MEASUREMENT OF WRITING SELF-EFFICACY OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract : *Writing self-efficacy would affect academic achievement of higher education students as they need to perform the majority of their academic tasks in written form. Thus, the main objective of this study was to measure writing self-efficacy of higher education students with reference to their gender, social class category and area of residence. Survey method was used in this study. All the post graduate level students of Gujarat Vidyapith were the population of the study. 306 students were selected by random cluster method. Four point Likert type Writing Self-efficacy Scale was applied which was validated earlier. The findings revealed that only 14.05 % students had high level writing self-efficacy. There was no significant difference in writing self-efficacy in the context of students' gender. There was significant difference in writing self-efficacy in the context of students' social class category and area of residence.*

Key Words :*Measurement, Higher Education, Writing Self-efficacy, Comparison*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Bandura (1986) self-efficacy is learners' beliefs in their capability to succeed and acquire new information or complete a task or activity to an appointed level of performance. Bandura (1992) believes that there is a difference between students with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy. The learners with high self-efficacy feel confident about finding the solution to a problem because the learners have created an idea to problem solving that has accomplished in the past. They believe that their own competency will be better when they work more; the learners assign their success according to their own attempts and schemes and acknowledge that errors are a process of acquisition. However, low self-efficacious learners believe that they have innate low ability, choose less requesting tasks on which they will make few errors, and do not try hard because they believe that any attempt will reveal their own lack of ability. As self-efficacy beliefs directly influence subsequent behaviors, they have been attested to be a better predictor of performance than factors such as actual ability or previous accomplishments (Bandura, 1994).

Writing ability has been found to be an important predictor of school success and

college readiness (Graham et al. 2001; Norman & Spencer, 2005). Moreover, writing is an essential communication skill in the business sector as well as in the world of education. A report from the College Board, the National Writing Project, and Phi Delta Kappa International states, "Writing has never been more important than in this digital age. It is almost inconceivable to achieve academic success without good writing skill (College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2010, p. 2).

Writing is the major common medium by which students establish and present their knowledge. The ability to express one's thoughts effectively in writing relies on one's sense of efficacy towards the skill-a skill which an individual needs in his/her lifelong learning journey. Writing is the most popular means by which teachers assess student performance; however, writing is not an easy skill to learn. Writing is a highly complex and demanding task requiring that a number of processes be performed. Skilled writers are able to negotiate grammatical rules and mechanical actions whilst maintaining focus (Graham et al. 2005). However, self-doubt, poor self-efficacy and poor motivation will negatively affect a student's ability to write well (Sawyer et al. 1992).

Self-efficacy is the key to promoting student's cognitive, behavioral and motivational engagement, which demonstrates the importance of its role in the development of writing competence. Thus, the main objective of this study was to measure writing self efficacy of higher education students.

Objectives of the Study

1 To measure writing self efficacy of higher education students.

2 To examine writing self efficacy of higher education students in the context of their gender, social class category and area of residence.

Variables of the Study

Details of variables and its levels are given in

Table-1 Variables and its level

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Levels
Self-efficacy Writing	Gender	Male
		Female
	Social class category	General
		Other
	Area of residence	Urban
		Rural

Hypothesis of the Study

Keeping in mind above mentioned objectives following null hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01} There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on Writing Self-efficacy Scale by the male and female higher education students.

H_{02} There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on Writing Self-efficacy Scale by the general and other class higher education students.

H_{03} There will be no significant difference between mean scores obtained on Writing Self-efficacy Scale by the urban and rural higher education students.

Operational Definition of the Terms

Higher Education Students. The students who are studying in post graduate departments of Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad are considered as higher education students.

Writing self-efficacy. The total score obtained on 'Writing Self-efficacy Scale' by the student is considered as writing self-efficacy of the student.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the students of post-graduate departments of Gujarat Vidyapith only.

Population and Sampling

All the post-graduate students studying during the year 2016-17 in Gujarat Vidyapith were the population of the study. First of all, list of post-graduate department of Gujarat Vidyapith prepared. Each department was running two-year post graduate programme. Using lottery method, the class (year) was selected for the sample. All the students, who were present at the time of data collection in the selected class were included in the sample. Thus, the random cluster sampling technique was used. Table-2 shows the characteristics of the sample.

Table-2 Characteristics of the sample

No	Characteristics		Total	Grand Total
1	Gender	Male	172	306
		Female	134	
2	Social class category	General	57	306
		other	249	
3	Area of residence	Urban	83	306
		Rural	223	

Tool of the Study

A four point Likert type scale was applied for collecting data. There were 18 items for measuring 4 factors. Nine items were positive and nine items were negative. Each item had four options indicating the degree of agreement. The degree of agreement was 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The respondent had to tick mark (✓)in one of the suitable options. The reliability of the tool was established using three methods. Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.83 , Spearman Brown Coefficient value was 0.68 and Guttman Split Half Coefficient value was 0.51. As well as Cliffs Consistency Indice – 'C' value was 0.36 which shows validity of the tool.

Data Collection and Analysis

The writing self-efficacy scale was administrated to collect data in a normal classroom condition. The respondents were given guidance regarding responding the items. There was no time limit for responding. After data collection, the researcher proceeded to data analysis according to objectives and hypotheses. Descriptive analysis and t-test were employed to analyze the data.

Results

Based on the scores on 'Writing Self-efficacy Scale', the Mean, Median and Mode were respectively 30.20, 29.50 and 29, while standard deviation was 7.666 and Variance was 58.770. The value of skewness was -0.038. It shows slightly negative skewness of the data. It means the frequency of high scorer students are more than low scorer achiever in respect of mean score of the data on writing self-efficacy scale. So it concluded that the level of writing

self-efficacy of higher education students was high and fairly above than average score. Standard error of skewness was 0.139 and kurtosis was 1.670; standard error of Kurtosis was 0.278. This indicated that the frequency of distribution was almost normal. Histogram of obtained scores frequency distribution on Writing Self-efficacy scale is presented in Figure-1.
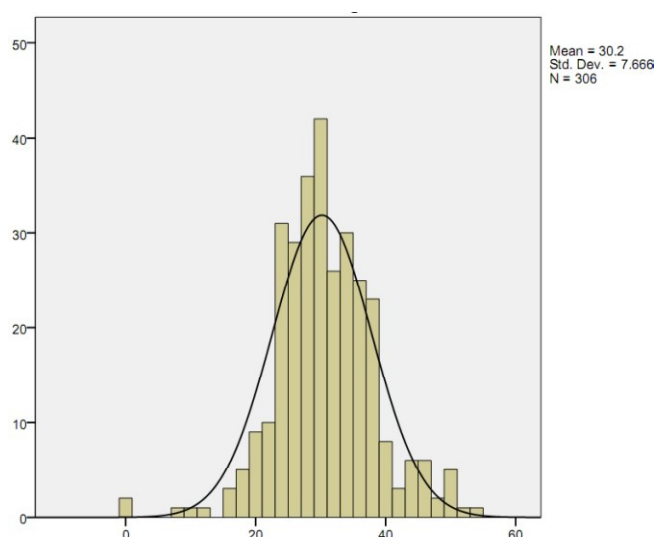

Figure-1

Histogram of obtained scores frequency distribution on Writing Self-efficacy scale

The maximum possible score on writing self-efficacy scale was 54(18 x 3). The obtained minimum and maximum score were 11 and 50, respectively. To categorize the high, moderate and low writing self-efficacy students, Mean +/- sd formula was applied. The results are presented in Table – 3.

Table – 3 Higher education students' writing self-efficacy level

No	Writing self-efficacy level	Score	N	Percentage
1	Low	<22.33	32	10.45%
2	Moderate	22.33 to 37.86	231	75.49%
3	High	>37.86	43	14.05%

Table – 3 shows that 10.45 % students had low; 75.49% students had moderate and 14.05 % students had high level writing self-efficacy. The results revealed that most of students had moderate level writing self-efficacy. Graphical presentation of the results is shown as Figure-2
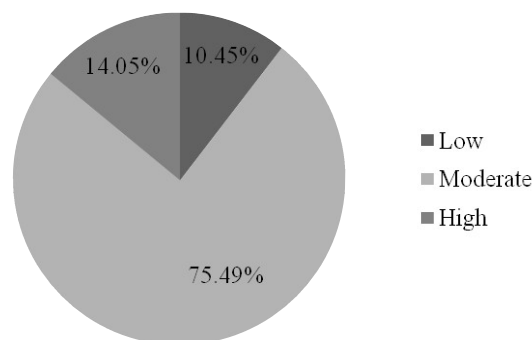

Figure-2

Higher education students' writing self-efficacy levels

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the first hypothesis testing are presented in Table - 4

Table - 4 Writing self-efficacy and gender relationship

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Mean Diff	t-value	df	Sig. level
Female	172	30.44	7.539	0.651	0.429	0.485	304	N.S.
Male	134	30.01	7.781	0.593				

Table - 4 shows that there were 172 female and 134 male students. Mean were 30.44 and 30.01; standard deviation were 7.539 and 7.781; standard error of mean were 0.651 and 0.593 of respectively for male and female students. Mean difference was 0.429 and t-value was 0.485. The calculated t-value was less than the table value.

Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference in writing self-efficacy of higher education students in the context of their gender.

The results of the second hypothesis testing are presented in Table - 5

Table - 5 Writing self-efficacy and social class category relationship

Social class category	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Mean Diff	t-value	df	Sig level
General	57	32.63	8.232	1.090	2.989	2.682	304	0.01
Other	294	29.64	7.437	0.471				

Table - 5 shows that there were 57 and 294 From General and Other social class category students, respectivel Mean were 32.63 and 29.64; standard deviation were 8.232 and 7.437; standard error of mean were 1.090 and 0.471 respectively for general and other social class category students. Mean difference was 2.989 and t-value was 2.682. The calculated value was greater than table value. Therefore the null

hypothesis was not accepted. There was significant difference in writing self-efficacy of higher education students in the context of their social class category. The writing self-efficacy of General social class category students was significantly higher than that of Other social class category students.

The results of the third hypothesis testing are presented in Table - 6

Table - 6 Writing self-efficacy and area of residence relationship

Area of residence	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Mean Diff	t-value	df	Sig level
Urban	83	32.22	8.634	0.948	2.768	2.841	304	0.01
Rural	223	29.45	7.150	0.479				

Table - 6 shows that there were 83 and 223 from urban and rural area respectively. Mean were 32.22 and 29.45; standard deviation were 8.634 and 7.150; standard error of mean were 0.948 and 0.479 respectively for urban and rural area students. Mean difference was 2.768 and t-value was 2.841. The calculated value was

greater than table value. Therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted. There was significant difference in writing self-efficacy of higher education students in the context of area of residence. The writing self-efficacy of urban area students was significantly higher than that of rural area students.

Discussion

Research has indicated that self efficacy correlates with achievement outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995). Students with high self efficacy often display greater performance comparatively to those with low efficacy. The results of the study indicated that the percent of students having high level of writing self-efficacy was very low. Most of students had moderate level writing self-efficacy. Therefore our practices and teaching strategies should be aimed at enhancing self efficacy to increase writing competence.

There was no significant difference in students' writing self-efficacy in the context of their gender. This result confirmed to the results of the studies by Shah et al. (2011), Khojasteh at el. (2016) and Hashemnejad et al. (2014). The result was in contrast with the result of the study by Akram & Ghazanfar (2014). Their study revealed that male students showed high level of self efficacy as compared to female students.

The results of the study also show that there was significant difference in students writing self-efficacy in the context of their social class category and area of residence. The writing self-efficacy of General social class category students was significantly higher than that of Other social class category students. The writing self-efficacy of urban area students was significantly higher than that of rural area students. Therefore it is important to pay more attention towards Other social class category and rural area students. Further research should be conducted to find out the causes behind this situation.

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