LEX LOCALIS-JOURNAL OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
ISSN:1581-5374 E-ISSN:1855-363X
VOL. 22, NO. S4(2024)

# "SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON SELF–EFFICACY AND STRESS AMONG THE MBA STUDENTS"

**NANDAR WIN[1], AMIYA BHAUMIK[2], DHAKIR ABBAS ALI[3]**

[1]Research Scholar, *Center of Postgraduate, School of Business and Management, Lincoln University, Malaysia.*

nandar.phdscholar@lincoln.edu.my[1]

**ABSTRACT**
Several studies are being conducted on the influence of the self-efficacy in numerous fields. In academic environments, the association link between self-efficacy and students' achievement is commonly measured. Research has shown that stress has a significant impact on academic performance. There is scant research on the relationship between stress and academic self-efficacy, particularly during the first class of university or college and throughout the time. The study provides a theoretical review of the self-efficacy and stress, as well as a synopsis of recent research on their interactions. The research showed the moderate to considerable no association between the self-efficacy and stress, as well as the mediate influence of stress on the self-efficacy. Additionally, students' stress and self-efficacy levels alter with time. Given the lack of literature on the link among self-efficacy and stress, we recommend more research into its temporal and causal coherence.

***Keywords:*** *First semester; MBA students; Self-Efficacy; Stress*

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many students choose university to attend the MBA to lay the groundwork for their future jobs. Not only is the selected topic a key criterion, but regardless matter also where their employment path takes them, their personal viewpoint and stress resistance engage the role in their professional success (Rigotti et al., 2020). The learners' attitude in the first class may give an early sign of their expected academic achievement (Pinxten et al., 2019). Several research has looked at the favorable relationship between personal attitudes, such as self-efficacy, and academic outcomes, as well as the detrimental influence of stress on academic outcomes (Pascoe et al., 2020). Additionally, various research indicates a considerable negative connection between self-efficacy and stress levels (Vaezi & Fallah, 2011).

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's conviction in their capacity to effectively accomplish tasks and achieve goals, is an important factor in determining academic performance and well-being, particularly among graduate students seeking an MBA. This principle is especially crucial in the high-pressure, demanding atmosphere of MBA program, where students must complete hard curriculum, meet tight deadlines, and meet high performance expectations (Gaye Contay, 2011). Research has indicated that students with higher self-efficacy have better stress management methods and achieve more academic achievement, whereas those with lower self-efficacy frequently feel increased stress and struggle to face academic obstacles (Rosman et al., n.d.). Exploring the link between self-efficacy and stress in MBA students is critical for understanding how these characteristics affect their academic experience, mental health, and overall performance in the program.

The preceding objectives serve as the foundation for this study's structure. Following in this introduction, the conceptual basis of self-efficacy is examined, after which stress theories are explored. The link between stress and self-efficacy is subsequently explained, followed by studies on the timely development of stress and self-efficacy. Finally, practical implications are presented.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Bandura's idea of self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to complete activities and achieve goals (*Self-Efficacy-the-Exercise-of-Control*, n.d.). In the case of MBA students, self-efficacy is crucial in influencing how they handle academic burden, manage time, and respond to problems. According to recent research, high levels of self-efficacy are linked to improved academic achievement and psychological resilience (Zhang, 2025). MBA students with high self-efficacy are more likely to use proactive learning tactics, set higher academic objectives, and persevere in the face of adversity, which can help to alleviate the effects of academic stress.

In contrast, stress among MBA students is on the rise, with academic pressure, job uncertainty, and peer competitiveness all playing a role. According to research, persistent stress can impair cognitive function, lower academic achievement, and have a severe influence on mental health (Li et al., 2025). The complexity of MBA programs frequently requires multitasking, critical thinking, and leadership, all of which can be stressful. Self-efficacy, on the other hand, has been shown to function as a psychological buffer, allowing pupils to perceive pressures as manageable rather than overpowering (Nadeem, n.d.).

New research focuses on the mediating and moderating function of self-efficacy in the stress-performance connection. According to (Wu et al., 2025), MBA students with greater levels of self-efficacy are more likely to employ problem-focused coping mechanisms, which have been associated to lower stress and better outcomes. Furthermore, interventions such as peer mentoring, skills workshops, and mindfulness training have been found effective in improving self-efficacy and reducing stress levels. These findings highlight the necessity of incorporating psychological development into MBA programs to promote resilience and student performance.

## SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy, which comes from social cognitive theory, is the conviction that one can accomplish goals or carry out duties (Fatimah et al., 2024). Recently, substantial data has developed to suggest that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in predicting student performance (Bhati et al., 2022). Albert Bandura established the notion of self-efficacy, which is described as a person's conviction in their capacity to effectively complete a specific activity. This notion has a profound impact on people's thoughts, behavior, and emotions. Self-efficacy influences many areas of human functioning, including goal setting, perseverance in the face of obstacles, and resistance to adversity (Flammer, 2015). Individuals who have high self-efficacy are more likely to create and stick to demanding objectives, see difficult work as something to master rather than avoid, and recover fast from failures. Individuals with poor self-efficacy, on the other hand, are more prone to question their talents, avoid difficult jobs, and be more vulnerable to stress and failure (Bhati et al., 2022).

Four major factors impact on the development of self-efficacy:

**Mastery Experiences:** Successful experiences increase self-efficacy, but failures reduce it.
**Vicarious Experiences:** Seeing others successfully complete a task might boost one's confidence in their own talents.

**Social Persuasion:** Positive feedback can boost self-efficacy, whilst negative feedback might reduce it.

**Emotional and physiological states:** A positive mood can boost self-efficacy, but worry and stress can reduce it.

Understanding and promoting self-efficacy may lead to considerable changes in personal development, educational results, and mental health, making it an important field of study in psychology and education (Klehe Justus-, n.d.).

## STRESS

Stress is a component of our daily lives; it is the physiological or psychological reaction to internal or external stimuli. Stress impacts practically every function in our bodies, including our emotions and behavior. Some of the symptoms include palpitations, sweating, dry mouth, shortness of breath, fidgeting, faster speech, heightened negative emotions (if present), and persistent stress exhaustion. Stress has a direct detrimental influence on our psychological and physiological well-being, lowering our quality of life by causing mind-body alterations (Ralte, 2024). According to the Selye, stated by (Ralte, 2024) contends that certain stress is unavoidable and cannot be reduced. The idea of stress has developed into a dynamic process that views stress as the result of interactions between environmental factors and individual characteristics.

Every kind of learning or education involves stress in one way or another. Stress serves as a catalyst for motivation, pushing the person to pursue greatness. However, excessive stress can also result in a lack of confidence, a lack of productivity, and difficulty completing daily duties. Students thus lose their excitement for learning and worry about the future (Murugesan & Vijayalakshmi, 2018) Stress may have both positive and negative impacts on individuals. Stress, in moderation, can motivate individuals to attain their goals. However, Chronic stress can have bodily (e-g, headache, stomach discomfort), psychological (e-g, wrath, worry) or behavioral consequences (Behere et al., 2011).

Stress may be caused by traumatic experiences, big life upheavals (e.g., loss of a loved one or sexual assault), or tiny everyday difficulties (e.g., misplaced keys or family squabble). These environmental triggers are referred to as stressors, and their length determines whether they are chronic or acute. Perceived stress refers to a person's sentiments and ideas regarding pressures and how they can cope with them (Varghese et al., 2015).

In addition to the response theory, it was proposed that stress is a process in which people assess potential stresses as a challenge or threat (primary assessment) before contemplating coping strategies (secondary assessment). If a stressor is viewed as a challenge, the expected result is possible growth or gain. If the stressor is regarded harmful, it may cause injury, loss, or undesirable repercussions, which are not always stressful for the individual in the first place. The secondary evaluation determines whether or not there are solutions and resources available to successfully manage the stressor. Depending on the answer, the individual determines if the situation is stressful or not (Folkman, 2013).

## LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND SELF-EFFICACY AND TIMELY RELATION

The association between self-efficacy and stress among the MBA students is complex, since greater levels of self-efficacy can operate as a stress buffer, enabling better stress management and coping mechanisms. Students who think they can handle academic obstacles are more likely to approach stressful circumstances with confidence and resilience, resulting in reduced perceived stress levels (Tremolada et al., 2016). Students with poor self-efficacy, on the other hand, may suffer heightened worry and trouble managing academic responsibilities, both of which can worsen stress. Timely interventions that boost self-efficacy, such as building a sense of mastery via modest victories or offering emotional support, can help MBA students manage stress more effectively and improve their overall well-being (Bandura, 1997). As a result, the relationship between self-efficacy and stress is critical in determining academic success and mental health outcomes in high-pressure settings such as MBA programs.

According to the (Bandura, 1977), Stress and anxiety have a negative impact on student self-efficacy judgments. As a result, people utilize information about their current emotions and well-being to assess their abilities to complete tasks. When individuals are frightened, tired, or agitated, their self-efficacy drops. In the other direction, folks predict greater achievement when they are not concerned (Van Der Bijl et al., 2001). First semester students are especially susceptible to stress because studying is such a critical shift in life. In addition to adjusting to university life and academic obligations (Zajacova et al., 2005), students must also adjust to their new living situation away from home and relatives. According to the Goodman (1993) cited by the (Karim et al., 2023) classified student-perceived stress into Academic, economical, self-imposed and connected to time or health categories. (Pitt et al., 2017) achieved similar results on the primary root of the stressors were identified, and their timing was studied. The study found that the beginning and conclusion of the first semester are associated with a greater likelihood of felt stress. Throughout a self-directed learning program, self-efficacy was assessed. It was found that it is constantly altering dependent on prior efficacy judgment accuracy and consistency.

## CONCLUSION

There has been few studies on how stress impacts self-efficacy in academic contexts that does not consider performance results. There has been no long-term study on the relationship between self-efficacy and stress. This is an interesting subject for further research. Stress management seminars for MBA students may reduce perceived stress and boost academic self-efficacy, resulting in improved academic performance and employment prospects. Aside from performance, excellent stress reduction abilities and a strong feeling of self-efficacy are key advantages in the workplace and are becoming increasingly important for talent recruitment.

The complicated relationship the link between self-efficacy and the stress in the group of MBA students highlights the importance of individualized treatments. The negative relationship between self-efficacy and stress. shows that increasing students' confidence in their skills may reduce stress levels, resulting in higher academic achievement and general well-being.

The research suggests that stronger self-efficacy correlates with decreased felt stress among MBA students. To solve these issues, educational institutions such as universities and colleges should look at establishing comprehensive support systems. Research indicates that mentoring programs improve students' self-efficacy and academic performance. Furthermore, raising awareness about issues like impostor syndrome, which can have a negative impact on self-efficacy, is critical. Universities and colleges can improve the academic experiences and mental health of MBA students by creating an atmosphere that fosters self-esteem and offers coping techniques.

In addition, interventions that increase self-efficacy, such as mastery-based learning, peer support, and mindfulness programs, have been shown to lower stress and improve student results. The evidence implies that self-efficacy modulates the association between stress and academic achievement, making it an important element in MBA student success. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and General Self-Efficacy Scale are the most commonly utilized tools in these studies, ensuring that results are comparable across contexts. However, despite strong evidence in broader higher-education populations, MBA-specific studies are limited, emphasizing the need for more targeted, longitudinal research to fully understand how self-efficacy functions as a stress-reduction mechanism in this distinct student group.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Future study might look at the long-term impact of self-efficacy on stress levels among MBA students, particularly at different points of their academic career. While existing research sheds light on the link between self-efficacy and stress, longitudinal studies would assist establish causal linkages and follow how self-efficacy evolves over time in response to academic obstacles, professional constraints, and changing personal aspirations. Researchers should also look at the function of demographic characteristics including age, gender, job experience, and cultural background to better understand how they influence self-efficacy and stress reactions in MBA programs.

Another intriguing area for future research is to investigate the impact of therapies targeted at increasing self-efficacy in reducing stress among MBA students. For example, the impact of introducing psychological training, mentoring programs, and cognitive-behavioral methods into MBA curriculum might be assessed. Comparative studies of various institutions or nations may indicate how environmental and institutional variables influence the self-efficacy-stress dynamic. Expanding the scope to include online and part-time MBA students would improve our knowledge of how different learning environments and time commitments affect this connection.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The conception of this work was debated among all the authors because this research is part of our Ph.D programme. The investigation and writing were conducted by author 1. Reviewed, supervised, evaluated, and validated the study by author 2 and 3. All authors have participated from the beginning to the final manuscript.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bandura, A. (1977). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:142746089

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. In *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.

Behere, S. P., Yadav, R., & Behere, P. B. (2011). A comparative study of stress among students of medicine, engineering, and nursing. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, *33*(2), 145–148. https://doi.org/10.4103/0253-7176.92064

Bhati, K., Baral, R., & Meher, V. (2022). Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students in Relation to Gender and Streams of Education. *Indonesian Journal of Contemporary Education*, *4*(2), 80–88. https://doi.org/10.33122/ijoce.v4i2.35

Fatimah, S., Murwani, F. D., Farida, I. A., & Hitipeuw, I. (2024). Academic Self-Efficacy and Its Effect on Academic Engagement: Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Instruction*, *17*(1), 271–294. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2024.17115a

Flammer, A. (2015). Self-Efficacy. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences: Second Edition* (pp. 504–508). Elsevier Inc. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.25033-2

Folkman, S. (2013). Stress: Appraisal and Coping. In M. D. Gellman & J. R. Turner (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine* (pp. 1913–1915). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_215

Gaye Contay, E. (2011). *Relationship Between Students' Geometry Academic Achievement and Geometry Self Efficacy*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330117500

Karim, S. I., Irfan, F., Haris, S., Al-Maflehi, N., Ponnamperuma, G., Al Sayyari, S., Al Faris, E., & Ahmed, A. M. A. (2023). Relationship Between Socio-Demographics, Study Skills and Distress Among Pakistani School Students: A Cross-Sectional Study in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, *16*, 587–598. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S394481

Klehe Justus-, U.-C. (n.d.). *Self-efficacy*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228210952

Li, T., Guan, J., Huang, Y., & Jin, X. (2025). The Effect of Stress on Depression in Postgraduate Students: Mediating Role of Research Self-Efficacy and Moderating Role of Growth Mindset. *Behavioral Sciences*, *15*(3). https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030266

Murugesan, V., & Vijayalakshmi, M. (2018). *Applied Psychology (Student), School of Distance Education, Bharathiar University-641 046*. *5*. https://doi.org/10.1729/Journal.19088

Nadeem, E. (n.d.). *Self-Efficacy, Stress and Academic Performance In Young Adults*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382068205

Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., & Parker, A. G. (2020). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. In *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* (Vol. 25, Issue 1, pp. 104–112). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823

Pinxten, M., Van Soom, C., Peeters, C., De Laet, T., & Langie, G. (2019). At-risk at the gate: prediction of study success of first-year science and engineering students in an open-admission university in Flanders—any incremental validity of study strategies? *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *34*(1), 45–66. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-017-0361-x

Pitt, A., Oprescu, F., Tapia, G., & Gray, M. (2017). An exploratory study of students' weekly stress levels and sources of stress during the semester. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *19*(1), 61–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417731194

Ralte, R. (2024). Self-Efficacy and Stress among Mizo Adolescents. *Article in International Journal of Indian Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.25215/1001.130

Rigotti, T., Korek, S., & Otto, K. (2020). Career-related self-efficacy, its antecedents and relationship to subjective career success in a cross-lagged panel study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *31*(20), 2645–2672. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1460858

Rosman, T., Medizinische, A.-K. M., Brandenburg, H., & Fontane, T. (n.d.). *Moderating effects of domain-specific self-efficacy on the relationship between intelligence and information-seeking skills*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301788844

*self-efficacy-the-exercise-of-control*. (n.d.).

Tremolada, M., Bonichini, S., & Taverna, L. (2016). Coping Strategies and Perceived Support in Adolescents and Young Adults: Predictive Model of Self-Reported Cognitive and Mood Problems. *Psychology*, *07*(14), 1858–1871. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.714171

Vaezi, S., & Fallah, N. (2011). The Relationship between Self-efficacy and Stress among Iranian EFL Teachers. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(5). https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.5.1168-1174

Van Der Bijl, J. J., Shortridge-Baggett, L. M., & Van Der Bijl, J. (2001). Self-efficacy: Theory and Measurement 1 Running head: SELF-EFFICACY: THEORY AND MEASUREMENT The theory and measurement of the self-efficacy construct. In *Scholarly Inquiry for Nursing Practice* (Vol. 15, Issue 13).

Varghese, R. P., Selvin, T., Norman, J., & Thavaraj, & H. S. (n.d.). *PERCEIVED STRESS AND SELF EFFICACY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A GLOBAL REVIEW*. http://ssrn.com/abstract=2703908

Wu, L., Chen, Y., Xue, M., Zhu, W., & Wang, W. (2025). *The Effect of Social Support on Learning Investment among Nursing Students: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy*. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6139781/v1

Zajacova, A., Lynch, S. M., & Espenshade, T. J. (2005). Self-efficacy, stress, and academic success in college. In *Research in Higher Education* (Vol. 46, Issue 6, pp. 677–706). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-004-4139-z

Zhang, Y. (2025). Exploring the Impacts of Academic Self-Efficacy on Learning Engagement and Academic Success Among Chinese Master's Students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *24*(4), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.4.1