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the Ceiling



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Bandura's Theory on Self-Efficacy

SELF-CONFIDENCE TRAINING MODULE



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1. Introduction



Self-confidence is the belief a person has in their skills and judgement, which allows them to openly communicate their knowledge and opinions freely. Self-confidence, however, is not a constant emotional state, with time, a person's degree of confidence may rise or fall. A person's temperament, societal and cultural circumstances, degree of education, wealth, success, and failure patterns can all affect one's level of self-confidence.

Psychologist Albert Bandura developed his theory on self-efficacy in 1977. Self-efficacy describes "people's belief in their ability to control their functioning and events that affect their lives", which is closely related to what is commonly understood as self-confidence. This theoretical construct is situated in his Social Cognitive Theory on human behaviour, which understands humans as having a self-system which allows them to have a sense of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation and behaviours.

Within this system, individuals can resort to some kind of reference mechanisms with a number of subfunctions for recognizing, controlling and assessing behaviour as a result of interactions between the system and external factors. Thus, this system inhibits a self-regulatory role by giving people the power to control their own thought processes and behaviour, which in turn can influence their surroundings.

Bandura calls this process "reciprocal determinism", where the interpretation of the results of one's own performances informs and changes their surroundings and their self-belief, which then in turn influences the own performance again. Therefore, individuals are both the product and the producers of their own surroundings and social systems.

In other words, self-efficacy is the belief of a person in their own ability to succeed in a certain situation. It is important to study the concept of self-efficacy in the framework of advancing one's own skill levels. Unlike self-confidence, self-efficacy specifically relates to the notion, that you are able to succeed. In comparison, one can also be confident in losing. Building self-efficacy has a variety of benefits for women in their personal and professional lives.

2. The module in the professional environment



In the context of professional and workplace-related environments, developing self-efficacy skills is beneficial as it can induce:

- **Improved Performance:** High self-efficacy workers are more inclined to take on difficult jobs and persevere in the face of challenges which improves job performance.
- **Increased Motivation:** Self-efficacy beliefs affect a person's drive to perform a task or activity. Employees who feel confident in their abilities are more likely to be inspired to take on new tasks and aim higher.
- **Lowered anxiety and stress:** Self-efficacy beliefs can aid people in managing stress and anxiety at work. High self-efficacy employees are more likely to have faith in their capacity to handle challenging circumstances and overcome obstacles.
- **Professional development:** An individual's willingness to participate in professional development opportunities might be influenced by their self-efficacy views. High self-efficacy workers are more inclined to look for opportunities for learning and development, which will improve their job abilities and performance.

So-called **mastery experiences** are the most effective way to build self-efficacy. Mastery experiences are first-hand encounters in which people skillfully navigate obstacles and accomplish their objectives. These experiences are essential for boosting self-efficacy since they give a person proof of their talents and a sense of control over them. People gain confidence in their own competency and ability to succeed in similar situations in the future by overcoming hurdles and navigating them. Another aspect of building self-efficacy is **social modeling**, which refers to the concept of observing the success of people with similar characteristics and the resulting strengthening of one's own belief in their own abilities and potential for success. Self-efficacy can become a self-fulfilling prophecy when individuals receive affirmation of their abilities and strengths from people around them (**social persuasion**). Lastly, our perceptions of our own self-efficacy are influenced by our feelings, moods and physical conditions. It might be more challenging to believe in our capacity for success when we are tired or depressed, especially if we interpret these symptoms as indicators of incapacity or weakness. The negative interpretations of these physical sensations can be lessened by engaging in self-compassion exercises and learning more about them through reflection and education (**states of physiology**).

3. Impacts recognized through gender stereotypes



Being able to incorporate self-efficacy in the daily life and professional environment carries significant benefits especially for women at the workplace. Women who can exercise more self-efficacy are able to expand their networks and exploit the positive effects resulting from stronger relationships in the workplace environment.

Women can feel supported and connected by putting an emphasis on relationship skills and developing great relationships with co-workers, managers, and mentors. Opportunities for networking, mentoring, and skill-building are provided through joining masterminds, programs, and groups that cater to their professional development needs. Trust and support are fostered by genuine friendships, where women are free to be themselves and share their stories. Confidence and self-efficacy are boosted when people are open about their value and the value they contribute. Finding coworkers and peers they can be honest with promotes true relationships and support. Working together on initiatives and projects also improves networking possibilities and networking chances.

Furthermore, investing in training and professional development enables women to expand their knowledge and abilities, which boosts their self-efficacy and confidence. Another efficient method to increase self-efficacy and realize job desires is to set SMART goals, which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Because occupational self-efficacy has a favorable impact on the goals women set for themselves, it results in increased career aspirations. Women who have strong self-efficacy are more motivated at work, which improves productivity, satisfaction, and overall engagement.

For women, a better quality of life is also influenced by empowerment and higher levels of self-efficacy. Women who have strong self-efficacy are more motivated, which encourages them to take on new tasks and set greater goals. Additionally, it results in better job performance since self-confident women are more inclined to take on challenging tasks and persevere in the face of challenges.



4. Good practices and tips



“People’s beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities. Ability is not a fixed property; there is huge variability in how you perform. People who have a sense of self-efficacy bounce back from failure; they approach things in terms of how to handle them rather than worrying about what can go wrong” (Bandura, 1977)

Building self-efficacy is essential for women professionals to achieve their career goals and aspirations. There are different ways how self-efficacy can be implemented in women's professional lives.

- **Emphasize peer modeling:** Learning from the examples provided by others around us, including instructors, employers, and peers, is referred to as peer modeling. It emphasizes the significance of instilling good morals and values in others.
- **Seek feedback:** Getting feedback is emphasized as a key strategy for boosting self-efficacy because it can reveal strengths and places for development. For feedback to be successful, it must be communicated regularly and succinctly.
- **Encourage participation:** Encouragement of participation increases active engagement and improves self-efficacy, particularly in professional setting. Higher levels of critical thinking and learning from others are associated with active involvement.

To increase self-efficacy in the workplace, organizations can provide professional development opportunities, role models, and recognition for employees. Managers can also provide positive feedback and support to help employees build confidence in their abilities.

Women can improve their leadership abilities and increase their self-efficacy by taking women's leadership courses. These programs offer women the organized direction and assistance they need to enhance their professional skills. Another way for women to improve their self-efficacy is to participate in professional development programs. By learning new skills and information, this boosts their confidence. Additionally, programs for women in academia that are expressly designed to strengthen their leadership skills can focus on enhancing their sense of self-efficacy and organizational leadership abilities. Overall, these programs provide important chances for women to boost their self-efficacy and encourage the development of their leadership skills.

5. Conclusions



Bandura's theoretical framework provides valuable insights in how self-efficacy and self-confidence play a role in the (professional) life of women and how this important soft skill can be developed and increased. Self-efficacy refers to the belief in one's own abilities and competences and success, which is influenced reciprocally by our values and beliefs and our surrounding environment.

Enhancing one's sense of self-efficacy is essential for both personal and professional development. Women, in particular, can benefit from it by overcoming gender stereotypes and succeeding in the workplace. Individuals and organizations can build a self-efficacy culture that fosters self-assurance, motivation, and performance by putting into practice tactics like peer modeling, feedback-seeking, and active involvement.

The main takeaways of this training module should help women guide women towards more self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy, or people's conviction that they have some degree of control over how they behave and how things turn out in their lives, is essential to self-assurance and personal growth.

Developing self-efficacy in the workplace includes a variety of advantages, such as better performance, more motivation, less anxiety and stress, and improved possibilities for professional development.

Women's self-efficacy may be impacted by gender stereotypes, but by placing a focus on relationships, making investments in training and development, setting SMART objectives, and promoting empowerment, women can raise their self-efficacy and realize their professional goals.

In order to increase self-efficacy, it is a good idea to emphasize peer modeling, ask for regular feedback, encourage engagement, provide opportunities for professional development, and provide support and recognition at work.

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