A REVIEW OF EXTENSION SELF-EFFICACY: BASES, FEATURES, GOAL REALISATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION

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ABSTRACT

The awareness, attitudes and values which an individual has about his abilities affects his work performance. The pessimistic perception and negative comments about quality extension service delivery have been on-going, but little has been done to evaluate the concept of self-efficacy in extension practice. Self-efficacy describes an important facet of human motivation which denotes a positive self-prophecy about one's capabilities premised on oriented outcomes, relayed experiences and verbal inducement. The primary step for an extension officer to succeed with farmers will be to acquire the perception and vehemently exert control over outcomes associated with new innovations. There is a plethora of evidence that emanated from various studies to show that it is possible to motivate extension practitioners using techniques such as evaluation of performance, behavioural modelling practice, and experiential education. This review paper discusses the bases, features, goal realisation and implications of self-efficacy in the context of extension service delivery. The paper concluded that with an increase in self-motivation, there is a concomitant growth in self-efficacy. Extension practitioners need to engage in activities that will promote and build self-motivation and assertiveness towards the attainment of set goals. Extension practitioners are likely to perform better when properly motivated towards a goal.

Keywords: Motivation, Satisfaction, Self-efficacy, Self-evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

The scope of responsibilities for extension practitioners is large, but many outside of the profession are unaware of the arduous tasks. For effectiveness, an extension officer must be conversant with instructional and management skills for participatory communicative interventions which are developed through practical training, planning, theory and strategic management. Extension advisors are saddled with empowering farmers in achieving their primary goals of becoming creative and productive. However, the challenges encountered by extension revolves around low motivation, goal initiation and setting, planning, communication, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, the multiplicity of challenges varies depending on the model used in extension facilitation and advisory services. The only way of promoting extension practitioners' motivation to learn and address these challenges independently is through building self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an assessment of an individual ability to undertake and perform a given task (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy, as noted by Lopez, Perdotti and Snyder (2018), is what one believes that he or she can undertake in a given task using his or her own expertise or ability under a given condition. Extension practitioners must have self-direction and exhibit a sense of self-efficacy to provide farmers with opportunities to mitigate challenges and be able to exercise control over problem solving.

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Bandura's theory illustrates explicitly how the development of cognitive components such as motivation and self-regulation assist in learning and performance achievement. The delivery of quality extension services remains one of the focal issues in the contemporary extension policy discourse. The awareness, attitudes and values which an individual has about his abilities affects his work performance. The pessimistic perception and negative comments about quality extension services delivery have been on-going, but little has been done to evaluate the concept of self-efficacy in extension practice. The concept of self-efficacy is part of the social cognitive theory which explains that a person is the determinant of his own development and can also proactively make things happen by his evolution (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010). Self-efficacy is also described as an important facet of human motivation which denotes a positive self-prophecy about one's capabilities premised on oriented outcomes, relayed experiences, verbal inducement, and useful feedback (Gecas, 2004). Self-efficacy is exemplified and implicitly concerned with the perception of individual capabilities and ability, as opposed to self-esteem which is focused on value perception of an individual's worth (Woolfolk, 2007).

The concept of self-efficacy is derived from a social cognitive theory which illustrates how individuals acquire and conserve certain behaviour consistent with time (Bandura, 1986). The theory postulates that individuals are the architects of their own development and can cause things to happen by their own actions. The theory of Bandura recognises four important areas peculiar to humans which encompasses cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory and self-reflection. The perception of the social cognitive theory is that individuals are never driven by any know internal forces nor moulded and controlled by external forces, but dependent on a model of "triadic reciprocality" where there is an interplay of behaviour, cognitive factors, personal factors, and environmental factors interacting with each other to determine behaviour. For instance, the manner in which an individual interprets the outcome of his or her own behaviour affects successive behaviour. This is the basis of Bandura's (1986) idea of reciprocal determinism illustrating that the interaction between personal factors (cognitive, affective, and biological events), behaviour of an individual, and environmental factors creates triadic reciprocality.

The social cognitive theory postulated that individuals are never driven by any know internal forces nor moulded and controlled by external forces, but dependent on a model of "triadic reciprocality" where there is a relationship between behaviour, cognitive factors, personal factors, and environmental factors interacting with each other to determine behaviour. An individual's self-efficacy is associated with increased self-motivation, increased readiness to learn new ideas, as well as increased competence and management skills (Hoy, 2000). Things happen as an upshot of actions, and it follows that the outcome a person envisages is dependent on perceived feelings of how well he or she would perform in a given setting. In consideration of individual social, intellectual and physical endeavours, Bandura (1986) noted that people who see themselves as highly efficient and successful would definitely anticipate favourable results, while individuals who wallow in self-doubt would expect average performance which translates into negative results or outcomes. An extension officer with a greater self-efficacy is more likely to be self-assured about his or her capabilities, and therefore more likely to remain focused, assertive and result-orientated in the profession (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy 2001).

2. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Motivation comes from inner satisfaction and belief that an individual is capable of completing and attaining the desired goal (Lunenburg, 2011). With the increase in self-motivation, there is

a concomitant growth in self-efficacy. Extension practitioners are likely to perform better when properly motivated towards a goal. Self-efficacy has been justified by a myriad of empirical research for providing the foundation for individual motivation and self-achievement. Until individuals believe that their actions can "harvest" or bring about desirable outcomes they need, they have little or no motivation to act or to be resilient in the face of challenges. Extension advisors are engrossed in creating change, and as a change agent, must possess certain qualities for enhancing the well-being of the farmers and be capable of altering the negative behavioural aptitudes towards innovation adoption and the social relationships under which farmers live. Adopting the social cognitive theory as a conceptual framework for behavioural change, extension advisors should thrive to improve the farmers' frame of mind and to adjust self-belief, habits and conservatism (personal factors), enhance their skills and self-regulatory performance (behaviour), and change the negative views on bio-diversity concepts (environmental factors) that may be a barrier to farm business success. Thus, the primary objective of this paper is to examine the bases and features of self-efficacy, the procedure for goal realisation, and the implications for extension practice.

3. PROCEDURE

This paper reviewed the concept of self-efficacy, bases, features, goal realisation and implications for extension practice extensively. Meta-analysis of studies on extension performances and quality of services were analysed and reported on. Journal articles, literature, and theories on the concept of self-efficacy in the context of learning and agricultural advisory services were also reviewed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results reveal that extension practitioners who possess high self-efficacy to undertake the challenging task with distinctive aptitude, show interest and commitment to goal attainment. Furthermore, they are more likely to move swiftly and recover their sense of efficacy after failure, and ultimately, they associate setbacks with the insufficient effort. On the contrary, extension advisors with low self-efficacy hold the belief that a given task is impossible thereby generating fretfulness and depression. In entirety, the perseverance which is aligned to high self-efficacy is likely to lead to improved performance against giving-in which is likened to low self-efficacy.

4.1 Bases of self-efficacy

There are four main sources of self-efficacy as postulated by Bandura (1994) which includes:

(i) Mastery experiences or performance outcome
This encapsulates the initial success one derives from an activity which in the long run activates enthusiasm and motivation to perform the further task in future. Initial success in a given task builds up a person's self-efficacy while disappointment or failure destabilises self-efficacy. Nevertheless, individuals who obtained success under a 'platter of gold' or gaining success easily may be demotivated by failure and are less resilient (Bandura, 2004a). In some instances, failures and difficulties in human endeavours cascade into valuable means of illustrating that success requires persistent effort. It bears noting that it is only when people realise that they possess the qualities to succeed, that they persist in the midst of difficulties or hardship, develop resilience and quickly recover from adversity. The most important source of self-efficacy is the

mastery of experience, usually referred to as past performance. Positive or negative performance outcomes can impact on the capability of a person to carry out efficiently a given task in future. For instance, the successful completion of the previously given task may trigger confidence to venture into a similar task in future with higher self-efficacy (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The opposite is true for an individual who experiences dismal failure in a given task. Such an individual who has failed previously may develop apathy and be disillusioned with low self-efficacy towards attempting a similar task in the future.

(ii) Vicarious experiences
This allows individuals to learn a new and successful behaviour without necessarily undergoing any form of training, but merely observing a person or a peer perform successfully a given task which typically raises the enthusiasm of the observer, culminating into a sustained effort that he or she can also succeed. This type of exemplary and observational learning is determined by the level of attentiveness, engagement and self-motivation of the observer. In contrast, seeing or observing others fail, irrespective of determined effort exerted in a given task, decreases an observer's evaluation of his own self-efficacy resulting in aversion and undermining one's performances. It is worth noting that if the behaviour under observation produces treasured and valuable outcomes, the observer becomes motivated to accept the behaviour and internalise it for future use. The influence of modelling on self-efficacy is determined by the observed similarity that an individual possesses and is likened to the models. The higher the presumed compatibility, the more the model's successes. When people discover that the perceived attributes of the observed model has no affinity or is not compatible with their perceived expected competencies, then their perceived self-efficacy will not be influenced by the model's behaviour and the outcome therein.

(iii) Social persuasion
Social persuasion is a sort of intrinsic motivation geared towards an individual with a view of exerting more effort to succeed. According to Bandura (2004b), individuals who possess self-doubt may be assisted to be convinced that he or she possesses the capabilities to succeed in a given task. Nevertheless, persuasion may undermine the inherent potential belief of one's capabilities faster than inculcating actual belief. It stands to note that deceitful persuasion can be a problem to self-efficacy if the requisite performance is not attained by the person concerned (Bandura, 1994). A person's belief in their efficacy motivates and takes over the mainstream of their activities, the effort exerted in various actions, and their level of resilience. Although verbal persuasion tends to be a weaker source of building self-efficacy than mastery of experiences or past experience, Redmond (2010) noted that it is universally accepted and applied because of its availability and simplicity.

(iv) Physiological feedback (emotional arousal)
The emotional state of an individual also influences self-efficacy to some extent. Individuals experience nervousness, fretfulness, uneasiness, and in some cases a pricking heart when talking to a large audience. These emotional feelings reduce or lower one's self-efficacy. It bears noting that individuals are more likely to perform better when they are in a good emotional state and therefore higher conviction of self-efficacy. The emotional arousal according to Bandura (1994) is the least determinant of self-efficacy when compared to the other efficacy sources. Many people depend on their emotional status in measuring their capabilities. Often people construe their uneasiness, anxiety and mood as signs of weakness and susceptibility. However, a mood that is positive increases self-efficacy while down-hearted or hopeless mood undermines and reduces self-efficacy. A more distinct way of increasing self-

efficacy is to enhance physical and expressive happiness and lessen undesirable emotional conditions. An improved self-efficacy belief seriously influences the physical conditions of an individual. Bandura (1997) observed that individuals live in a "psychic environment" that is mainly of their own making.
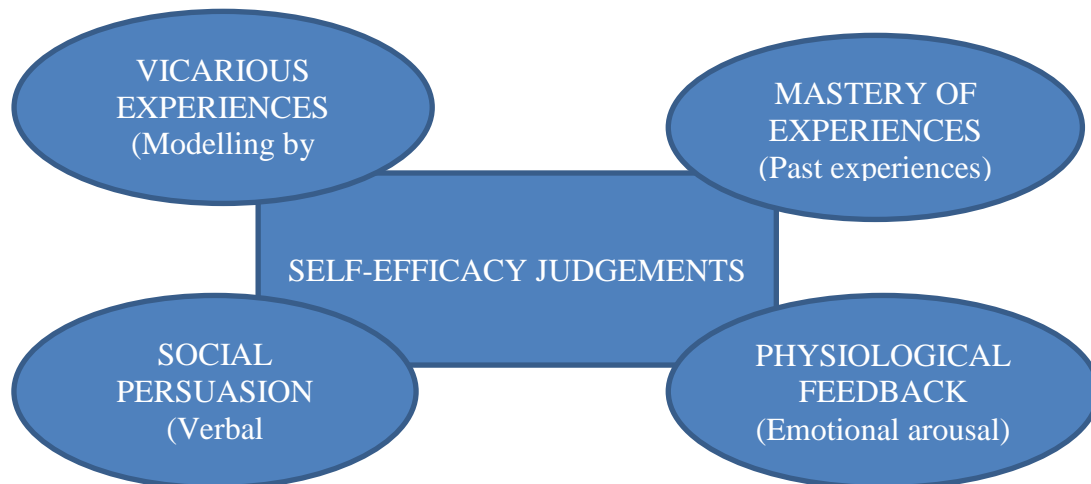

Figure 1: Sources of information for self-efficacy judgement
Source: Agholor, 2016

4.2. The features of self-efficacy

Professed self-efficacy has been discovered to be necessary for making an individual develop an intention to carry out a pre-determined task (Feltz & Reissinger, 1990; McAuley, 1992). Firstly, an individual with high self-efficacy sees challenging obstacles as tasks to be learnt and they develop self-confidence and approach a problem situation or challenges with a positive mind to succeed. Secondly, an individual with high self-efficacy is more disposed to risk-taking and are also able to generate unfathomable interest in the activities in which they are involved. Thirdly, individuals with high self-efficacy are more resilient with a high sense of fulfilment as they view mistakes as the first attempt in learning. In the face of failure or setbacks, they recover and adjust quickly and forge ahead (Pajares, 2002). Furthermore, individuals with high self-efficacy are usually able to accurately assess their own ability. This class of individuals indulges in self-examination and are not over ambitious nor too optimistic, but are able to evaluate themselves with the aim of self-advancement.

In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy display general dispiritedness to taking a risk or trying anything new since they are not assured that the outcome of the attempt will be successful. Secondly, individuals with low self-efficacy are engulfed in fear and usually depict doubts towards a given task (Frank, 2011). Thirdly, they have a problem of negative impression management whereby putting forward a substantial level of behaviour in order to be seen as accepted or seeking approval from others. An individual with low self-efficacy seeks to be validated or approved by others culminating into worry about how others may perceive or assess them. Such individuals lose confidence in their own ability.

4.3 Goal realisation of self-efficacy

The social cognitive theory postulates that individuals are the major determinant of their personal motivation, behavioural pattern, and improvement within a linkage of mutually interacting stimuli (Bandura, 1997). For individuals as contributors to their personal life situations, Bandura (2005:4) noted that individuals are self-organised, proactive, regulated and self-reflective. Bandura developed the social cognitive theory in response to the inadequacies envisaged in the behaviourism and psychoanalysis theories (Redmond 2010). These dissatisfactions, as observed by Bandura, were in the areas of cognition and motivation. As noted by Crothers and Hughes (2008), the theory of Albert Bandura's cognitive theory stressed how cognition, behaviour, personal and ecological factors act together to influence individual motivation and behaviour (Crothers & Hughes, 2008). The social cognitive theory alluded to the fact that the causes of human behaviour are due to "reciprocal determinism". The notion to this conception of reciprocal determinism is that one's behaviour is influenced and moulded by the behaviour itself. In specific terms, the kind of reciprocal determinism preferred by social cognitive theorists is referred to as *triadic reciprocality* (Bandura & Walters, 1977). This conception illustrates that behaviour, environment, and personal factors (cognition, temper) interact and perform as influencing factors to each other. The triadic reciprocality concept can be illustrated in a real-world situation through an example of working together in an interactive process in the case of a parent and a newly born baby. The parents owe the baby a duty of care. Assume a situation where the baby has the irritating temper of crying constantly, and this was noticed from birth and is most likely to be genetic or biological. The baby's irritating temper is an example of a personal factor. The constant cry of the baby is demanding and requires attention as the baby sleeps only for a short time (behavioural factors), and this triggers an environment to be created which is exemplified in the form of noise, and inadequate opportunities for sleep, interacting with the personal factors of the parents to assist in shaping their own behaviour in the direction of being tired, irritating, worried, and unhappy. The aftermath of the parents' behaviour will begin to shape the environment of the baby, and the baby's behaviour will also continue to shape the environment of the parents. This is as a result of the interaction between the triad (personal, behavioural and environmental factors) which contributes to different magnitudes (Crothers & Hughes, 2008).
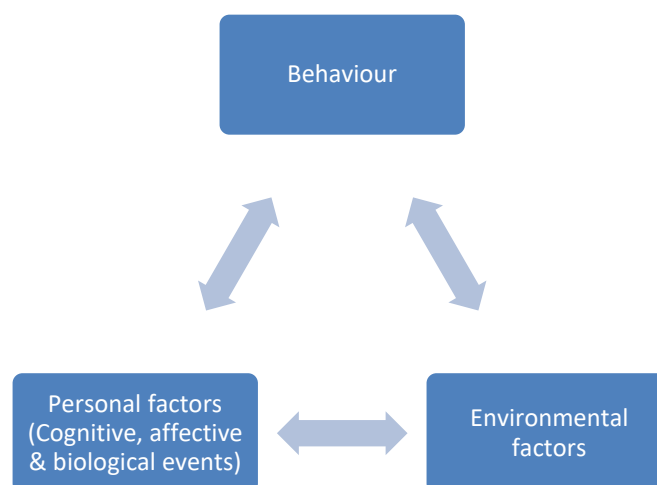

Figure 2: Conceptual model of triadic reciprocal determinism
Source: Agholor, 2016

The goal realisation of the social cognitive theory is made up of four main processes, namely self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction and self-efficacy (Redmond, 2010). Self-observation as a process of goal realisation can be informative and motivating because it allows for an assessment of one's improvement or achievement towards a set goal. Self-observation encompasses regularity and proximity. The former (regularity) implies that behaviour should continuously be observed while the latter (proximity) entails that behaviour should be observed when it happens or soon thereafter. However, self-observation is an inadequate means of goal realisation because for an individual to be motivated depends on his expected results and self-efficacy (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

Self-evaluation allows an individual to liken their performance or progress to a desired or anticipated goal. Goals must be standardised and specific. It bears noting that goals such as "I will do my best" are ambiguous and certainly will not motivate. In specifying goals, Schunk and Zimmerman (1994) posited that specific goals stipulate the amount or level of effort needed for success and increases self-efficacy since improvement is easy to measure. Two types of self-evaluation exist, namely absolute or fixed and normative. The self-evaluation with grading scale is referred to as absolute while the self-evaluation that compares one's performance against another person's performance is referred to as normative (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Individuals are usually satisfied when they attain goals that are ascribed value and are likely to exert more effort towards higher performance (Bandura, 1989).

In terms of self-reaction, responses to one's progress can be a motivating factor towards developing self-efficacy. When the responses or reaction to progress attained is acceptable, then one will develop high self-efficacy with positive intention to continue a given task. However, a negative self-reaction might also be able to activate further inner 'will power' to work harder. The achievement of a set goal may likely induce or encourage an individual to re-evaluate and increase the standard of the goal for further achievement, whereas if an individual has not attained the set goal, they may probably re-evaluate and reduce the set standard with the intention of achieving (Bandura, 1989).

For the self-efficacy aspect, goal realisation can also be attained through the belief of one's ability to carry out a determined task (self-efficacy). The positive belief towards the completion of a task can be encouraging in itself (Shortridge-Baggett, 2000). Therefore, high self-efficacy escalates the deliberate effort to be exerted towards a given task.

Figure 3: Processes of goal realisation
Source: Agholor, 2016

4.4 Implications for extension

Extension practitioners who have been able to develop high self-efficacy undertake the challenging task with special proficiency. They develop vested interest and are committed to goal attainment and heighten zeal in time of failure. Furthermore, they move swiftly to recuperate their sense of efficacy after having failed, and ultimately associate setbacks with the inadequate effort. However, extension advisors with low self-efficacy assume and hold to the belief that a given task is impossible, thereby generating fretfulness and depression. In entirety, the perseverance which is aligned to high self-efficacy is likely to lead to improved performance against giving-in which is likened to low self-efficacy. The addition of activities aimed at increasing extension advisors' self-efficacy is likely to increase the adoption of new skills and ideas presented to farmers.

The primary step for an extension officer to succeed with farmers will be to acquire the perception and vehemently exert control over outcomes associated with new innovations. It is the author's belief that if this primary step is denied, then the willingness in promoting adoption of innovation by farmers will be a mirage. There is a plethora of evidence that emanated from various studies that it is possible to increase extension advisors' self-efficacy by applying techniques such as skill building, evaluation of performance, behavioural modelling practice, motivation, and experiential education. The implication here is that extension practitioners need to adopt a variety of techniques towards building higher self-confidence and competency as an embodiment of self-efficacy for effective and quality performance. Moreover, a suite of extension activities such as regular seminars and conferences, field days and symposiums could be useful as tools towards developing self-efficacy.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Motivation is derived from inner satisfaction and belief that an individual is capable of completing and attaining the desired goal. With the increase in self-motivation, there is a concomitant growth in self-efficacy. Extension practitioners must engage in activities that will promote and build self-motivation and assertiveness towards the attainment of set goals. The importance of self-efficacy cut across individual decision making ability, inspiration, and irrepressibility and behaviour modification for goal attainment.

In consonant with the findings, it is recommended that extension practitioners be supported and encouraged to participate in seminars and conferences. This is an avenue to learn from peers and be adjusted towards increasing self-efficacy. They should have access to coordinated skill building, regular assessment of performance, attitude modelling, training, and pragmatic instructions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy.

In summary, it bears noting that self-efficacy is a determinant factor which predicts performance outcomes. There is a portmanteau of evidence as illustrated in the review to suggest that self-efficacy plays a unique role in the motivation of extension practitioners for effective service performance.

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