine how the participants developed, experienced, and perceived self-efficacy

source beliefs. “To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, p. 104, 2002).

Phenomenology is considered a process as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In this process the researcher sets aside personal accounts and experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2009). The researcher explored the individual lived experiences of the students and the expertise of the teachers, administrator, and a guidance counselor through semi-structured interviews.

Role of the Researcher

Moustakas (1994) explains that the researcher examines the phenomenon by attaining an attitudinal shift known as the phenomenological attitude called epoche, where the research will be investigating with a fresh and open viewpoint without prejudgment. The qualitative research took place in the students natural school setting where data collection focused on the meaning of participants and described a process that is expressive and persuasive in language (Creswell, 1997). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as a multi-method focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter. The researcher bracketed personal experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy,1993). The students, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor interviews described routine and problematic moments and personal meanings of self-efficacy sources in each individual’s life.

Gatekeepers and participants interpret what they are asked to do in their own social context (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003). Researchers must learn the social structure of a research site to successfully negotiate entry (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003; Berg, 2004). Negotiating access is based on building relationships with gatekeepers, which has the potential to be an unpredictable, uncontrollable process (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003).

Researchers typically negotiate access with influential gatekeepers at multiple entry points to the research site (Patton, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The gatekeepers range from the Director of Schools and the building level administrators. A formal letter was written to obtain permission from the principal and permission was accessed and welcomed. Informal gatekeepers within the organization often protect research settings and participants, particularly vulnerable individuals such as the students and the classroom. These informal gatekeepers are the teachers, office personnel, assistant principals, and the librarian (Berg, 2004). The research took place in the library, and the librarian assisted in the logistics of the interviews. Formal gatekeepers in positions of power, such as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research at East Tennessee University have the authority to grant official permission and sponsor research for specific entry points (Berg, 2004).

Ethics

The researcher must anticipate any ethical issues that may arise during the qualitative research process and prepare for those issues accordingly (Creswell, 2009). Ethics should be considered both for the data collection process and procedures while equally ensuring ethical practices in the writing and reporting phases of the research

(Creswell, 2012). Parental and participant consent was obtained for all the sophomores to voluntarily participate in the pre-screening instrument (Appendix A). After students were chosen based on the pre-screening instrument results, a new parental consent form was obtained to gain permission for students to participate in the interview process. Before each interview with students, teachers, the administrator, and the guidance counselor, assent forms were collected from each participant and the purpose of the study was explained before each interview began. Participants were be informed that at any time during the interview, the participant could choose to cease the interview process. Following the completion of the interview process, transcriptions of the student, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor interviews were emailed to the participants upon request.

A pre-screening survey instrument was administered to 67 voluntary 10th grade students. The pre-screening instrument was administered to ensure that an equal number of participants that experience a wide-range of self-efficacy source beliefs were included in the interview process so that all perspectives were represented. The pre-screening instrument was administered two days in advance of the interview process to allow for computing. Based on the pre-screening instrument score results, approximately eighteen students were asked to voluntarily participate in the interview process. Interviews were conducted in the library with the librarian's consent. Teachers, the administration, and the guidance counselor chose the most convenient and conducive times to conduct the student and teacher interviews based on the participants schedules.

Pre-Screening Instrument

A self-efficacy pre-screening instrument (Appendix A) containing twenty-four questions was administered to 67 sophomore students. Sixty-seven students volunteered to participate out of 154 students. All 67 students brought parental consent forms signed and also signed the student assent forms. The pre-screening instrument was composed of three survey sections with 8 questions in each section. The three sections included: social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy. Using an Excel program, all section averages were averaged together to comprise individual overall student scores to be used for ranking. The pre-screening survey instrument self-efficacy average score data results were filtered and numerically organized by lowest perceived self-efficacy belief average scores to highest perceived self-efficacy belief average scores. Scores were ranged from lowest to highest and every third student was chosen until 18 students were accumulated. Six students were chosen from the high self-efficacy belief average score section, six students were chosen from the average self-efficacy belief score section, and six students were chosen from the low self-efficacy belief score section. Students were notified that they had been randomly chosen and invited to voluntarily participate in the interview process.

Design of the Semi-Structured Interview Procedure

The best approach for this study was the semi-structured procedure that employed an interview protocol guide. This section presents discussion of the key components of the interview guide. The section also presents a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the interview protocol guide. Additionally, the parts of the interview protocol are outlined. There are several components of the semi-structured

procedure. One key component of the semi-structured procedure is the interview protocol guide. The purposes of the interview protocol guide were to facilitate the interviews, keep the research on track, and gather the data needed to answer research questions. Another key component of the interview is the actual interview questions. As Merriam (2009) noted, "the key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions; asking good questions takes practice" (p. 95). The interview questions were exploratory and inductive in nature. The types of questions avoided in the interview protocol were multiple questions in one question, leading questions, and yes-or-no questions (Merriam, 2009). The interview questions were linked to specific research questions to develop a research crosswalk between the interview questions and the research questions. Advantages of using emergent interview techniques or a semi-structured interview provided the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to collect additional data on the emerging topic. The researcher handled probes as a follow up to the main exploratory research questions by linking the two sets of questions during the interview. Another advantage was that probing assisted in asking the study participants to provide more details, clarification, or examples with regard to their answers (Merriam, 2009). A disadvantage of using an interview guide to facilitate interviews is that the researcher may become fixated on following the guide and may overlook potentially important information that might be discovered through the interview. Consequently, the researcher might not listen to key points shared by an interviewee during the interview. These key points or observations could be vital in understanding the students experiences explored through the study or in answering the research questions.

Interview Protocol

The motives and intentions underlying the study were to learn about the development of students self-efficacy belief source development. The purpose of the inquiry was to gather meaningful data and information from the study participants to answer the research questions. The methods of collecting and storing information during the interview included note taking and the use of audio equipment. The interview materials and content collected through audio-tapes and notes are kept in a secure location. The respondents' information was protected through the use of pseudonyms, thereby meeting the requirement for research involving human subjects. The student interviews were conducted during the school day and each interview was scheduled for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. All 18 chosen students voluntarily participated and received a $10 Wal-Mart gift card for participation. Adult interviews were also conducted during the school day and took place either in teachers classrooms or an office. Adult participants were rewarded with a $25 gift card from Wal-Mart.

Participant Information

There were 22 total participants in the interview process. Eighteen of the interviews were students, and five of the interviews were adult participants. Nine student girls and seven student boys participated. All students were either age 15 or 16. Three of the adult participants were male and two were females.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview protocols (Appendices B, C, D, and E) were utilized during the interviews to provide prompts for the questions and serve as a means for recording notes (Creswell, 2012). Audiotaping was utilized during the interview process with the

students, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor. Permissions were obtained from the interviewees to record the interview. For transcription purposes, the audiotaping provided a more detailed account of the interview.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In non-standardized semi-structured interviews, the interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David & Sutton, 2004). The researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and an interview protocol with specific questions to be covered. The semi-structured interview questions allowed the study participants to share their perceptions and interpretations on how they make meaning of their world. The researcher utilized semi-structured interview questions based upon issues generated through the review of the literature. The students responded to semi-structured interview questions regarding issues such as performance and academic self-efficacy. The semi-structured interview questions allowed the researcher to probe further if the responses needed to be clarified or if the responses were unique. The order of the questions changed based on the direction of the interview. Even though an interview protocol was used, additional questions were asked. Corbetta (2003) suggests that some aspects of the semi-structured interviews are left to the interviewer's discretion such as the order of the various topics and the wording of the questions. The interviewer is free to conduct the conversation and to ask the questions appropriately to ensure clarification if the answer is not clear. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which were not initially considered (Gray, 2004). The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that the researcher can prompt and probe deeper into the given situation. In addition, the

researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are unclear about the questions.

IRB Process

The Institutional Review Board process for East Tennessee State University will consisted of training and submitting new research and documents to obtain permission for human studies. The guidelines for the four main procedures for submissions were adhered and followed:

> (1) Obtaining voluntary informed consent from participants through a written statement, (2) Assessing the harms, risks, and benefits of the research, and minimizing any threat of harm (physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, and dignitary harm) to the participants, (3) Selecting participants equitably, so that no groups of people are unfairly included or excluded from the research, (4) Assuring confidentiality about participants identities using a pseudonym for each interview participant, including those appearing in audiotapes (National Research Council, 2003, pp. 23–28).

Subjectivity

As an educator and a student; since 1996, having worked with students of all levels, elementary, middle, and high school students, brings closeness to this research project. Being currently employed as a principal of a rural high school and have worked at the location for five years in administration, the closeness to the study topic has the potential of creating research bias that is both positive and negative. The bias can be positive in that familiarity with the subject provides insight into some issues related to the research project. Over the 19 years, having witnessed many students with both low

efficacy beliefs and high efficacy beliefs at all grade levels, leaves feelings of helplessness when watching students who are hopeless because of the lack of faith in themselves. As a kindergarten and 1st grade student, personally struggling academically with reading and feeling embarrassed, without ever giving up the will to learn and keep trying, brings questions of why some students have the tenacity to keep trying while others give up? The personal bias can be negative because of closeness to the subject can lead to strong, but not necessarily accurate, views regarding some of the issues. The key task as a researcher is to maintain subjectivity, uphold the validity and integrity of the study, and to ensure that personal experiences do not influence the data or results.

School Information

The school, located in northeastern Tennessee, is a public, rural school founded in 1926 by a World War I hero. The school was later transferred to the state of Tennessee in 1937. It is the only school in the United States that is fully financed and operated by the state and government. According to the 2015 United States Census Bureau, the town where the school is located has a population of 1,940. The entire school system has a free and reduced lunch rate of seventy-six percent and is a Title I school with a total population of 599 students with a free and reduced lunch rate of sixty-eight percent.

The graduation rate is 74.8%, which is lower than the state average of 87.8%. The school exceeds the state of Tennessee's proficient and advanced achievement (P/A) in all areas with the exception of Chemistry. The data are as follows: State of TN - Algebra I P/A – 65.6 %: School Site – 79.5%; State of TN - Algebra II P/A – 51.2%: School Site– 69.8%; State of TN – Biology P/A - 65.2%: School Site– 70.4%; State of TN – English I P/A – 71.8%: School Site– 66.7%; State of TN (sophomore class) – English II – 64.8%:

School Site – 66.7%; State of TN – English III – 41.7%: School Site – 52.5%; State of TN – Chemistry – 45.2%: School Site – 25.1% (Tennessee, 2014). Even though six out of seven achievement measures at the school site exceed the state of Tennessee, the graduation rate is still lower than the state average.

Population and Sample

The sophomore class has 154 students with 84 males and 70 females. The sophomore class has less than one percent of an African American population and no Hispanic students. One hundred fifty-two of the students are white and 15% of the students in the sophomore class are in special education and have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The sophomore students at voluntarily participatee in a self-efficacy pre-screening instrument. From this sampling frame, a list of approximately 18 students, identified by using a number, were chosen to participate in the interview process (Creswell, 2012). Five adults voluntarily participated in the study: three teachers, an administrator, and a guidance counselor.

Sampling Strategy

A purposeful sampling strategy, based on the students pre-screening instrument (Appendix A) results, was utilized to represent all levels of self-efficacy beliefs in students. Powerful purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on a deep understanding that leads to information rich cases for in-depth study (Creswell, 2002). All voluntary students that participated in the pre-screening instrument were issued a self-sealing envelope to seal the screener in after they had finished. This ensured that no one else viewed the screener results besides the primary researcher and the student. Scoring of the pre-screening instrument took place using a Likert Scale of 1-5 for each question

of each section of the screener. The screener was devised of three sections with 8 questions in each section. Based on the scores, an equal number of students who exhibited low to low-average self-efficacy, average, and high to high-average self-efficacy beliefs were chosen to participate in the interview processes. Parental consent was obtained for all voluntary students to participate in the interview process.

Sample

Based on the academic self-efficacy pre-screening survey instrument, eighteen sophomore students were chosen to participate in the interview process. The students were chosen based on the pre-screening instrument Likert scale scores ranging from *not very well* to *very well*. Scores on each item range from one to five with the lowest score of a one and a highest score of a five. Three different groups of five students each were chosen. The method for choosing the participants is as follows: five students were chosen who scored an average score range of 1.00-5.99; five students were chosen with an average score range of 6.00-12.99; five students were chosen whose average score range was 13.00-18.00. Scores were rounded up to the nearest tenth. The samples are representative of each leveled group.

Data Collection Procedures

Research questions provide the scaffolding for the investigation and the cornerstone for the analysis of the data, researchers should form interview questions on the basis of what truly needs to be known (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). The central question and research questions guide the interview questions for each interview protocols (Appendices B, C, D, and E). All pre-screening instrument data was entered into an Excel program and averaged to obtain a purposeful sample. Eighteen participants

were identified and then an administrator, guidance counselor, teachers, and students were interviewed. All interviews were recorded using an audio recorder to ensure accuracy. The appropriate interview protocol was followed based on the type of interview conducted. The interview protocol served as a guide to keep the interview on-track and semi-structured.

Pilot interviews were conducted with two sophomore students, a teacher, and an administrator from a different high school. No data was utilized from the pilot interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted to test whether or not the participants easily understood the questions. The participants, in the pilot interviews, provided feedback for the wording and description of the questions. Feedback from the pilot interviews was used to make necessary changes to the interview protocols.

Data Management

All interviews of this study were audiotaped, with permissions of the participants, and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions are kept, along with the audiotapes, in a locked file cabinet at my personal residence. All electronic transcriptions are on a file on a personal password protected computer. All participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. All identifying information was masked in the interview transcriptions. The pre-screening instrument documents were placed with student names in a sealed envelope by the student and only seen by the researcher and the student providing the document. The coding sheet for students with corresponding numbers is kept separately from the pre-screening instrument documents and locked in a filing cabinet. Hard copies of interview transcriptions are organized for each group of

participants: students, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor. Excel spreadsheets are used to house transcriptions in a separate section for each participant.

First and foremost, the researcher needs to ensure that the rights, needs, privacy and consideration for the participants should be addressed since research is always obtrusive (Creswell, 2003). Transcriptions were coded with the appropriate matching participant pseudonym. In order to provide due consideration to the participants, all interview participants who requested, received a copy of the interview transcription via electronic mail to review and insure that the transcript accurately reflected the appropriate dialogue and meaning of verbatim transcriptions (Creswell, 2003).

Measures of Rigor

Triangulation is a tool to support the researcher's construction. It is a process by which the researcher can guard against the accusation that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's biases. The function of triangulation is to locate and reveal the understanding of the object under investigation from different aspects of empirical reality (Denzin, 1978). Data triangulation can be used to compare the perspectives of people from different points of view. Interviewing the students, teachers, an administrator, and a guidance counselor ensured transferability and dependability. Qualitative research must develop thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the context. The recognition of the inevitability of subjectivity also yields the process of triangulation that utilizes the use of multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories to ensure the credibility of the research (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990).

Patton (1990) advises that a credible qualitative study needs to address the qualifications, experiences, and perspectives of the researcher. With eighteen years of elementary, middle, and high school educational experiences in classrooms and administration, self-efficacy source issues plague students from early to secondary grades. Many students develop negative self-efficacy issues in the PK-2 grades. As an elementary teacher and now a high school administrator, many of the same students who suffered from low self-efficacy issues in elementary school continue to have the same self-efficacy beliefs in high school.

Member checks also serve to decrease the incidence of incorrect data and the incorrect interpretation of data, with the overall goal of providing findings that are authentic and original (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The greatest benefit of conducting member checks is that it allows the researcher the opportunity to verify the accuracy and completeness of the findings, which then helps to improve the validity of the study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Member checks were conducted with the adult participants at the school study site and ensured accuracy.

Triangulation is a validity procedure in qualitative research where multiple data sources are used to form themes in a qualitative study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation with the four types of interview participants contributed to the dependability of the study. Codes from each group were compared and patterns that emerged from the triangulation of data resulted in themes across all groups. Each group of interview participants had emerging codes, those codes then became common themes. Cross-analysis coding was used to compare codes across all four types of interview

participants. Cross-analysis coding showed common emerging themes across all four types of interview groups.

Data Analysis

Patton (2002) explains that without developing manageable classification or coding schemes there is chaos and confusion in analyzation (p. 463). Creswell (2007) notes that codes can emerge in response to not only expected patterning, but also what you find to be striking, surprising, unusual or conceptually captivating (p. 153). The transcripts from the interviews were first-round coded individually for themes about self-efficacy sources. After each transcript was coded, they were re-coded a second time. The second coding was used to cluster themes into Bandura's (1997) framework (mastery, verbal, vicarious, physiological). Third round coding, coded data into three categorical source experiences: elementary, middle, and high school experiences. Constant comparative analysis was used for each group of interview participants: students, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor. Axial coding procedures assisted in the development constructs that informed the researcher of if, when, how, and why self-efficacy source experiences happened (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Saldana (2009) recommends that you keep a record of your emergent codes, content descriptions, and a brief data example in a codebook, separate file, or via a qualitative analysis software program. An expert review of a master code list shows how codes fit into categories. The data was revisited numerous times to confirm themes while direct quotes from the transcripts support emergent themes.

Data Presentation

After the data was analyzed, the findings were presented using thick and rich description. The data was depicted in the form of quotations, transcripts, and other documents to support the findings, which connected with a description of emergent themes or relationships. An interpretative commentary was provided regarding the particulars as well as general findings from the rich description. The presentation included thematic analysis on some of the key themes that emerged. After the open coding cycle was completed, the researcher interpreted and reflected on the codes and grouped the codes based on similar meanings. After the grouping, the researcher moved inductively to construct categories or themes. The categories or themes are, "conceptual elements that 'cover' or span many individual examples" or bits of data (Merriam, 2009). Then, the researcher examined the relationship between the themes. The key, emergent themes answered the research questions and provided an understanding of the complexity of the students, including development of personal perceived self-efficacy beliefs and perspectives of academic self-efficacy and academic motivation. The information presented in the study's findings represented a balance between analysis and interpretation (Patton, 2002). The particular description was derived from the raw data, which consisted of quotations and transcripts of interviews with students, teachers, the administrator, and guidance counselor. For the quotations and other particular description, the researcher clarified whether or not the piece of data represented a generalization of the data as a whole. The researcher provided an interpretative commentary regarding the particular description and the general description to build the connection between the two descriptions and to foster a better understanding. Thus, the

data presentation included thick and rich description that was built on a balance of the analysis of the themes and an interpretative commentary of the particular and general types of description.

Findings for the central question and each research questions were presented in narrative form with direct quotes to show rich, thick description. In addition to the narrative prose, tables organized by Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy source categorical framework (mastery, verbal, vicarious, physiological) are displayed. Crosswalk data for research questions and time periods in students lives is presented in Appendix I with three representative time period source experience categories: elementary, middle, and high school. A master code list was developed and represents how codes are categorized into themes. The code-mapping chart located in Appendix J represents coding of the self-efficacy source development beliefs and academic motivation. This map represents how codes fit into categories and overarching themes to answer research questions regarding self-efficacy source beliefs and motivation (Anfara et al., 2002). Categories of codes were established based on the themes from the interview responses. A research blueprint located in Appendix E provides a strong connection between and among the central research question, the research questions, and the interview questions for each group of participants.

Summary

The methodology used and the paradigm of inquiry rationale for employing qualitative research design are outlined and discussed in this chapter. The theoretical perspectives that provided the framework for the study of students in 10th grade are described. The details for the methodology used, including site selection, participant

selection, and data collection processes, are discussed. The semi-structured interview guide and interview protocol are outlined. The details for the qualitative data analysis, presentation, and management are provided. The chapter also includes discussion of the strategies to build the trustworthiness and validity of the study, such as the triangulation of data. The chapter concludes with the discussion of human participants and ethics precautions, design issues, and pilot testing.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study examined the development of 10th grade students academic self-efficacy perceptions and academic motivation. While some academic self-efficacy studies focus on students enrolled in post-secondary education and middle school grades, this study focuses solely on 10th grade students. Many quantitative self-efficacy survey studies have been conducted with high school students. However, no studies have been exclusively conducted with a qualitative approach on 10th grade student efficacy in a rural setting were found. The central research question was: What early self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) do adolescent students develop and experience to foster academic motivation? The central research question was supported by a subset of three research questions that are important for addressing the central research question as it relates to students educational journeys. The subset of research questions included: (1) How do 10th grade students describe early academic self-efficacy source (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) experiences? (2) How do 10th grade students develop and define academic self-efficacy beliefs? (a) enactive mastery experiences (actual performances); (b) observation of others (vicarious experiences); (c) forms of persuasion, both verbal and otherwise; and (d) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction. (3) How do self-efficacy sources enhance or diminish academic self-efficacy and academic motivation?

To complete this research study, a qualitative research methodology was utilized as outlined in Chapter 3. The research study entailed interviewing a total of 17 student

participants: one administrator, three 10th grade teachers, and a 10th grade guidance counselor. A self-efficacy pre-screening instrument was used to determine the 17 student participants and all interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides. The researcher assigned pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the student and adult study participants.

Collecting Data

Site Selection

The high school, located in northeastern Tennessee, is a public, rural school founded in 1926 by a World War I hero. The school was later transferred to the state of Tennessee in 1937. It is the only school in the United States that is fully financed and operated by the state and government. The school has grades 9-12 with a total population of 599. The sophomore class has a total of 150 students.

Site Visit

The visit to the site selection occurred in seven days during the school day over a two-week period. Day one consisted of introducing myself, explaining the research, and delivering parental consent forms for the pre-screening instrument to eight classes of sophomore students. The second day consisted of interviewing three of the adults in private locations. On day three, the pre-screening survey instrument was administered to sixty-two voluntary participants that met the qualifications of having both the parental consent form and student assent form signed. The fourth day, two more adults were interviewed and the parental consent forms were given to the 17 potential interview students. Initially, only 15 students were to be chosen, but the administration of the school suggested that two alternate students be chosen in case of student absences. It was

decided if all 17 students met the qualifications of bringing a signed parental consent form back, that all 17 would be interviewed in order to further saturation. Days five, six, and seven consisted of interviewing all 17 students. All interviews were conducted in a private room in the library. The adult interviews were conducted in the teachers classrooms or offices. All 22 study participants were interviewed privately in person on campus.

Participants

Student participants had to be in the 10th grade at the school site and the adult participants had to work with 10th grade students in some capacity. A self-efficacy pre-screening instrument was administered in order to gather students for voluntary interviews. Sixty-two out of 150 sophomore students voluntarily participated in a self-efficacy pre-screening survey instrument. Forty-one percent of the sophomore students participated in the pre-screening instrument survey. Some of the sophomore students chose not to participate in the pre-screening instrument, were absent on the day it was administered, or did not have a parental consent form signed. From the pre-screening survey instrument data results, student names were placed in an Excel document list numbered from 1-62. Using a TI-84 calculator random-number generator, a total of 17 student participants were chosen to participate in the interview process. All 17 students (8 males and 9 females) chosen from the pre-screening instrument data results participated in the interview process. Additionally, the five faculty members who work with sophomore students voluntarily participated in the interview process. Adult participants varied in years of experience and subject area. However, all participating employees taught or worked with some or all of the sophomore students. Faculty members did not

participate in the student self-efficacy pre-screening instrument. Both student and adult study participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect anonymity. The adult study participants with pseudonyms, gender, and job title are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Adult Interview Participants

Pseudonym Adult Participant	Gender	Job Title	Number of Year's Experience
John	Male	Principal	18 years
Bob	Male	10th grade geometry Teacher	8 years
Mary	Female	10th grade Algebra II Teacher	4 years
Linda	Female	10th Grade English Teacher	12 years
Chris	Male	Guidance Counselor	27 years

Student Interview Participants

Pre-screening instrument average scores are comprised of 3 different assessments: (a) Social Self-Efficacy (b) Academic Self-Efficacy (c) Emotional Self-Efficacy. Each of the three assessments consisted of eight questions for a total of 24 questions. A total average of each assessment was taken and utilized to gather the 17 participants. Lower average scores indicate a lower self-efficacy while higher scores indicate a higher self-efficacy. The range of all sophomore participants scores is 2.04 to 5.04 with the lowest average score potential of a 1 and the highest average potential score of 5. The range of scores exclusively for the 17 interview participants is 2.50 to 4.54. In Table 2, the student interview participants with pseudonyms, gender, and pre-screening survey instrument average scores are presented.

Table 2. Student Interview Participants

Pseudonym Student Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Average Pre-Screening Instrument Scores**
Jamie	Male	15	3.54
Rena	Female	15	2.83
James	Male	16	3.38
Randy	Male	16	3.66
Bailey	Female	16	3.21
Greg	Male	15	3.88
Susan	Female	15	3.92
Edward	Male	16	3.29
Chris	Male	15	4.13
Chloe	Female	16	3.75
Nathan	Male	15	3.87
Emily	Female	16	2.79
Irma	Female	15	4.17
Addison	Female	15	3.13
Larry	Male	16	4.54
Farrah	Female	16	4.25
Norris	Male	16	2.50

The student female participants showed a higher average score on the self-efficacy pre-screening instrument than the male students. The average female score for the eight females was 4.25 while the average male score for the nine males is 3.54. Out of the 17 participants, 8-15 year olds participated while 9-16 year olds participated. The 15-year-old students had a higher average than the 16-year-old students. Four of the 15-year-old students were female and three of the students were males. The 16-year-old students had a ratio of 5 males and 4 females. The average pre-screening instrument scores by age is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Pre-Screening Instrument Scores by Age

Age	Average Pre-Screening Scores
15	3.13
16	2.50

All student interview participants were enrolled in core classes such as English, Algebra II and/or geometry, and physical science. Some students had Algebra II and geometry classes simultaneously in the same year. These students excelled in math and had the option of taking two math classes simultaneously. Other classes varied based on each student's focus area and elective classes. Student interview participants mostly came from broken homes with four out of seventeen students living with both biological parents. Four of the 17 students reported being held back one grade in the early years of elementary school or PK. Only one student reported attending summer school for remediation in the 3rd grade. All students confidently reported that they planned to

graduate from high school and were currently on-track with credits for graduation. No students had plans of graduating from high school early.

Central Question and Themes

Central question: What early self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) do adolescent students develop and experience to foster academic motivation?

The themes were connected to the purpose of the study to describe how rural 10th grade students develop and utilize early self-efficacy source experiences. All 18 student interview transcriptions were analyzed and coded using first round open coding and axial coding. A table was developed to organize each group codes. Then, the administrator, teachers, and guidance counselor interview transcriptions were used for cross-comparison analysis to ensure validity. Additionally, the themes were relevant to the significance of the study, which investigated the elements of participants experiences in their educational journey from PK-10th grade. Nine themes were identified to answer the primary research questions. The principal, teachers, and guidance counselor interviews correlated with the sophomore students and created triangulation for the research. The research questions and corresponding interview questions for students, the administrator, teachers, and the guidance counselor are identified in the Research Blueprint in Appendix F . Interview Protocols for all participants are located in Appendices B, C, D, and E. All questions were created to investigate not only the sources and time periods that developed students self-efficacies. Based on the research questions, a blueprint was created to identify and relate the interview questions to the corresponding research question. Based on the data from the interviews, many common themes emerged. Those themes are reflected in Table

4 below. Table 4 further enhances the Research Blueprint found in Appendix F by categorizing the themes with the interview participants, source(s), and time period of students lives in which those themes occurred. All students interviewed attended a K-8 school for elementary and middle school. The elementary years for this research is identified as grades K-5th and middle school is identified as grades 6^{th}-8^{th}. More detailed descriptions of the precise student experiences that culminated the themes are included in quotes after the presentation of Table 4.

Table 4. Research Questions, Themes, and Self-Efficacy Sources

Research Questions	Student Themes	Self-Efficacy Source	Time Period	Administrator Teachers Guidance Counselor
A) What significant events occur in student lives to develop perceived academic self-efficacy?	personal accomplishments	Mastery	elementary, middle, and high school years	extracurricular activities; home environment; spirituality; classroom placement;
	personal challenges	Mastery	elementary, middle, and high school years	
	Family and teacher support	persuasion, physiological, vicarious	PK, elementary, middle, and high school years	
B) How do significant events shape students self-efficacy beliefs?	sense of accomplishment	mastery, physiological	elementary, middle, and high school years	mastery builds confidence; grit; entitlement; comfortable with repetition; increased drive
	tenacious attitude	mastery, physiological	elementary, middle, and high school years	
	feelings of stress	Physiological	middle and high school years	
C) How does student perceived academic self-efficacy affect student academic performance?	low academic motivation	Physiological	elementary, middle, and high school year	self-disciplined; attendance; connected to family; positive peer interactions; attitude of victimization; success builds success; cyclical
	increased performance	mastery, physiological	elementary, middle, and high school year	
	increased inner drive	mastery, physiological	middle, and high school years	

Themes for Research Question 1:

What significant events occur in student lives to develop perceived academic self-efficacy?

This research question examined the events that occurred in students lives that assisted them in developing academic self-efficacy. Students were asked to recall significant memories from four different time periods: Pre-K, elementary school, middle school, and high school. Six of the seventeen students had very limited or no memories of Pre-K, Head Start, or daycare experiences. For those students that did have memories of Pre-K years, events were described as fun and full of play. All students had vivid memories of elementary and middle school and described friendships, challenges, accomplishments, and struggles. Additionally, all students described people that had supported them thus far along their educational journeys with their mothers being noted as the most supportive. Students also described their grandmothers as being a vital part of their lives and someone else who encouraged them. For students that did not have a biological mother present in their lives, a grandmother, dad, or aunt served in that role and provided support. Competition played an important role for all students either in academic contests or extracurricular events such as spelling bees; football, baseball, and soccer games; 4-H events, and even bets among friends. An understanding of these key elements as described by the student participants provided an insight into the events that occurred and how those events assisted the students in developing their personal self-efficacy beliefs. From the data analysis yielded, three themes answered research question one.

Personal Feelings of Accomplishment

One theme addressed the participants unique personal feelings of accomplishment. All seventeen students had their own unique accomplishments that ranged from academic recognition to athletic events to successful relationships. Jamie, a male student age 15 described how he had not done very well in middle school until his 8th grade year. " My eighth grade year I really buckled down and actually wanted to do good and I was awarded an award at my graduation and I felt successful about that." Another male student, Norris, age 16, described how he felt he performed better than other students in the classroom, which enabled him to help others. When asked to describe his best performances in school, Norris said,

> Probably on tests and in class work and getting done on hard stuff and being done correctly and good. Everybody else is like not too sure about what to do and I know what to do. So, I go around helping people.

Addison, age 15, described a science fair project that she did not think would win because of her lack of effort. "I won like first place for a science project at the science fair that I didn't really work that hard on. And I was like really proud of myself for it." Bailey, a female, age 16, described one of her best memories as 8th grade graduation. When asked why 8th grade graduation was one of her best memories, Bailey replied, "I accomplished everything that I set my goal to be. I graduated with an A average and was Top 10 of my class." Personal feelings of accomplishment often surfaced during events of competition for students. Specifically students mentioned athletic contests such as football, cheerleading, soccer, basketball, and baseball. Academic contests such as Beta conventions, 4-H Clover bowl, and spelling bees were also important events for students.

When students were asked to describe one of the best memories from school, Rena, a female, student, age 16, said, "I got in a spelling bee in elementary school and a bunch of girls decided to compete. We had a bet going on and I won!" Another student Farrah, age 16, described a competitive event from her elementary school experience where she was able to compete at the state level. "I was in Clover Bowl. I went to state multiple times with my Clover Bowl friends. I got to tour the college and stuff back then in elementary school." Another student described several competitive events when asked what one of her best memories was. Susan, female student, age15, described,

> Yeah, we had a singing competition and I made second in that. And also, in the Beta talent competition I played piano and I made first in that. Um…and then one time we took this Benchmark test in like 5th grade or something and I made a 97.

Chris, male student, age 15, described a memory from elementary school where he felt really successful. He said, "Ah….field day competition, where you got picked for like…you advanced in each step and even if you're not qualified to do it, you just do it." Chris also reported that he was picked for running. When asked if he won, he said, "No, but I felt successful anyways because I got to do what I liked." The guidance counselor was asked to describe specific evidence of students positive perceived self-efficacy beliefs and he discussed how students can feel confident in one area but not so confident in another area. He said,

> I see a lot of students that they know or they think they're good in one area and they feel pretty good about it. Like, a lot of our football players think they're good at football or they wouldn't play. They come in here and tell me they don't like

math. I tell them to think they can do math just like they think they can do football.

Personal Challenges

Another theme that emerged throughout the coding process to support events that occurred to develop self-efficacy was the fact that all students had experienced personal challenges regardless of their personal self-efficacy beliefs. Some students experienced more hardships than others due to family situations. Some students challenges were sometimes more severe than others such as having a biological parent incarcerated, or not having any contact with a mother or father, or experiencing personal health issues at a young age. Whatever the level of severity, the students considered and described these events to be the most challenging for them. For instance, Irma, female student, age 15, described her worst moment in high school was when she was personally injured. "When I was doing drills for ROTC and I threw a rifle up into the air and it came down and hit me in the nose. I was like OWE!" Male student, Larry, age 16, when asked about some of his biggest challenges he reports, "I'm just slow and I really just don't understand what I'm reading. When I'm reading, I don't understand it." Jamie, male student, age 15, describes his 9th grade year. "The Algebra I was tough. At first I had like a low B and I worked myself to death. I ended up getting the Most Improved Award in Algebra I." Students who had experiences with health issues such as broken bones also reported difficulties and challenges with academics and sporting events. Described as his worst moments in middle and high school, Jamie, male student, age 15, reported he first broke his wrist in 8th grade and almost had to have surgery and then, in high school he broke his collarbone. " I broke my wrist and it set me back. I had to miss school. Then, in high

school I broke my collarbone and it set me back in football. It cost me not to get to play." Emily, female student, age 16 was diagnosed at a young age with Kleine Levin Syndrome. She described her symptoms as not being able to wake-up once she falls asleep. Emily reported, "Usually I come home from school and then I will just pass out, like, on the couch and then yeah they just can't wake me up. Sometimes I've actually had to miss school, like three days this year because of it." Personal challenges for the students presented opportunities to learn how to be determined through struggles. Most students reported that they had learned how to cope successfully with the challenging events that had occurred or continued occurring in their lives. Bailey, a female, age 16 explained,

> I had like a hard time when my parents got divorced. I went to live with my Dad instead of my Mom. I had to go to court and talk to the judge and so that was probably the hardest time. I missed a lot of school. It was in my 7th grade year, but I passed with all A's even through the hard times. I still did something good for myself.

Greg, a male student, age 15, who never sees his mother and lives with his dad and step-mom, described how he did very well in school up until 4th grade. "I tried up until 4th grade. I don't know what happened. I don't know if it had anything to do, but my grandma died around there and she was like my best friend, so that might of." Some of the events and hardships provided opportunities for learning, which increased their positive self-efficacy beliefs about themselves and provided more self-confidence. However, if their family life was not consistent, coping with their challenges was more difficult.

Family and Teacher Support

The family and teacher support theme emerged and was consistent with every interview. Students described help and support from their parents. In particular mothers were mentioned the most. When asked what helped Chris, a male student, age 15, do so well in school he replied, "My mom pushes me to. She wants my education to be good. She wants me to get into the best college I can. Other than that, I want to be successful for me." A female student, Susan, age 15, who won the spelling bee in elementary school said, "I worked really hard for it (spelling bee). My mom made me write down words like three times every night for two weeks." When asked why she worked so hard, she reported, "I wanted to do it. I mean I wanted to participate in it, but Mom wanted to help me win." When Rena, female student, age 15, was asked who in her life helps her, she replied, "My mom has helped me because like she understands stuff the way I do. She knows how we do it and stuff and so she helps me there too." The student participants relationships with their families, particularly their mothers and often grandmothers, played a significant role in the development of their self-efficacies.

The adult interviews with the administrator, teachers, and guidance counselor supported the students responses about the support or lack of support from family. Adult interview data validated the importance of students being supported by family. When the principal was asked what types of experiences students have to foster positive self-efficacy, he described that it did not have to be students with a certain socioeconomic status. When asked to describe some of the most self-efficacious students in his building, he reported that the athletes in the school displayed self-efficacious behaviors. The principal said, "They've got parent connection. They're riding in a car together. They are

going to ballgames together. They come and get them from practice." On the other end of the spectrum, the principal reported that non-self-efficacious students often do not have those parent connections. He reported,

> It seems that there is no quality time spent with the kids. The kids are more apt to be alone in their bedrooms, down the block, or down the apartment complex, whatever it may be, but there is just not a lot of interaction between the parent and child. It's for the wealthy families too. It flips both ways.

The interview with the guidance counselor revealed the same characteristics of students with low self-efficacy issues. When asked what are some of the characteristics of students that display a low self-efficacy, he reported,

> I think a lot of it is because they do not have the appropriate backing, pushing role models at home. I don't think it's because of laziness. They think that their future is hopeless. I had one student I counseled with today. He's going to graduate because we are going to make him. It's not because of himself or his family. He won't be 18 until June, so I told him he is ours and he has no choice. He sees no future. He's just sad.

The teachers were also asked to describe characteristics of self-efficacious students. Ms. Amy, the 10th grade Algebra II teacher, answered,

> I try to contact all the parents at the beginning of the school year and you can kind of get a feeling of the student when you do that, because some of the parents of the students who struggle, would say 'Oh, gosh, what has he done or what has she done?' And everybody else would say, 'Hi, it's nice to talk to you, so why are

> you calling?' And so I feel almost like they're coming with bad records from previous incidents.

One male student who lives only with his grandmother and sees his father occasionally, described why he continues to like coming to school despite low grades and a low academic self-efficacy. Edward, male student, age 16, said, "I like coming to school. It's better than staying at home. I mean I get to talk to my friends and I mean, some of the work is okay." He reported living with his grandmother and seeing his father occasionally. He also stated that he has visitation weekends with his mother who lives in another city. Edward was asked if he had an after school homework routine and he replied,

> Some days we mix it up. We don't even go home. We go to my dad's girlfriend's. It's usually those days I don't do homework. Some day's I don't want to do it (homework) because it's stupid. Teacher gives us stuff over the weekend. I'm having visitations with my mom. I mean, I'm visiting my mother. You shouldn't give us stuff over the weekend. If it's during the week, I'll get it done eventually.

Teachers also played an important role in developing students self-efficacies. When asked what moment had stood out the most, Bailey, female student, age 16, stated,

> I'm thinking, like the teachers, who my teachers were. That is probably the first thing that comes to my mind who stands out the most. I probably had the best teachers that I could have had. I have had a really good selection. They've all helped me in the best ways they could have

and I've always been successful in all my classes, which means that

I've tried my hardest and because of them I had good grades.

Interestingly, students could describe having several poor academic years, then the next year they could have what they described as a good teacher and their self-efficacy beliefs would completely change. When asked about his middle school years, Jamie, a male student, age 15, described how poorly he was doing until 8th grade.

Sixth grade was pretty hard. I didn't do great. I was making Ds. I wasn't making an A in anything besides gym or something like that. I didn't do good in math.

In 8th grade I had a teacher to show us different ways how to do it (math) and give us the easiest way possible and let us know how to do it and that really helped me.

The data revealed that regardless of the support given by the teachers, if the students home environments were not stable with at least one biological parent consistently present, then students struggled with their self-efficacy beliefs.

Themes for Research Question 2:

How do significant events shape students self-efficacy beliefs?

Students develop self-efficacy beliefs based on the events and situations that occur in their lives. Based on the data gathered from the students, teachers, administrator, and guidance counselor, three themes were gleaned from the interview data. Personal accomplishments, personal struggles, and family and teacher support were identified as events that assisted students in developing their perceived self-efficacy beliefs. These events gave students a sense of accomplishment when achieving a goal, caused students to develop a tenacious attitude, and brought about feelings of stress. Students often described how proud they were of themselves even when they initially thought they could

not face a challenge. Some students described feelings of stress when faced with a trying situation. The adult interviews confirmed students positive self-efficacy beliefs when faced with a difficult and challenging situation in life.

Sense of Accomplishment

The sense of accomplishment theme could be divided into two categorical divisions. The first characteristic for students was described as feelings of accomplishments based on their perceptions of the capabilities to perform a task. The other characteristic of the sense of accomplishment theme is a sense of accomplishment through productive struggle. Figure 1 displays the sense of accomplishment categories.

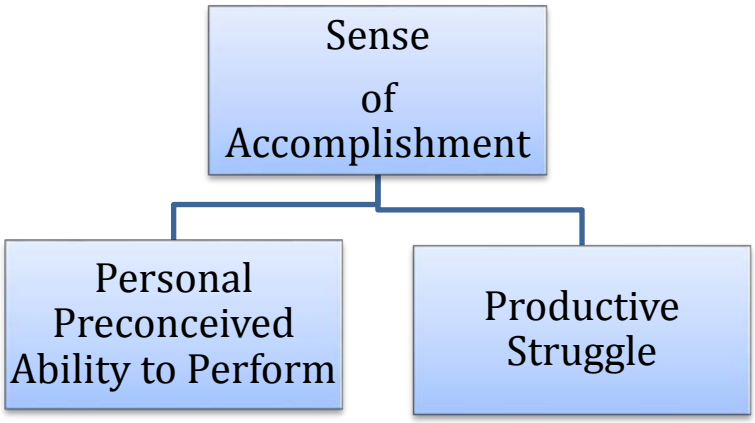

Figure 1. Sense of Accomplishment Categorical Framework

Students described feelings of accomplishment in both personal preconceived abilities to perform and productive struggle. Some students described feelings of accomplishment by participating in events or tasks that were effortless for them such as tasks that they enjoyed or were confident in completing or performing. Students were asked to describe an event or situation in which they felt successful. Randy, a male student, age 16, has experienced little success according to his interview. The one thing

that he felt successful about in school was football and he had been injured and unable to play. Randy has no post-secondary plans except to move out of his grandmother's house and get his own place. When asked to describe a successful event, he said, "Oh, I like shop class and carpentry. I'm pretty good at that. I made a table and talked about it." Randy felt confident about his abilities to build a table. Working in carpentry class gave him a sense of accomplishment. Chris, another male student, age 15, was also asked to describe his greatest accomplishment. He said, "Bringing up my history grade. Because if I could accomplish that, I could do stuff more that I didn't think I could." Even though the sense of accomplishment for both students was similar, it was very different. One student felt confident about his capabilities and ability to build while the other student initially did not feel confident about his capabilities and abilities to bring up his history grade. Randy felt a sense of accomplishment by completing a task that was easy for him while Chris felt a sense of accomplishment through struggling and succeeding in history class. Both students felt accomplished but the accomplishment was different based on the perceived challenge of the task. Mastery and physiological performance sources both enabled Chris and Randy to build their self-efficacies. Chris verbalized the point that the accomplishment of bringing up his history grade could be transferred to other tasks or situations. Based on Randy's confident statement about building a table, Randy will most likely have a positive self-efficacy to build more and different types of objects in the future. The principal was asked to describe in detail actions or characteristics of students displaying self-efficacy source examples (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological). The principal described,

> You're going to have most kids that are going to become better as they master things and realize that they are confident about doing things. Overall, not all, but overall, kids in high school, freshmen and sophomores are learning. They're building confidence in those years. They didn't come to high school thinking they could do everything or master everything…Many of them through achieving accomplishments and recognizing their own abilities and strengths, do pretty good and that's what happens.

Ms. Amy, the Algebra II teacher, was asked to describe students actions or characteristics that display a positive self-efficacy. She said, "If students are struggling, they'll go back to the point that they did get it and they're like, 'Oh, I got it…oh this was easy.' They're willing to work at it. That's the key thing." Both the administrator and geometry teacher described the sense of accomplishment that students feel and display when working to complete a task. Additionally, in order to complete tasks, self-efficacious students display a tenacious attitude when facing challenges.

Tenacious Attitude

Student interview participants with higher self-efficacies presented answers to interview questions with a tenacious attitude. Those students answered questions confidently and were positive about their abilities to accomplish a task. Students may or may not have had the specific capabilities needed to complete a task, but were confident in the abilities to persevere regardless. The principal described these self-efficacious students as having grit - the desire to never quit. James a male student, age 16, describes his tenacious attitude to do well in English despite his perceived self-efficacy for English.

James said, “English is pretty hard for me, but I try really hard in there. Essays are hard to write. I try real hard to get an A.”

Mr. Bob, the geometry teacher, was asked to describe the characteristics of students who have a positive self-efficacy. He explained, “Students who are determined, who have goals and are willing to do anything to reach those. You know, you have to be really stubborn or strong-willed to do that.” Bailey, a female student, age 16, explained, “I want to learn more. Like, I want to know more about everything because it just makes me feel like I could have more success in just anything.” Bailey reported that with more knowledge she has the confidence to transfer that knowledge where it is needed. Edward, a male student, age 16, stated, “When I heard my GPA wasn’t a 3.5, I was irritated about myself. I mean it was my fault last year. I could have done my work and I could of done it right. I just didn’t.” Students who displayed a positive self-efficacy described challenges that would increase their efforts. Norris, male student, age 16, was asked to describe his middle school years. Norris said,

> The teachers were hard on us but it helped us to get to high school because they actually taught us stuff that we were going to need in high school. At the time, you don’t think you’re going to need it in high school but then you get to high school and then you’re actually happy they were hard on you and everything.

Student participants who exhibited high self-efficacies welcomed challenges and described a tenacious attitude when faced with tasks that were out of their comfort zones. Student participants who exhibited a low self-efficacy would describe more complacent behaviors. Mrs. Linda, the English teacher, was asked to describe behaviors of students who had low self-efficacies. She said, “A 70 for those students is okay…and just being

comfortable there and not willing to take the risk maybe." Mrs. Linda reported that despite those complacent behaviors, she still encouraged those students and has often seen those students change especially if they had a positive attitude. It was more difficult for students who had a low self-efficacy to remain positive during challenging events or situations.

Feelings of Stress

Many students who displayed a lower self-efficacy described feelings of stress when faced with a challenging event. Emily, female, age 16, when describing a really bad moment in school, she said "That research project was stressful. And then I'm also not really good at vocabulary, so usually when I see my test scores I am like I'm done, I can't do this." Rena, female student, age 16, was asked to describe a time where she felt unsuccessful. She replied, " I was in a reading class for extra reading. I was on a lower reading level and it made me feel really down. I didn't have anyone that I knew in there. It did help me though." Rena remembered that event from elementary school vividly, but she also recognized the fact that the situation and extra help was needed and successful. Jamie, male student, age 15, reported, "I mean, throughout my whole 6th grade year I was doing terrible. I was doing terrible on all the vocabulary tests and the content and I was just down you know." Chloe, female student, age 16, described her worse moment in school, "Probably all the homework. All the homework, grades, and stressing, and all that stuff to try to get it done and do it right." Chloe reported that she was under a lot of stress with school and playing basketball. She explained that she had high expectation for herself. Chloe said, "I want to do good and then also trying to do good for my parents, and just trying to like get better at everything, but also trying to stay calm and not stress

out as much as I usually do." Students who exhibited high, average, and low self-efficacies put personal pressure on themselves to perform or experienced feelings of stress for non-performance. Students with low self-efficacies experienced stress due to the lack of work ethic, which put them behind in classes and caused low grades. Students who exhibited high self-efficacies were always working harder and striving to be better which may have caused stress. All of the students reported that high school was more stressful than elementary or middle school due to the coursework, homework, and pressure to perform. Additionally, students were involved with more extracurricular activities or had outside jobs, which caused time constraints for studying and homework. Nathan, male student, age 15, discussed his elementary years in math classes. When asked if there was a time in his life when he was better at math, he stated,

> Yeah. During like the lower grades, like 5th and 6th grade and stuff like that. I was pretty good. I didn't have anything to worry about. I mean, like, you're just a kid. You don't really think about anything. When you get older you think about more things.

In fact, many students described pre-school and elementary years as fun and the most relaxing time of their lives. Addison, female student, age 15, described her preschool experience. She stated, "It was a comfortable place. You could kind of relax and you didn't feel pressured and everybody was on the same level." After pre-school, students began to realize that everyone had different abilities and the competition among peers began to surface.

Themes for Research Question 3:

How does student perceived academic self-efficacy affect student academic performance?

Based on the interview data from the students, teachers, principal, and guidance counselor, students perceived self-efficacies affected student academic performance. Students who had developed a high self-efficacy experienced high academic motivation while students who had developed a low self-efficacy experienced low academic motivation. The motivation to work and perform in the classroom was highly dependent on the student's personal self-efficacy beliefs. Students who exhibited a low self-efficacy would at least have one area of interest that they performed with a higher self-efficacy. The area might be academic in nature but may be an extracurricular activity. For students with high self-efficacies, the high self-efficacy belief would transcend to all areas of school both academic and extracurricular. Even if a student knew that a particular subject was more difficult for them than another, they still maintained a positive attitude and a strong work ethic to perform. The connection between high self-efficacy and high motivation and low self-efficacy and low motivation was very strong and consistent.

Low Academic Motivation

Based on the students interviews conducted in this research, students with lower self-efficacies also had lower academic motivation in most areas. Ms. Mary, the Algebra II teacher, discussed using competition among her four classes. She displayed a table of class averages of test scores on the board and students compete as a class to try and get the highest test scores for a reward. When Ms. Mary discussed her 3rd block inclusion class, she said, "The class is so disharmonious. I guess. Most everything has to be done individually with them. The positive reinforcement does not work with them." Ms. Mary

also reported that her 3rd block students struggle and students display a low self-efficacy. The guidance counselor was asked to describe specific evidence of students positive perceived self-efficacy and he discussed how students can feel confident in one area but not so confident in another area. This low self-efficacy can sometimes lead to low motivation in only certain areas. He explained,

> I see a lot of students that they know or they think they're good in one area and they feel pretty good about it. Like, a lot of our football players think they're good at football or they wouldn't play. They come in here and tell me they don't like math. I tell them to think they can do math just like they think they can do football.

The principal was asked to describe behaviors of students who exhibited low motivational issues in school. The principal replied,

> I think dress would be the very first thing. You can look at students coming through the door and you can almost determine how kids are going to be that day based on their appearance. High school kids dress in the fashion that they're feeling, not all, that is generalization. Secondly, there is poor attendance. Thirdly, they have an attitude of victimization. They will not take ownership of the issues they are having in their lives.

The guidance counselor was asked to describe students that he counsels that present low motivational issues. He reported that often those students are having some type of relationship issues such as difficulties with a boyfriend or girlfriend. He reported, "If it's boyfriend or girlfriend issues, they won't care about Algebra, they care about that boyfriend or girlfriend. So, I have to get them back to normal as possible so they can go

out and learn." The English teacher, Ms. Linda, was asked to describe unmotivated students in class. She described,

> Of course absences, they are not there a lot. When you do give directions, they are not paying attention. When they do a task, they do not do it to the best of their ability. I try to be empathetic, I know those kids may have a lot going on in their lives, but sometimes you just have to take responsibility and those kids do not take responsibility.

Edward, male student, age 16, was asked to discuss his work habits. He reported that he has visitations with his mom 3 hours away from home every other weekend. On Sunday nights, he drives back home with his dad. Edward said, " I could do my work on Sunday nights, but I want to watch the *Walking Dead*. I'm choosing not to do my work. I've never been to the office." Nathan, male student, age 15, described his biggest challenge in school as physical fitness class. He said, "I'm not a real physical person. I don't really run a lot." When asked about his other grades, Nathan reported, "I'm making like a 72 in geometry. I don't really know what English is and I'm making like an 80 in welding, and like a 90 or 95 in carpentry, and then I don't really know what my English grade is." He was asked if his grades were a reflection of his work habits. Nathan replied, "Probably. I don't like geometry. It's early in the morning and I'm not fully awake and I don't like to talk." Students that experienced low motivational issues had lower self-efficacies in some or most areas. Seemingly, students with low motivational issues had other distracting situations in their lives such as relationship or family issues. However, the low motivational issues could not necessarily be generalized across all academic subjects. If students had a higher self-efficacy in an area, then the motivation was greater. Just as

lower self-efficacy was linked to lower motivation in that specific area. Sometimes students would spend a span of time exhibiting low motivational issues and then change in order to increase performance.

Increased Performance

Student and adult interview participants explained how a teacher, a competition, a restriction, or friend, or the sheer will to change, would increase performance. Ms. Mary, the Algebra II teacher, described a new student that came into her class a month into the semester. The class was getting ready to take a test and naturally the student was not expected to take the test. So she told her she was exempt from the test. The student came with a grade of an 82 from another school and was worried that the teacher would make her take the test. After the teacher showed the student that she cared about her grade, the student brought that grade up to a 95 by the end of the nine weeks. The teacher said, "I guess she just needed someone to care about her." Rena, female student, age 16 stated: "I have trouble in English, like I have a lot of trouble in English and I've always pushed myself harder in that subject." Rena was also asked why her grades had increased this year. She said, "I think that last year I didn't really focus as much and it hurt my grades real bad and I told myself, you know, like it's high school. I'm going to have to try harder." James, a male student, age 16, was asked to describe his biggest challenge. James replied, "I have to try real hard in English to get an A. I have to like do all the extra stuff to get an A and if I don't get an A, my parents jump all over me." Larry, male student, age 16 reported why he increased his academic performance, "I got a D in English in 8th grade, but then I brought it back up because I didn't want to take 8th grade again. I came to realize it on my own. I needed to start paying attention." Greg, a male

student, age 15, described an event where he worked harder in school. “Most of middle school I was tired of being showed up. I decided that in high school my grades would be better.” Student reasons for increasing performance varied. Most of the reasons came from the vicarious source or physiological source. Either something or someone motivated them to increase their effort, or they did not like they way they felt about themselves and their performances.

Increased Inner Drive

Students who were developing a higher self-efficacy described an increased inner drive. Jamie, a male student, age 15, was asked to describe how his grades were a reflection of his work habits. Jamie replied, “Well, if I didn’t work as hard as I do, I would probably be failing. Because I still kind of struggle with getting the A’s that I have.” He was also asked to describe an event where he felt successful. He replied, “Hmm…my 8th grade year at Pickett County Elementary, I really buckled down and actually wanted to do good, and I was awarded an award at my graduation, and I felt successful about that.” Bailey, female student, age 16, was asked to describe why she works so hard to get A’s in her classes. She stated,

> I really do it for myself, like my parents don’t really worry about my grades because they know that I want to get good grades, which I try to have that because I want scholarships and I want to get all these things for myself. I just try to do my hardest because I know that I’m able to.

Greg, male student, age 15, was asked to describe his best performances in school. He replied, “Probably this year.” When asked why this year was his best performance, Greg replied, “Because I’ve tried more this year so I have a lot better grades.” Edward, male

student, age 16, was asked what kind of grades he earned in middle school. He replied, "Like since I've been here, it's gone from having D's, to having C's, to having B's to having A's from 4th to 8th grade, but in 8th grade, I left with three A's and two B's." Chris, male student, age 15, was asked to describe an event in elementary school where you felt unsuccessful. Chris replied, " In 8th grade, I did make almost an F in history, but I saw that I was about to fail. So, I brought that up 20 points almost to an A." The principal was asked to describe characteristics of students who display high self-efficacies. He explained, "I would think our top 10% or 15% of students may not necessarily have the highest IQs in the school, but I think they get there through hard work, a strong work ethic, perseverance, and determination." The principal went on to say, "I think most of our students are just normal, but work ethic, determination, and environment usually makes the difference." Students would experience an increased inner drive when faced with challenges. If a challenge was accepted, students would increase their effort; therefore, increasing their self-efficacies and performances. The success of the performances would often build on one another to increase mastery performance experiences.

Summary

This chapter represented the results and findings from 22 personal interviews with student and adult participants and self-efficacy pre-screening instrument data. Students described in detail their academic self-efficacy source development by providing details of their educational experiences from PK-10th grade. Through rich, thick descriptions, students explained how situations and events helped to mold their personal self-efficacy beliefs. These beliefs were identified through self-efficacy source experience or lack of

experiences. Students memorable events and situations provided a view into their personal environments and educational journeys. The data analysis of the central research question revealed nine themes: personal accomplishments, personal challenges, family and teacher support, sense of accomplishment, tenacious attitude, feelings of stress, low academic motivation, increased performance, increased inner drive). Sophomore students at the site experienced at least one or more of the self-efficacy source development opportunities (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective) in order to foster a positive self-efficacy and to maintain academic motivation. Mastery sources proved to be the most influential on student self-efficacy for the students. Family support situations or events were influential for students. Persuasion from students mothers and grandmothers assisted students impressively in developing their self-efficacies. Mothers and grandmothers played a vital role in the self-efficacy development of the 10th grade student interview participants. The physiological and affective feelings source was also instrumental for influencing the development of students self-efficacies especially when positive feelings came from students being successful with mastery source development. Students self-efficacy source experiences both enhanced and diminished academic motivation. If student self-efficacy was high then the academic motivation was increased. However, low self-efficacy indicated low academic motivation. The sources of development of student self-efficacy determined student academic motivation. In order for students to cultivate self-efficacy, the primary source experiences must be present in their lives; otherwise, students perceived self-efficacy development is deferred for students academic journeys.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter revisits the problems of practice and connects the findings from the research study to Bandura's theoretical framework and previous research. As a result of the research study, three important findings emerged. This last chapter details the interpretations and conclusions from the findings and provides recommendations for practitioners as well as suggestions for future research in student self-efficacy development and academic motivation.

Revisiting Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as, "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (p.)" Bandura's (1977) foundation of self-efficacy: belief in one's capabilities to influence an outcome supported the students personal perceived beliefs. The theoretical framework for this study, self-efficacy theory, postulates that people acquire information to evaluate efficacy beliefs from four primary sources: (a) enactive mastery experiences (actual performances); (b) observation of others (vicarious experiences); (c) forms of persuasion, both verbal and otherwise; and (d) physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997). The findings support Bandura's self-efficacy source framework. All of the participants described personal experiences with self-efficacy source development and academic motivation. Students experiences and events with self-efficacy sources all varied due to environment and experiences or lack of experiences. Students who exhibited higher self-efficacies had more family support,

particularly from their mothers or someone who fulfilled that motherly role. Self-efficacy is defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994a, p. 2). People who possess confident beliefs about their own capabilities believe they can accomplish the following: (1) Approach tasks as challenges to be mastered, (2) Set goals and make commitments to accomplish the goals, (3) Maintain or increase efforts when facing challenges or adversity, (4) Attribute failure to lack of effort, skills, and/or knowledge, (5) Assure that threatening situations can be controlled (Bandura, 1994a). When students were interviewed and asked to describe a difficult time in their lives, the following students responded with positive self-efficacy behaviors. In contrast, people who doubt their capabilities (Bandura, 1994a): (1) Will not attempt tasks they view as personal threats, (2) Possess a weak commitment to goals, (3) Think negatively about themselves, their capabilities, their situations, and challenges, (4) Give up more quickly when faced with difficulty, (5) Slowly recover their positive self-efficacy after failure, (6) Experience stress and depression more often.

Summary of Themes

The study resulted in nine themes that answered the central research question and the three sub-set research questions. The theoretical framework focused on the participants perceptions of personal perceived self-efficacy source development. The study participants, students who were enrolled at the school site along with administration and faculty members, provided responses to answer the research questions and form the themes that emerged. The nine themes emerged from methodical coding

which included open coding, axial coding, and then placing all codes in an Excel table to develop themes.

Three themes answered this the first research sub-question: How do 10th grade students describe early academic self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) experiences? Those themes were personal accomplishments, personal challenges, and family and teacher support. The first theme determined that participants perceived self-efficacy was dependent upon the type and amount of self-efficacy source events and situations that students had experienced. Student participants perceived personal accomplishments assisted them in developing their self-efficacy specifically those accomplishments that were completed as a mastery source. With regard to the second theme, participants described personal challenges as being another source of development particularly challenges that were more difficult. When students had to exhibit grit, self-efficacy building increased. When tasks were menial and not challenging, self-efficacy building occurred but was not as pronounced.

The third theme revealed that lack of family and teacher support could deeply diminish self-efficacy for students whereas the support of family and teachers could catapult student self-efficacy. Most students had many opportunities of self-efficacy source development events such as mastery tasks that included making an earned grade of an A in a class, competing in the local spelling bee and winning, or playing on a winning sports team. Events or situations that require work and effort proved to provide the greatest self-efficacy builder. Some of the student participants did not have as many situations or event opportunities as others to build self-efficacy or did not have as many positive or mastery situations as others did. Thus, creating a low self-efficacy belief for

most academic events such as repeatedly failing classes, or struggling to read without being provided intervention, or spending a year in an academic grade level or more behind the other peers. One significant challenge created by a low self-efficacy belief is that fact that once a negative self-efficacy belief is possessed, it is difficult to reverse that belief. Students developed their perceived self-efficacy beliefs based on the number and types of self-efficacy development sources that occurred positively or negatively in their lives.

The second theme emerged from the challenging events, work, or situations that students encountered throughout their educational journeys. The type of self-efficacy source development was not as relevant to students as the mastery of the task, situation, or event. Mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective sources all played a role in students development with the mastery source being the greatest influencer and vicarious being the least reported by student participants. Students rarely discussed developing self-efficacy beliefs from their peers. They discussed peers as being a support for them, but not as a source of increasing or decreasing their self-efficacy. Mastery sources that challenged students gave students the most satisfaction. Anytime students reported working hard, practicing for weeks, or studying for a great length of time, their self-efficacy beliefs would increase. Naturally, the earlier those developing self-efficacy sources, situations and events occur for students, the more chance students have to build their self-efficacy beliefs. Students reported events that took place early in their academic careers such as 3rd grade. In late middle school and high school, students were refining their self-efficacy beliefs to transcend to all tasks. Those positive challenging events and situations were a great source of self-efficacy belief development, but even if those

opportunities arose, without support from family, especially a mother figure, students self-efficacy beliefs could quickly spiral downward.

The third theme to support the research sub-question is the family and teacher support theme. As mentioned throughout, this theme emerged for all students. Both students who held a high self-efficacy belief and those that held a low self-efficacy belief. If the family environment was not conducive for structure, discipline, and love, the students self-efficacies were at risk. Many students that had a high self-efficacy reported that their mothers and often grandmothers were their persuasive self-efficacy source. Those students who did not have a mother or grandmother figure present had a lower self-efficacy and had experienced many hurts and disappointments. The low self-efficacy for students often turned into student apathy. Teachers could serve as a positive persuasive source by showing that they believed in students and pushing them to achieve. However, in order to combat the loss of close family support, a student would need a supportive teacher each year to provide what is lost at home. Without the consistent support of family and teachers, students are at-risk of developing personal low self-efficacy beliefs and student apathy.

Three themes also aligned with the second research sub-question: How do 10th grade students develop and define academic self-efficacy beliefs? Students defined self-efficacy beliefs by feeling and exhibiting those feelings. Those three themes were: sense of accomplishment, tenacious attitude, and feelings of stress. The first theme, sense of accomplishment, was prevalent for those students who had both high and low self-efficacy beliefs. If students who possessed a low self-efficacy belief successfully completed a task, then they too would have a sense of accomplishment physiological and

affective feeling. Students who had a high self-efficacy would feel the same sense of accomplishment, but would feel a greater sense of accomplishment if the task was challenging for them. Additionally, those students who possessed a high self-efficacy belief had a tenacious attitude towards any task or challenge regardless of their skill set. Those students were not afraid to work and try to accomplish tasks out of their comfort zones. However, students who had a low self-efficacy belief were opposed to challenges and tasks beyond their skill set, but were quite comfortable in pursuing tasks that they felt they would make them successful. The third theme also provided in-depth information for the research question. Those students who had a low self-efficacy belief and were often already stressed about situations other than school displayed feelings of stress, the third emerging theme. School perhaps was a distraction from events occurring at home. When low self-efficacy led to low academic motivation, then, students had feelings of stress when assignments were overdue and tests were failed. Mostly those students acted as if school was not stressful, and even at times, they would act incognizant of the fact that they were performing poorly in school. Students who had a high-self efficacy experienced less feelings of stress when it came to a challenging task. Mostly those students kept a positive attitude about school and extracurricular activities. Sometimes those students may have felt overwhelmed by the rigors of an involved high school student who takes honors classes and is involved in many extracurricular activities, but typically those students had a high self-efficacy for juggling multiple tasks.

Lastly, three themes also aligned with the third research sub question: How do self-efficacy sources enhance or diminish academic self-efficacy and academic motivation? The three themes emerged to answer how self-efficacy sources enhance or

diminish academic self-efficacy and academic motivation. Students with less self-efficacy development source events and situations often experience a lower self-efficacy. If students have few or negative self-efficacy source development events, then there is a decreased chance in building positive self-efficacy beliefs. Students with little family support experienced this phenomenon the most. Contrary to few self-efficacy source development events, those students with a high number and successful number of events had a higher self-efficacy, which led to a higher academic motivation.

The second theme occurred with both students who had high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy beliefs. Both groups of students might exhibit an increase in performance. First, students with lower self-efficacy beliefs may increase their self-efficacy beliefs if the student experiences a self-efficacy development source (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective). This incident occurred sometimes with students. For instance, students might show an increase in performance, if they feel like they have a better teacher from one year to the next. Some students would be held back a grade and instantly increase their self-efficacy beliefs because the second time experiencing the class gave the students the opportunity to experience mastery source experiences. Students with an already high self-efficacy belief, would increase performance if a task was exceptionally challenging for them. Consistently though, students with a low self-efficacy belief had to have a self-efficacy source development experience in order to increase performance. Otherwise, students with low self-efficacy would continue to be complacent and accept status quo for academic performances.

The third theme to emerge for students was an increased inner drive. Students with a high self-efficacy would display an increased inner drive when faced with

challenges. Any challenge would be accepted and students were proud to show their abilities. If students with a low self-efficacy would experience a self-efficacy source development event or situation and gain self-efficacy beliefs, then they too would experience an increased inner drive. Often success would build on success. If students had experienced bad grades and then decided to make a change to increase those grades, if the grades increased, then in turn, the inner drive would increase also.

All three sub-questions and the nine emergent themes link together to provide information for the central research question: What early self-efficacy sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, and physiological and affective feelings) do adolescent students develop and experience to foster academic motivation? Tenth grade students at the school site experience all self-efficacy sources with mastery, persuasion, and physiological and affective feeling sources being the most prevalent. Successful mastery source development yielded the highest self-efficacy beliefs while physiological and affective sources were the next beneficial for increasing self-efficacy beliefs.

Findings

The research revealed nine themes that answered one central research question and three research sub-questions examined in the study. Based on a thorough review of the nine themes, the researcher identified three major findings based on the theoretical framework and research questions. The three major findings were developed in the context of the literature and relevance to this study on the educational journey of 10th grade students. Finding one indicated that the students depicted their personal perceived self-efficacy based on the self-efficacy source development that had occurred in each student's life, particularly the amount of mastery source experiences that students had

successfully completed. Finding two indicated that the participants based their personal perceived self-efficacy source development on how successful or unsuccessful they had been in school with special emphasis on students persuasion and physiological and affective source development. Finding three revealed that participants academic motivation was based on the students personal perceived academic self-efficacy relating to all four mastery sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective).

Finding One

Students Personal Educational Journeys Determined Self-Efficacy

Each student's unique journey through PK, elementary school, middle school, and high school determined the student's personal perceived self-efficacy belief. Additionally, students home environments played a crucial role in the development of their self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) hypothesized that individuals form self-efficacy beliefs based on the interpretation of information from the environment, specifically from the four crucial sources (mastery experiences, social experiences, vicarious experiences, and physiological experiences), and attests that the most powerful source of information is interpreting one's own previous performance, or previous mastery experience (Klassen, 2004; Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007; Usher & Pajares, 2006). If students had success in mastery source performances early in their lives, then students had high self-efficacy beliefs and exhibited behaviors and performances aligned with positive self-efficacy beliefs such as an increased inner drive, a tenacious attitude toward challenges, and strong academic motivation. However, if students did not have successful mastery performances early in their lives, then students possessed lower self-efficacy beliefs and exhibited behaviors such as low motivation, depression, apathy, stress, and fear of failure.

Students experiences were determined both by their school paths and their home environments.

Finding Two

Students Personal Perceived Self-Efficacy Source Development is Determined by Self-Efficacy Development Source Experiences

The journey that students experience is comprised of the events along the way. Those self-efficacy source events and situations develop student self-efficacy. Mastery source experiences where students find fulfillment and an increased self-efficacy in completed tasks successfully create positive self-efficacy beliefs. Family and teacher support of persuasion and physiological and affective source development also catapulted students self-efficacy beliefs. Bilge, Cetin, and Dost (2014) examined high school students levels of burnout and school engagement with respect to academic success, study habits, and self-efficacy beliefs. Data were gathered in the 2011–2012 school year from 633 students attending six high schools located in Ankara, Turkey. The results suggested that students with low self-efficacy beliefs had higher burnout levels. In addition, students with inadequate study skills and those with low self-efficacy beliefs were at higher risk of losing their beliefs. Another finding was that students with high academic success also had high self-efficacy. Unexpectedly, students with inadequate study skills and low self-efficacy beliefs were found to have high self-efficacy. Students with adequate study skills and high self-efficacy beliefs also had high school engagement levels. Jenson, Petri, Maddux and Meier (1995) attest that a strong sense of self-efficacy also helps individuals approach challenging situations without experiencing incapacitating anxiety and confusion. Day, Truman, and Duffy (2011) conducted a study

in which 20 college students with self-reported disabilities participated in focus groups organized around Bandura's (1994, 1997) self-efficacy source experience: mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective sources. The results indicated that participants in the study reported that success in their classes added to their overall sense of accomplishment and self-confidence as they made their way through college. Students reported that several factors contributed to mastery experiences in college, ranging from the role of instructors, family, friends, and classmates to the assistance of the college's academic and disability support offices. The participants credited instructors as having the most impact on their ability to experience success in their classes. Instructors created a valuable culture for learning in a class that students appreciated and that promoted mastery experiences. The post-secondary participants reported, not only did mastery experiences improve students self-efficacy beliefs, but another self-efficacy source, social/persuasion, proved to be beneficial for the students. Bergen's (2013) research, addressed the issue of few qualitative studies having been conducted and few studies focus on the teachers interactions with students and how those early interactions can improve or impede the formation of sufficient self-efficacy. The importance of family and teacher support evidence emerged from the data gathered from the sophomore students. The students described their mothers, grandmothers, and teachers as being supporters of their self-efficacy beliefs. These family supports and sources were a integral piece to cultivating students self-efficacies. However, Gilligan (1982) suggested that the self-efficacy beliefs of girls may be strongly informed by the messages received from teachers, peers, family, and significant others. These messages may be more

meaningful to girls than boys. Boy are often more preoccupied with personal accomplishments than with relational persona.

Without positive self-efficacy source experiences and situations occurring in students lives, students self-efficacy beliefs are negative and slower to develop. Bandura (1994, 1997) suggested that individuals who doubt capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, which are viewed as personal threats. Instead of concentrating on performing successfully, inefficacious people have low aspirations, a weak commitment to pursuing goals, dwell on personal deficiencies and obstacles encountered, readily give up when faced with a difficult situation and often experience potentially adverse outcomes. These individuals have a hard time recovering their sense of efficacy after failure or setbacks.

Arslan (2012) conducted a correlational study to reveal the sources of 6th-8th grade students information for self-efficacy beliefs for learning and performance. The population of the study was comprised of 1,049 sixth through eighth grade students from central primary schools that were selected through cluster sampling located in Ereğli, Zonguldak. Two different types of scale surveys were used. The factor "performance accomplishments" or mastery experiences was the strongest one that predicted the students self-efficacy beliefs for learning and performance. Furthermore, it accounted for 36.7% of the change in the students self-efficacy beliefs for learning and performance. Therefore, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion accounted for only 2.1% of the total variance.

Finding Three

Academic Motivation is Linked to Students Personal Perceived Academic Self-Efficacy

The students presented a strong relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and academic motivation. If self-efficacy beliefs were established and high, then academic motivation was also high. If students experienced low academic motivation, then self-efficacy beliefs were low also. Results from a meta-analysis of more than 100 empirical studies conducted over the last 20 years found that of nine commonly researched psychosocial constructs, academic self-efficacy was the strongest single predictor of students academic achievement and performance (Artino, 2012). The principal, teachers, and guidance counselor described the low academic motivation issues with 10th grade students and reported that low self-efficacy and low academic motivation were linked. Bergen (2013) attests that a major focus of instruction should move towards improving students level of self-efficacy, providing a shift in delivery and instruction. "If we can improve how a student tackles and prepares for things by providing them with a more realistic view of their skills (calibrating), we consequently bolster their belief and actual ability to tackle a problem. This is the best life skill to internalize and generalize" Improving a student's ability to accurately depict abilities in a content area will improve performance.

Discussion of Findings

As noted in Chapter 1, several issues exist with the focus of education in America. The focus on accountability measures is leaving students behind in overwhelming numbers. Students are unable to fulfill their full potential due to many policies currently

in place. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reports only thirty-seven percent of United States high school seniors are prepared for college-level coursework in math and reading according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card or NAEP. The NAEP (2016) report also shows that the performance of the country's highest achievers is increasing in reading while the lowest-achieving students are performing worse than ever. Students are being promoted from grade to grade with very little remediation services to ensure success outside of special education services or Response to Intervention [2].

If the self-efficacy beliefs of students in the nation correlate with performance, our society will quickly become an apathetic nation. Camera (2016) from U. S. News World Report, interviewed Peggy Carr (2016), acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics for the Department of Education, and found that there is currently a gap between the highest and lowest performing students. According to the data, Carr found the students at the lower end getting worse. The current strategies in place to reform education are not effective. The whole child must be addressed instead of focusing on students to be a measure of progress for teachers.

According to Tough (2014), writer for New York Times Magazine, more than 40% of American students who start at four-year colleges do not earn a degree after six years. When community-college students are included in that tabulation, the dropout rate is more than half, worse than any other country except Hungary. A study conducted at the University of Texas ascertains that students not only have financial and academic obstacles when first entering college, they also have issues with doubts and fears of the capabilities needed to make it. The United States now ranks 12th in the world in the

percentage of young people who have earned a college degree. Tough (2014), also a mentor at the University of Texas, suggests that the only way to solve the problem of college completion is to get inside the mind of a college student. By providing motivating interventions and moral supports for college students, the University of Texas at Austin aims to take large numbers of highly motivated working-class teenagers and give them the tools they need to become successful professionals. Without addressing the social emotional well-being of students, academic performance will not be achieved at a progressive rate. High school students and entry-level college students are struggling to maintain the self-efficacy and motivation needed to accomplish rigorous and challenging tasks in both high school and college.

Sparks (2014) attests, a substantial number of American teenagers remain spectacularly unmotivated and unengaged in schooling. Learners should form positive self-efficacy beliefs early in academic careers. Schools and families must work closely to provide opportunities to foster and increase students positive self-efficacy beliefs.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the researcher's observations, four recommendations for action are being suggested. One recommendation is for Local Education Agencies (LEA) to use new Title IV funding to fund a full-time social worker, specifically a person who specializes in family counseling, for each school. Based on the research conducted, student low self-efficacy issues began in the home. For traditional and non-traditional families, the social worker could counsel with and address the needs of the whole family for more well rounded families and students. Another recommendation is for school counselors to have a state standard that implements advisor/advisee programs into every

school. Based on the interview data, students need to connect to an adult role model in the school. The faculty advisor would pair with the advisee for the time that the student is enrolled in the school much like a faculty student advisor program at a university. The third recommendation is for teachers to administer a self-efficacy survey to all students at the beginning of the year to assess students motivation to work. Knowing that academic self-efficacy plays a major role in academic motivation, it is vital to know the data for each student. Based on the self-efficacy assessment results, teachers will have an insight into program planning for differentiated instruction. The fourth recommendation is to examine the early grade literature and math progress and make changes to ensure that students are academically prepared such as a federal policy implementing standards based grading for grades PK-8th. Based on the research, four of the seventeen student participants had experienced retention in the following grades: PK, K, and 3rd. All three students reported struggling academically in those early years. However, each of those four students had a positive self-efficacy belief and had recovered to be academically motivated. Students are being socially promoted without being academically prepared.

Recommendation 1:

Human Resources Department-Family Counselor

Because all students are expected to come to school and perform regardless of the support at home, a social worker should be implemented in every school. In addition to a guidance counselor who has different standards based on the grade levels in the building, a family social worker could work with students and families. All families are not properly equipped to deal with self-efficacy issues that plague students. If students have felt rejected by a parent, that student has special needs just as if they were a special

education student. Tracking students that are economically disadvantaged does not necessarily equate a lack of parenting at home. If students who come from non-traditional family settings are expected to perform the same as students who live in a traditional home, then interventions should be in place to address those specific issues. Many of those students and their families are not receiving counseling services unless there are legal issues within the home. Students and their families should have the opportunity to receive those services while at school. The social workers' working hours could be different than the school day if needed to accommodate those families that have work obligations. The social worker could perform home visits just as case workers make visits and keep track of the children. With the newly authorized Title IV, Part A under subpart 1, funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program is designed to help meet goals by increasing the capacity of State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and local communities to: 1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education 2) improve school conditions for student learning, and 3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students (United, 2016). The LEA will be able to identify the needs of the district and implement funding within guidelines in support of Safe and Healthy Students. The 4108 policy guidelines are as follows: Not less than 20 percent of funds to support one or more of the activities authorized under section 4108 pertaining to well-rounded educational opportunities (United 2016.) Two of the opportunities that would support a social worker in the schools are defined as: (1) Promoting community and parent involvement in schools, (2) Providing school-based mental health services and counseling (United,

2016). Again, it is the LEA's decision to utilize the funding provided to address the needs of the students. Without addressing the social emotional needs of students first, learning becomes minimalized and fosters a low self-efficacy, which leads to low academic motivation. By continuing not to address students and their families' needs, the effort of educating our society is futile.

Recommendation 2:

Counseling Department-Advisor/Advisee Program Implemented at the Elementary Level

Recommendation two is developed to promote a student adult connection in every school. Based on the research conducted, students self-efficacy issues started in late elementary school and middle school. Time periods before 3rd grade were either not recollected by students or students had no memorable significant events to report. Most issues for students occurred at the middle school level, which consisted of 6th-8th grades. A few students reported having self-efficacy issues as low as 3rd grade with issues surrounding learning difficulties. A mandated advisor/advisee program would place a student with a faculty member that could loop with the student each year until the student enrolls in the next feeder school. Students often described years in school as being bad because of a teacher. Regardless, an advisor/advisee program would lead to another opportunity for students to have a connection with another adult in the building. The advisor/advisee state mandated program would ensure that students had guidance throughout their academic careers to ensure success. The advisor could track student progress, attendance, discipline issues, interventions, and keep students abreast of upcoming opportunities. Currently, according to Policy 5.103 for public school guidance counselors, the student to guidance counselor are the following: (1) Elementary School

Counselors - Grades K-6: 1:500, (2) Secondary School Counselors - Grades 7-12: 1:350 (Tennessee, 2016). The current ratio will not feasibly allow guidance counselors to fulfill the advisor/advisee role. Naturally, high school faculty members should not advise students on credits and transcripts without proper training, but could serve as an effective mentor in other areas such as signing up for the ACT or SAT, staying on-track for graduation, planning classes for the next semester, and enrolling in extracurricular activities. As it stands, guidance counselors are unable to fulfill the needs of all students. Post-secondary institutions have had advisor/advisee programs in place for many years, pre-secondary institutions should model post-secondary institutions faculty advisor/advisee programs.

Recommendation 3:

Classroom Practice- Self-Efficacy Assessment-Implementation of Mastery Tasks on Student's Individual Academic Level

The issues with self-efficacy and academic motivation are not being addressed in classrooms across the United States. Based on the research conducted, students described situations where they struggled academically year after year, which further led to low self-efficacy and low academic motivation. Teachers, the administrator, and the guidance counselor confirmed this phenomenon. Standards are taught on grade level to students regardless of their grade level performances. Data revealed that students felt unsuccessful week after week, month after month, and year after year. Not only did their self-efficacy diminish but so did their learning. Students must have opportunities to experience success at their level or slightly above. The data revealed that successful mastery source challenges were the greatest self-efficacy booster. If students are constantly expected to

perform sometimes 4 or more grade levels above their current grade level, then frustration and apathy will cripple the student. Response to Intervention (RTI^2) will address some of these issues, if students have the most effective teacher delivering the most effective research-based instruction. However, when students fall more than one grade level behind, the rate at which students must grow requires more hours than are in a school day especially at the high school level where students are enrolled in credit bearing classes. Teachers should survey students each year to determine their self-efficacy and academic motivation levels. These two components can assist teachers in program planning and differentiation. The whole child should be considered when teaching and learning are involved. A self-efficacy survey should be implemented each school year both at the beginning and end of the school year. Program planning can include opportunities to differentiate mastery source events and situations that foster academic self-efficacy and motivation.

Recommendation 4:

Early Grades Literacy and Math Preparedness-PK-8th Grade-Standards Based Grading

Based on the research conducted, many of the students inefficacious issues and low academic motivational issues were linked to low performance. The low performance could be attributed to many factors such as learning issues, low self-efficacy, or lack of support from family and teachers. Students described high school as being difficult. When students were asked why high school was hard, some students explained that in elementary school and middle school, students were passed regardless of grades. In high school, credits must be earned in order to graduate. Controversy is centered around retention and promotion issues. However, many students are leaving the early grades ill-

prepared in reading and math. This problem only worsens as students progress through the grade levels. Standards-based grading is a way to show exact mastery and non-mastery. For many school districts and schools, if a 1st grade student has a final report card grade of a 70 in reading, then only 70% of the material was mastered throughout the year. A 70% grade of mastery does not give the next year's 2nd grade teacher a recipe to follow for that individual student. "Standards-based grading was created in response to what many experts saw as a lack of accuracy and continuity in the way schools and teachers grade their students" (Munoz & Guskey, 2015, p. 66). A standards-based grading (SBG) policy nationwide would assist the continuity from state to state, district to district, school to school, and child to child. Standards-based grading would ensure complete student mastery for each standard needed for the academic year. This initiative would not come without a need for consistent professional development to ensure that the subjectivity of broad standards were unpacked to be concise and reliable for all classrooms. Kyle Spencer, an author for Education Digest, states, "Standards-based grading derives from the idea that teachers ought to have clearly defined academic goals for their students, be able to determine if they've met them, and then communicate that to students and parents" (2012, p.5). SBG also allows parents and guardians to see the exact standards that students have mastered on that grade level. At the end of the year, all standards would need to be met in order for students to be successful at the next grade level. Standards-based grading takes the ambiguity out of teaching and learning.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because of the significant number of students involved, the variable sources that create efficacious and inefficacious students, and the effect of students self-efficacy development sources on students educational journeys, this topic warrants further research. Most of the recommendations for future research are based on the limitations of this study as well as specific topics that need to be explored.

Future Research Recommendation 1:

Conduct a Study That Includes Parents and Guardians of the Students

One recommendation for future research is to conduct a study that is similar to this research study but including the parents and/or guardians of the students. A similar study that involved the parents and guardians of the students would provide more evidence for self-efficacy source developments.

Future Recommendation 2:

Conduct a Similar Study to Include a Case Study of Students

Another recommendation is to conduct a similar study to include a case study of students along with the interviews. Since mastery source development was the best indicator of high or low self-efficacy, students could be observed while performing tasks.

Future Recommendation 3:

Conduct a Longitudinal Research Study Over a 5-Year Span

A third recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal research study similar to this research study but to follow up yearly over five years with the participants during their educational journey to post-secondary education, career, or workforce.

Other topics need to be further explored for future research that can make a valuable contribution to the field of education. A recommendation for future research is to further explore topics related to Response to Intervention[2] and the effects that intervention strategies have on students self-efficacies. These recommendations for future research might diverge in methodology and topics but should converge in a collaborative effort to increase student learning.

Summary and Conclusion

Although public education of the masses has afforded many individuals the opportunity as a means to a better future, it also has created additional roadblocks on the educational journey. One of the significant roadblocks is that many students learn early in their educational journeys that they are not academically or emotionally prepared. This phenomenon of low self-efficacy and low academic motivation is not a recent trend; in fact, it is rooted in the history of public education. Nevertheless, the number of ill-prepared students has continued to increase significantly, creating a generational undereducated society, launching underprepared workers in the workforce, increasing the high school dropout rate, and generating a dismal college completion rate. This qualitative study of 22 participants focused on students perceptions of academic self-efficacy source development. The study resulted in three findings. The three major findings were developed in the context of the literature and relevance to this study on the educational journey of 10th grade students. Finding one indicated that the students depicted their personal perceived self-efficacy based on the self-efficacy source development that had occurred in each student's life, particularly the amount of mastery source experiences that students had successfully completed. Finding two indicated that

the participants based their personal perceived self-efficacy source development on how successful or unsuccessful they had been in school with special emphasis on students persuasion and physiological and affective source development. Finding three revealed that participants academic motivation was based on the students personal perceived academic self-efficacy relating to all four mastery sources (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological and affective). These findings, based on responses from the participants in the study, provide better understandings of students who are experiencing academic motivational issues that are linked to academic self-efficacy beliefs.

Although the selected school for this study was known for its leadership, innovation, and research-based approach to education, the participants in the study provided the catalyst for recommendations for improvement. One recommendation is for Local Education Agencies (LEA) to use new Title IV funding to fund a full-time social worker, specifically a person who specializes in family counseling, for each school. Another recommendation is for school counselors to have a state standard that implements advisor/advisee programs into every school. Based on the interview data, students need to connect to an adult role model in the school. The third recommendation is for teachers to administer a self-efficacy survey to all students at the beginning and end of the school year to assess students academic motivation to work. Knowing that academic self-efficacy plays a major role in academic motivation, it is vital to know the self-efficacy levels for each student. The fourth recommendation is to implement standards-based grading for PK-8th grade students to effectively assess student progress and make changes to ensure that students are academically prepared.

This study, based on the participants voices provides a greater understanding of the key elements of student self-efficacy source development of the 10th grade participants. Educators hold a responsibility to students to implement widespread, effective programs for social emotional education, to fund future research, and seek to better understand the influence of students experiences on the academic road to success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Student Pre-Screening Self-Efficacy Survey Instrument

DIRECTIONS: Circle the answer that best shows how well you can do each of the following things.

AFTER FINISHING, PLEASE FOLD AND PLACE IN YOUR ENVELOPE. THANK YOU!

1.How well can you express your opinions when your classmates disagree with you?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
2.How well can you become friends with other youth?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
3.How well can you have a chat with an unfamiliar person?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
4.How well can you work in harmony with your classmates?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
5.How well can you tell other youth that they are doing something that you don't like?	Not Very Well	2	3	4	Very Well 5

	1				
6.How well can you tell a funny event to a group of youth?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
7.How well do you succeed in staying friends with other youth?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
8.How well do you succeed in preventing quarrels with other youth?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5

Social Self-Efficacy Survey (Muris, 2001)

1. How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on your schoolwork?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
2. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
3. How well can you study a chapter for a test?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
4. How well do you succeed in finishing all your homework everyday?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5

5. How well can you pay attention during every class?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
6. How well do you succeed in passing all your subjects?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
7. How well do you succeed in satisfying your parents with your schoolwork?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
8. How well do you succeed in passing a test?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5

Academic Self-Efficacy Survey (Muris, 2001)

1. How well do you succeed in cheering yourself up when an unpleasant event has happened?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
2. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
3. How well can you prevent becoming nervous?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
4. How well can you control your feelings?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5

5. How well can you give yourself a pep-talk when you feel low?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
6. How well can you tell a friend that you don't feel well?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
7. How well do you succeed in suppressing unpleasant thoughts?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5
8. How well do you succeed at not worrying about things that may not happen?	Not Very Well 1	2	3	4	Very Well 5

Emotional Self-Efficacy Survey (Muris, 2001)

Description: The academic self-efficacy subscale measures youths' perceptions of their ability to manage their own learning and succeed academically.

Ages: This scale is recommended for youth ages 14-18 (Grades 8-12). Reliability: Alpha is .88.

Number of Items: 24.

Scoring Procedures: The responses range from 1= Not Very Well to 5= Very Well. There are no items that need to be reversed scored. Responses are summed to produce the total score.

Permission: Not required for use of this scale.

Appendix B

Interview Protocol Students

Male/Female: ____
Age: ____
Student Number: ____
Pseudonym: _____

SIQ1) How old are you?
SIQ2) Do you have any brothers or sisters?
Full___ Step ____ Half____
SIQ3) Who do you live with?
Both____ Single ____ Mother__ or Father___ Grandparent____ Other____
SIQ4) Describe an event in your elementary school career where you felt successful. (physiological)
SIQ5) Describe an event in elementary school where you felt unsuccessful. (physiological)
SIQ6) Have you ever been enrolled in any other school system?
Public____ Private ____ Home school _____
SIQ7) Did you attend pre-school, daycare, or head start before K?
SIQ8) Have you ever been held back a grade or promoted a grade?
Feelings? _____
SIQ9) Describe your best performances in school.
SIQ10) Describe your biggest challenges in school.
SIQ11) How are your grades this year a reflection of your work habits?

SIQ12) Tell me about your entire school experience.
Pre-K _____
Elementary _____
Middle _____
High School _____

SIQ13) Describe any type of school work that you do at home.
SIQ14) Tell me about people in your life that have helped you with school.
SIQ15) Describe how you feel about school.
SIQ16) Tell me about your best moments in school.
Pre-K _____
Elementary _____
Middle _____
High School _____
SIQ17) Tell me about what you would consider to be your worst moments in school.
Pre-K _____
Elementary _____
Middle _____
High School _____
SIQ18)Describe how your elementary years have influenced your performance in high school. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)
SIQ19) Describe how you feel about working in groups or teams with other students?
SIQ20) Do you plan to graduate from high school?
SIQ21) Are you currently on-track with your credits for graduation?
Early graduation? _____
SIQ22) Have you ever attended summer school for any grade?
SIQ23) Describe how you learn best.
SIQ24) Describe your plans for after high school.
Influence of that decision _____

Appendix C

Interview Protocol Teachers

Researcher's Checklist:
Consent ___
Study Description___
Results via email ____

Male/Female: ____
Subject Taught: ____
# of years teaching _____
Pseudonym: _____

TIQ1) Describe how you became a 10th grade teacher.
TIQ2) Have you ever taught any other grades?
TIQ3) What is your favorite subject/grade to teach so far?
TIQ4) Describe your teaching style/method.
TIQ5) Tell me how students learn in your classroom.
TIQ6) How many students do you have in all? ____
On average in a class?_____
TIQ7) Describe a positive self-efficacious student.
Self-efficacy definition: Self-Efficacy Belief- people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986)
TIQ8) Describe in detail the work habits of unmotivated students.
TIQ9) Tell me how you know how a student learns best.
TIQ10) Describe in detail the work habits of motivated students.
TIQ11) Describe specific evidence of students positive perceived self- efficacy beliefs. TIQ12) Describe specific evidence of students negative perceived self-efficacy beliefs.
TIQ13) Describe the different types of students perceived personal self-efficacy beliefs. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)
TIQ14) Describe examples of students personal self-efficacy beliefs in your classroom. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)

Appendix D

Interview Protocol Administrator

Researcher's Checklist:
Consent ___
Study Description___
Results via email ____

Male/Female: ____
# of years in administration _____
Pseudonym: _____

AIQ1) Describe how you became an administrator.
AIQ2) Have you ever been an administrator at any other school?
AIQ3) How many teachers are in your building?
AIQ4) Describe how your teachers foster student learning.
AIQ5) Tell me how teachers ensure learning in their classrooms.
AIQ6) How many students do you have in all? ____
On average in a class?_____
AIQ7) Describe a particular grade that has more discipline issues. Why?
AIQ8) Describe a particular grade that has a higher failing rate. Why?
AIQ9) Describe a positive self-efficacious student.
Self-efficacy definition: Self-Efficacy Belief- people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986)
AIQ10) Describe in detail the work habits of unmotivated students.
AIQ11) Describe parents/guardians of unmotivated students.
AIQ12) Describe in detail how teachers in your building motivate students.
AIQ13) Describe specific evidence of students positive perceived self- efficacy beliefs. AIQ14) Describe specific evidence of students negative perceived self-efficacy beliefs.
AIQ15) Describe the different types of students perceived personal self-efficacy beliefs. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)
AIQ16) Describe examples of students personal self-efficacy beliefs in your school. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)

Appendix E

Interview Protocol Guidance Counselor

Male/Female: ____
# of years in administration _____
Pseudonym: _____

Researcher's Checklist:
Consent ___
Study Description___
Results via email ____
REMINDER: Please do not provide any identifiable information about students or others.

CIQ1) Describe how you became a counselor.
CIQ2) Have you ever been a counselor at any other school?
CIQ3) What age students do your serve?
CIQ4) Describe your responsibilities to students.
CIQ5) How do you meet your students needs?
CIQ6) How many students do you have in all? ____
CIQ7) Describe a particular grade that has more counseling issues. Why?
CIQ8) Describe a particular grade that has a higher failing rate. Why?
CIQ9) Describe a positive self-efficacious student.
Self-efficacy definition: Self-Efficacy Belief- people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986)
CIQ10) Describe in detail students that you counsel about grades.
CIQ11) Describe parents/guardians of unmotivated students.
CIQ12) Describe in detail how you motivate students.
CIQ13) Describe specific evidence of students positive perceived self- efficacy beliefs.
AIQ14) Describe specific evidence of students negative perceived self-efficacy beliefs.
CIQ15) Describe the different types of students perceived personal self-efficacy beliefs. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)
CIQ16) Describe examples of students personal self-efficacy beliefs in your school. (mastery, vicarious, persuasion, physiological)

Appendix F

Research Blueprint

Title: Developing Student Academic Self- Efficacy: A Qualitative Study of 10th Graders			
Purpose Statement: The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the development of academic self-efficacy source beliefs of 10th grade students. At this stage in the research, the development of students personal perceived self-efficacy beliefs will be generally defined in the following categorical framework: mastery sources (actual performance), vicarious sources (modeling), persuasion sources (verbal and otherwise), and physiological and affective sources at the time of the experiences (student capabilities and strengths) (Bandura, 1997).			
Research Questions	Data Source(s) & Coding Schemata	Type(s) of Data	Analysis
A) What significant events occur in student lives to develop perceived academic self-efficacy?	AIQ8, AIQ12, SIQ24, AIQ5, AIQ7, SIQ4, TIQ4, TIQ13, TIQ14, SIQ5, SIQ8, SIQ12, SIQ14, SIQ17, SIQ18, SIQ19, SIQ22, CIQ8, CIQ12, CIQ5, CIQ7	Interview Transcriptions (Student, Teacher, Administrator)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding
B) How do significant events shape students self-efficacy beliefs?	AIQ5, AIQ7, AIQ8, AIQ15, SIQ17, SIQ18, AIQ4, TIQ5, TIQ7, TIQ9, TIQ11, SIQ8, SIQ12, SIQ14, SIQ15, CIQ5, CIQ7, CIQ8, CIQ15	Interview Transcriptions (Student, Teacher, Administrator)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding
C) How does student perceived academic self-efficacy affect student academic performance?	AIQ8, AIQ5, AIQ9, AIQ7, AIQ10, AIQ11, AIQ12, AIQ13, AIQ14, SIQ9, SIQ10, SIQ12, TIQ8, TIQ10, SIQ13, SI14, SIQ17, SIQ18, SIQ20, SIQ21, SIQ24, CIQ8, CIQ5, CIQ9, CIQ10, CIQ11, CIQ12, CIQ13,	Interview Transcriptions (Student, Teacher, Administrator)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding

Appendix G

Self-Efficacy Sources and Corresponding Interview Questions

Self-Efficacy Sources	Corresponding Interview Question
Mastery	TIQ13, TIQ14, AIQ15, AIQ16, SIQ9, SIQ10, SIQ11, SIQ12, SIQ13, SIQ14, SIQ16
Vicarious	TIQ13, TIQ4, AIQ15, AIQ16, SIQ14, SIQ9, SIQ10, SIQ11, SIQ2, SIQ13, SIQ14, SIQ16
Persuasion	TIQ13, TIQ14, AIQ15, AIQ16, SIQ14, SIQ9, SIQ10, SIQ11, SIQ12, SIQ13, SIQ14, SIQ16
Physiological	TIQ13, TIQ14, AIQ15, AIQ16, SIQ4, SIQ5, SIQ8, SIQ11, SIQ12, SIQ13, SIQ14, SIQ16, SIQ15, SIQ22

Appendix H

Rapport Building Interview Questions

Researcher Building Rapport Questions
SIQ1, SIQ2, SIQ3, TIQ1, TIQ2, TIQ3, TIQ6, SIQ6, SIQ7, AIQ1, AIQ2, AIQ3, AIQ6, CIQ1, CIQ2, CIQ3

Appendix I

Time Period in Academic Careers and Corresponding Questions

Time Period in Students Lives	Questions
PK-Elementary	SIQ4, SIQ5, SIQ7, SIQ8, SIQ12, SIQ14, SIQ15, SIQ16, SIQ17, SIQ18
Middle	SIQ8, SIQ12, SIQ14, SIQ15, SIQ16, SIQ17
High School	SIQ11, SIQ10, SIQ9, SIQ12, SIQ13, SIQ14, SIQ15, SIQ16, SIQ17, SIQ18, SIQ19, SIQ20, SIQ21

Appendix J

Themes and Description Support for Themes

Themes	Support and Explanation of Themes
personal accomplishments	Students described feeling accomplished when completing a task.
personal challenges	Students described feeling accomplished or frustrated depending on the level of challenge. Efficacious students faced challenges while inefficacious resisted challenges.
Family and teacher support	Students described support from parents, particularly Mothers and Grandmothers, teachers, or guardians. Lack of support from immediate family members often led to low self-efficacy beliefs for students.
sense of accomplishment	Students descried feeling accomplished when successfully completing a task. The sense of accomplishment was heightened depending on the level of the challenge.
tenacious attitude	Students who experienced personal perceived high self-efficacy beliefs exhibited tenacity towards any challenge.
feelings of stress	Students who experienced personal perceived low self-efficacy beliefs exhibited feelings of stress when faced with a challenged or sometimes felt overwhelmed.
low academic motivation	Students who experienced personal perceived low self-efficacy beliefs exhibited a low academic motivation to work.
increased performance	Students who experienced personal perceived high self-efficacy beliefs experienced an increase performance especially when successfully completing challenging tasks.
increased inner drive	Students who experienced personal perceived both low and high self-efficacy beliefs would have spurts of increase inner drive depending on the output of work when accomplishing a task.

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