

# The Relationship Between Academic Success and Self-Efficacy Among First Generation

## College Students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to measure levels of self-efficacy and how it may relate to their academic success among first generation college students. Participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire asking about their self-reported levels of self-efficacy. Demographic such as their ethnicity and if they were first generation status was also examined. Results showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between academic success and self-efficacy among FGS.

### Introduction

- In the 2015-16 school year, 56% of all enrolled undergraduate students were first-generation college students (National Data Fact Sheet, n.d.)  
- First-generation students are less likely to come into post-secondary education as prepared as their peers and possess less confidence to succeed (Stuart, 2014)  
- Increased levels of confidence in the tasks given to FGS also increased their academic satisfaction (Garriott, et.al., 2015).  
- Self-efficacy in college has been repeatedly linked to academic success in students (Wright, et.al., 2012).  
- Research further supports that self-efficacy in general and more specifically academic self-efficacy were reliable factors in predicting academic success and GPA (Weiser & Reggio, 2010).

### Hypothesis

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be a positive correlation between the levels of self efficacy and academic success among first-generation college students.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be a significant difference among first-generation college students who are minorities compared to their non-minority peers.

### Research Questions

1. How do self efficacy and academic success relate?
2. How do self efficacy levels differ between non-FGS and FGS?
3. Does being a first generation student decrease self-efficacy levels?

### Methods

- Participants were 22 female and 9 male undergraduate students from Southern Adventist University
- Participants responded to a questionnaire consisting of 2 sections
  1. Self Efficacy Questionnaire
  2. Demographic Information
- Participants were separated into two groups based on whether or not they are first generation college students or not and were given a score on their levels of self efficacy
- Those of first generation status were analyzed to see the correlation between GPA and Self-Efficacy and were also compared to their non-first generation peers

### Results

- 31 students participated in the study
- Calculates Pearson's  $r$  and Independent Samples  $t$  test for the variables.
- Results supported hypothesis 1 in showing that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic success among first generation college students with a correlation of  $r(n-1) = .653$  making it statistically significant. Thus allowing us to reject the null hypothesis
- Results did not demonstrate any significant difference between first generation students who are minorities and their non-minority peers.
- Results also demonstrated no significant difference between self-efficacy scores amongst first-generation and non-first generation students.

### Discussion

- The correlation between self-efficacy levels and academic success may indicate that a high level of self-efficacy could lead to higher academic success.
- First-generation students who want to succeed in their academics may need to focus on improving their self-efficacy in order to increase their motivation to do so.
- Results showed a strong positive correlation between levels of self-efficacy and academic success among first generation students.
- Because sample was conducted on a smaller campus, it may be useful to conduct this study on a larger campus with a larger and more diverse sample size.
- Because of the community of the campus and the background from which the students are more likely to come from, the sample may have had higher levels of self-efficacy than present in non-Adventist first-generation students.

### References

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