The Role of Self-Efficacy on School Leadership: A Cross Cultural Comparison, Australia and Singapore.

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Abstract

In 2011 a survey was carried out among Australian and Singaporean Schools with the objective on measuring the level of self-efficacy at different levels of school staff in order to determine the relationship between schools with more efficacious staff and those schools which were considered to be high performing. This paper discusses the theoretical underpinning to the role of self-efficacy in leadership performance and development.

Bandura (1997:3) defined self-efficacy as a person's belief in his/her capability to successfully perform a particular task. While self-confidence is a general personality trait that relates to how people act in most situations, self-efficacy relates to specific tasks. As a result, a person can simultaneously have high self-efficacy for some tasks and low self-efficacy for others.

A school department head may have high self-efficacy for the educational aspects of his/her role, but low self-efficacy for other aspects, such as dealing with staff performance problems. As self-efficacy is more specific than self-confidence or self-esteem (i.e. the extent to which people like themselves), self-efficacy is generally more easily developed than self-confidence or self-esteem. Self-efficacy is also a much better predictor of how effectively people will perform a given task, than their level of self-confidence or self-esteem.

Bandura (1989) states that there are four sources of self-efficacy: enactive self-mastery, role-modelling, verbal persuasion, and the person's physiological/emotional state. Enactive self-mastery is the most powerful source of self-efficacy. It is achieved when people experience success at performing elements of a task. It serves to convince them that they have what it takes to achieve increasingly difficult accomplishments of a similar kind.

This paper offers practical suggestions as a result of the survey findings and offers suggestions to educational leaders and those who develop these leaders.