## Students' Self-Efficacy and Motivation on their Academic Performance in using English Language

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**Abstract**

Globalization has brought significant changes to the educational landscape which aims graduates to embody professional attributes and competencies. In order to meet the inevitable changes, schools carry the responsibility to ensure the significant academic performance of the students. This study attempts to identify the influence of self-efficacy and motivation on students' academic performance. Mixed method was employed with questionnaires as the main source of quantitative data while open-ended questions with focus group discussions for the qualitative data. Two hundred fifty-four (254) first-year students were utilized as respondents while descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple linear regression were used and complemented the qualitative data. Students' academic performance was found to have influenced their self-efficacy and motivation. This study hopes to strengthen the motivation of the students in learning the second language by enforcing close collaboration and communication among students through the use of the language. It is also suggested to future researchers to explore factors not included in the study that may have the influence on the academic performance of the students.

**Keywords:** globalization; academic performance; self-efficacy; motivation

## 1. Introduction

Globalization has transformed the world in every aspect of knowledge, education and learning essential to provide professionals to man the economy. Global education changes its methods of teaching from cultural to worldwide system to encourage international development. This phenomenon has changed the educational

landscape in ASEAN countries that will allow students grow academically distinct with characteristics and attributes of a professional (Louangrath, 2013) and as a result, schools are pressed to deliver quality instruction (Del Villar, 2016). In order to address these imperative concerns, colleges and universities in Thailand are offering more International Programs to supply such demands. Wiriyachitra (2001) posited that English curriculum in Thai schools does not meet the demands used in the workplace; however, Pawapatcharaudom (2007) expressed that while the country's economy is expanding and promoting to international markets, English language is a requirement for this decade.

In order to address these concerns, St. Theresa International College aims to deliver quality education through English as the medium of instruction. Although learning English is essential for Thai students, their language facility and vocabulary is minimal which may lead to high frustration, confusion, and stress which in turn will have an effect to their performance (Pawapatcharaudom, 2007).

The academic performance of the students is essential to every school. It reflects their competencies that can be beneficial - an important role in producing quality graduates. This study investigated the academic performance of Thai students notwithstanding of the language tool used in teaching and learning. This present study attempted to establish the students' personal belief to perform a course of action and accomplish a specific performance (Bandura, 1986) and their diligence to complete studies (Moreno, Cutre and Ruiz, 2009) have an impact on their academic performance.

The main objective of this study was to determine the predictors of academic performance of First Year Thai students.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

This study is anchored on two important factors – self-efficacy and motivation of students. In an attempt to study the influence of students' academic performance, one could not think a better theory than Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. According to the theory, the way people think, feel, act and motivate themselves is affected by self-efficacy (Zulkosky, 2009) and fulfill any tasks assigned to them (Bandura, 2006). Researchers of self-efficacy suggest that people lacking self-efficacy have problems with motivating themselves to carry out tasks. When students

have the impression that they will not be able to complete a certain task, they will not make an effort to fulfill it and they will easily quit (Margolis and McCabe, 2006).

Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. As everyone has different capabilities, their self-efficacy levels can also be different. For example, while mathematician can have high operational efficacy, they can be low in social efficacy (Schunk and Pajares, 2002).

As human motivation is a complex phenomenon involving a number of diverse sources and conditions, it has always been a matter of discussion in the academe (Dornyei, Csizer, and Nemeth, 2006). Motivation is surely one of the concepts of great importance that it is related to academic performance. Motivation has a significant effect on the attitude and learning behaviors of individuals (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Fairchild, Horst, Finney and Barron 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais and Brière, 1992). Perceived as a single concept by putting a general level of motivation in terms of certain behaviors, self-determination theory directs its focus on classifying different kinds of motivation. The idea underlying the theory is that the quality of motivation would be more significant than the quantity in terms of effective performance, creative problem solving, and deep or conceptual learning.

This study, in particular, was designed to investigate the correlation between self-efficacy and motivation to students' academic performance. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory has given a path to self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) states that the extent to which a person copes with obstacles and failures is determined by personal efficacy; furthermore, students insist on carrying on the activities that are threatening. Therefore, students can either be of the opinion that they are going to have a positive outcome or they are going to have a negative outcome for a certain task, which is their academic performance (Shunk and Pajares, 2002). Thus, the way students motivate themselves is affected by self-efficacy (Zulkosky, 2009).

## 2.1 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of the study is to determine the predictors of academic performance of First Year Thai students. Specifically, this study determined the following: (a) level of students' self-efficacy; (b) level of students' motivation; (c)

students' academic performance; (d) self-efficacy as a predictor to academic performance; (e) motivation as a predictor to academic performance.
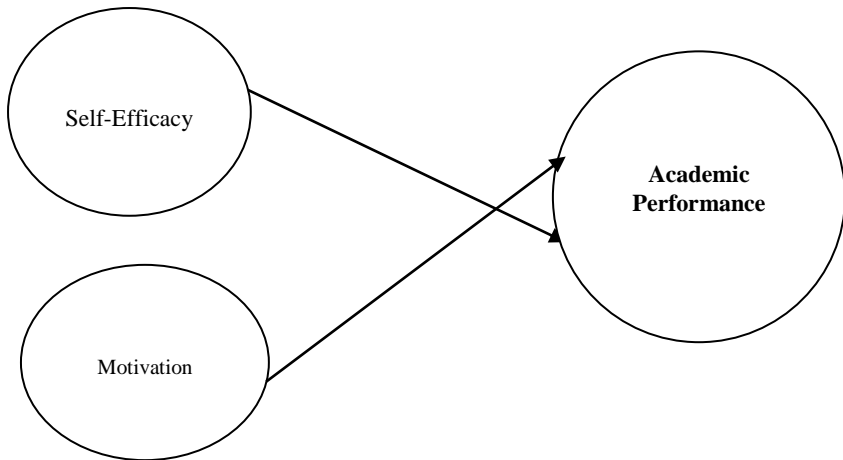


**Figure 1 Schematic diagram of the study**

## 3. Methodology

Mixed method was employed in this study which combines the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches providing a better understanding of research that either of the approaches alone could not suffice (Creswell and Clark, 2011). The participants of this study were the first year students of St. Theresa International College enrolled during the 2$^{nd}$ semester of Academic Year 2017-2018. Data were collected through questionnaires and the participants rated themselves accordingly. Total population sampling was employed in this study where the researchers chose the entire population. This study was conducted among 254 first-year students who were enrolled in the English Program. The descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviations) and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient were utilized to meet the objectives of the study. The data were statistically processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25).

## 4. Analysis and Results

**Table 1 Descriptive Result of Respondents' Self-Efficacy**

| Variables | N | Mean | Description | Interpretation | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Self-Efficacy | 254 | 3.21 | Often | Good | 0.839 |
| Social Self-Efficacy | 254 | 3.24 | Often | Good | 0.845 |
| Emotional Self-efficacy | 254 | 3.18 | Often | Good | 0.821 |
| Overall Mean | | 3.21 | Often | Good | 0.807 |

Table 1 shows the descriptive result of self-efficacy (*m=3.21, sd= 0.807*) implying the respondents' good drive to perform a task with the similarity of their responses. Such drive will assist the students to execute actions in the attainment of their desired goals. Bandura (2001) cited in Usher and Pajares (2008) posited that students with good self-efficacy will more likely perform better in their academics across areas and levels.

It can be noted that among the constructs, emotional self-efficacy *(m=3.18)* has the lowest rating while social self-efficacy *(m=3.24)* rated as the highest. Students' emotional self-efficacy is an important aspect in managing their emotions and beliefs in performing their tasks and roles as learners in an English Program. For example, the students commented that *"Thais are not confident in English because it's not our native language"*. Moreover, students expressed that while *"English is really difficult in reading, writing and speaking"*, *"learning the language is challenging but we will work hard for it always"*.

On the other hand, students exemplified good ability in engaging in social interaction. Students expressed *"if I don't understand my teacher, I ask my friends"*, *"my friends translate some difficult vocabulary to me"* and *"friends and teachers inspire me to study English"* will produce and maintain successful interpersonal relationships.

**Table 2 Descriptive Result of Respondents' Motivation**

| Variables | N | Mean | Description | Interpretation | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reject Alternatives | 254 | 3.13 | Often | Good | 0.990 |
| Social Enjoyment | 254 | 3.49 | Often | Good | 0.972 |
| Qualification and Career | 254 | 3.61 | Always | Very Good | 1.004 |
| Social Exploration | 254 | 3.28 | Often | Good | 0.941 |

| Social Pressure | 254 | 3.28 | Often | Good | 0.903 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Altruism | 254 | 3.29 | Often | Good | 0.894 |
| Overall Mean | | 3.34 | Often | Good | 0.981 |

Table 2 displays the descriptive result of students' motivation. The students' motivation *(m=3.34, sd=0.981)* is good and the standard deviation shows homogeneity of their responses. Their motivation explains why they decided to study, and this, in turn, becomes an essential ingredient for academic performance. This motivation drives them to pursue their drive to achieve success in life (Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte, and Feather, 2005) whilst see this chance of going to college can bring them success. In order words, their motivation is what gets them going and determines the things they are doing. Notably, students wrote *"finish study to become a flight attendant or pilot to earn more money and help the family".*

Consequently, the highest mean rating is Qualification and Career *(m=3.61);* evident why students enrolled in an international program. Chanchaochai (2012) argued that English used as a foreign language in Thailand has gained an important role as a medium required for professional advancement as well as a tool to help businesses function more effectively. Students' comments *"I think English is very important for good jobs", "I think I can get more job offers if I am able to communicate in English"* are very evident. So-mui and Mead (2000) noted that the need of English language in the workplace is due to the increased expansion of communication technologies and electronic media.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Academic Performance (GPA)**

| GPA Range | Description | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.50-4.00 | Very Good | 23 | 9.1 |
| 3.00-3.49 | Good | 58 | 22.8 |
| 2.50-2.99 | Satisfactory | 85 | 33.5 |
| 2.00-2.49 | Acceptable | 72 | 28.3 |
| 1.74-1.99 | Fair | 9 | 3.5 |
| 1.50-1.74 | Marginal | 6 | 2.4 |
| 1.01-1.49 | Failure | 1 | .4 |
| Total | | 254 | 100.0 |
| Overall Mean | | 3.03 (Good) | |

Table 3 displays the students' grade point average. The result shows the mainstream *(f= 85; 33.5%)* of their grades described as satisfactory. The overall mean

*(m=3.03)* of their academic performance was described as good. The grade result of the students demonstrates the initial relationship of their academic performance and self-efficacy and motivation. With average assessment of self-efficacy and motivation, it also follows the average academic performance of the students. Zimmerman (2008) posited that the appropriate use of students' motivation demonstrates high performance in their academics.

**Table 4 Linear Regression Result of Self-Efficacy as Predictive of Academic Performance**

| Variable | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig |
|----------|-----------|------|---|-----|
| Self-Efficacy | .527 | .362 | .990 | .027 |
| Model Summary<br>R=.362; R  Square = .131; Adjusted R Square = .097; f=.979 | | | | |

Table 4 displays the linear regression of one independent variable and the dependent variable. The result reveals that the collective self-efficacy (academic, emotional and social) of the Thai students has a significant relationship (p<.027) to their academic performance. Meera and Jumana (2015) emphasized that a student with a higher sense of self-efficacy will achieve better academic performance, thus, Sharma and Nasa (2014) posited the positive relation regardless of age, gender, disciplines, and countries. Moreover, the data also shows that 13.1 percent of the variance of students' academic performance (GPA) can be explained by the collective self-efficacy of the students. The remaining variance can be explained by other factors not included in the study.

The result of the study is evident on the responses of the students: "*English is difficult and skill of each person is not equal*" and "*everyone can learn English if they put attention and really want to be good in English*". Students further commented that "*education is one of important opportunity/choice that everyone could get equally*" and "*confident I am getting the knowledge from college, get a good job and use this to do many things in the future.*"

**Table 5 Linear Regression Result of Motivation as Predictive of Academic Performance**

| Variable | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivation | .512 | -.378 | -.347 | .001 |
| Model Summary<br>(R=.328; R Square = .107; Adjusted R Square = .083; f=12.096) | | | | |

Table 5 shows the linear regression analysis of the independent variable and dependent variable. The result of the study *(B = -.378, t = -.347, p=.001)* showed that motivation has a significant relationship to students' academic performance. The result confirmed in the study of Khayyat (2004); Ali and McInerney (2009) that motivation is of great importance related to academic performance and as such, Vansteenkiste et al., (2005) elaborated that it can only influence through their participation in the class learning activities. Further, Makhlough, Siamian, Asrami, Khademloo, Esmaeili, and Esmaeili (2014) elaborated that motivation is a requirement for learning because it boosts the learner's strength and direction essential in maintaining the energy that directs his activities.

Furthermore, this study confirmed the study in Del Villar, Gabon and Danuco (2016) that it is a predictor of students' academic performance. Collectively, the result shows 10.7 percent of the combination of students' grade point average can be explained by the combination of the constructs of motivation while the remaining percent can be attributed to other factors that predict students' academic performance.

For instance, students expressed *"the reason I want to study English because I want to help my family"* and *"want to work as a flight attendant and make my parents live a comfortable life"* because *"better English means better salary"* validated the crucial role of motivation in students' academic performance.

## 5. Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

### 5.1 Findings

The use of English as the language for communication in the workplace is an essential element of employment in Thailand due to its high foreign market and likewise as a means in getting a good job with high salary. With this, Thai students opt

to study in the international program with the belief and confidence to land a good job after studying. While the academic performance of every student is vital to any schools, this study accounted for self-efficacy and motivation in students' academic performance.

The moderate self-efficacy and the average motivation of the students have established an initial relationship between the two independent variables to their grade point average. The self-efficacy implies reasonable beliefs to perform academic tasks while motivation is average, however, the construct qualification and career are remarkable due to the importance of English as a medium for required professional advancement.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The researchers recommend designing an English course material for occupational courses for the students to fulfill their needs and English language learning motivation. Likewise, researchers recommend the strengthening of the motivation of the students in learning the second language by enforcing close collaboration and communication among students through the use of the language. Furthermore, researchers suggest exploring factors such as socio-cultural that may influence the academic performance of the students.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The self-efficacy of the students has a significant relationship to their academic performance. Their academic performances are the result of what they come to believe they have accomplished and can accomplish. Students who believe they are capable of accomplishing their schoolwork will have in turn, an effect on their performance. The combination self-efficacy is substantiated with 13.1 percent of influence on their GPA,

Likewise, the relationship between motivation and the students' academic performance was also confirmed. The motivation of the students enhances their cognitive processing and directed their behavior towards their goal. The motivation of the students increases the effort they put into their academic tasks and escalates their enthusiasm to perform such tasks. A combination of 10.7 percent of the independent variable has influenced students' GPA.

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