



The Role of Self-Efficacy in Higher Education Students for Human Resource Development: A Systematic Literature Review

Dinis Cahyaningrum¹, Tifani Dame Hasany², Khairul Mujahidi³, Ni Wayan Adelia Mutiara Asri⁴

¹ Universitas Mataram, dinis@staff.unram.ac.id

² Universitas Mataram, tifanidame@staff.unram.ac.id

³ Universitas Mataram, khairul_mujahidi@staff.unram.ac.id

⁴ Universitas Mataram, adeliamutiara@staff.unram.ac.id

Corresponding Author: dinis@staff.unram.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Academic self-efficacy is an important factor that influences students' academic success, persistence, and professional competency development in higher education. However, previous studies have mainly focused on academic achievement and motivation, while limited studies have discussed its contribution to human resource development using the integration of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of academic self-efficacy in supporting academic achievement, student persistence, and human resource development among higher education students. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach through a literature review by analyzing previous studies from books, journal articles, and academic publications. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify major themes and relationships among previous findings. The results showed that academic self-efficacy positively influences motivation, learning engagement, academic persistence, career readiness, adaptability, and employability skills. The novelty of this study lies in integrating SCT, SCCT, and Human Resource Development (HRD) perspectives to explain the broader role of academic self-efficacy in preparing adaptive and competitive human resources in higher education.

Keywords: *Academic self-efficacy; Higher Education Student; Social Cognitive Career Theory; Social Cognitive Theory; Student persistence*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a strategic role in supporting the development of high-quality, adaptive, and competitive human resources in the era of globalization. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, universities are not only academic institutions but also agents of human resource development capable of preparing graduates to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce [1]. Therefore, the development of both academic and non-academic competencies among students has become an essential aspect of creating productive, innovative, and competitive human resources.

One psychological factor that significantly influences students' academic success is self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura through the Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence their behavior,

motivation, thought processes, and achievements [2]. In the context of higher education, academic self-efficacy refers to students' beliefs in their ability to complete academic tasks, overcome learning challenges, and achieve educational goals. Students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident in dealing with academic demands, possess better self-regulation skills, and demonstrate greater engagement in learning activities compared to those with low self-efficacy.

Student persistence refers to students' ability to remain enrolled, continue, and successfully complete higher education. One of the most influential factors affecting student persistence is academic self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve academic success [2]. Academic self-efficacy affects how students perceive academic challenges, manage effort and learning strategies, and maintain motivation when facing difficulties. Based on social cognitive theory, individuals with high academic self-efficacy tend to demonstrate stronger learning motivation, perseverance, and self-regulation, increasing their likelihood of persisting and completing their studies [2–3]. In contrast, low academic self-efficacy may lead to self-doubt, avoidance of challenging academic tasks, and a greater risk of academic discontinuation [4–5].

Research has shown that students with high self-efficacy tend to have better learning motivation, greater academic resilience, and more effective adaptability in dealing with changes in learning environments [6]. Beyond academic achievement, self-efficacy also plays an important role in human resource development. Students with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to possess better problem-solving abilities, communication skills, collaboration skills, and career readiness. These competencies are essential for developing human resources capable of adapting to technological changes, industry demands, and the dynamic nature of the modern workforce.

Previous studies have demonstrated that academic self-efficacy plays an important role in supporting academic adjustment, task management, and students' academic success. Several quantitative studies have shown that academic self-efficacy significantly contributes to first-year students' academic adjustment and reduces tendencies toward academic procrastination [7–8]. Other studies also emphasize that self-efficacy is an important factor influencing students' academic readiness and overall academic achievement [9–10]. Furthermore, several studies indicate that self-efficacy is positively associated with professional competency development, career readiness, and students' adaptability in dynamic work environments. In line with Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), self-efficacy also influences students' career interests, goals, and readiness to enter the workforce.

However, previous studies have mostly focused on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement, motivation, or learning engagement. Limited studies have comprehensively discussed how academic self-efficacy contributes to broader human resource development outcomes, such as career readiness, adaptability, professional competencies, and long-term workforce preparedness among higher education students. In addition, few literature reviews have integrated the discussion using both Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) perspectives.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review on the role of academic self-efficacy among higher education students in supporting human resource development based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and SCCT. This study seeks to identify research trends, factors influencing students' academic self-efficacy, and the contribution of self-efficacy to academic success, student persistence, career readiness, and professional competency development. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on positioning academic self-efficacy not only as a factor influencing academic achievement but also as an important element in developing adaptive and competitive human resources in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory

Self-efficacy is a central concept in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that individual behavior and achievement are strongly influenced by personal beliefs regarding one's own capabilities. Bandura defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific goals and desired outcomes [2]. In educational settings, academic self-efficacy refers to students' confidence in their ability to understand learning materials, complete academic tasks, and achieve academic success effectively [3, 11].

According to Bandura, self-efficacy is developed through four primary sources [2]:

1. **Performance Accomplishments**
Performance Accomplishments refers to previous successful experiences that strengthen individuals' beliefs in their capabilities. Successful academic experiences increase students' confidence in handling future academic challenges effectively [12–13].
2. **Vicarious Experience**
Vicarious experience occurs when individuals observe others with similar characteristics successfully completing tasks. Through observational learning, students may develop stronger confidence in their own abilities [2, 14].
3. **Verbal Persuasion**
Verbal persuasion includes encouragement, motivation, and constructive feedback from lecturers, peers, family members, or other significant individuals. Positive reinforcement can strengthen students' confidence in their academic abilities [15].
4. **Emotional Arousal**
Emotional and physiological conditions, such as stress, anxiety, and mood, also influence self-efficacy. Students who are able to manage stress and maintain positive emotional states tend to demonstrate higher self-efficacy when facing academic challenges [16].

These four sources play a significant role in shaping students' confidence, influencing learning behavior, academic engagement, and achievement outcomes in higher education environments.

Academic Self-Efficacy and Student Persistence in Higher Education

Academic self-efficacy has been widely recognized as one of the most important psychological predictors of students' academic success in higher education [3,12]. Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate greater motivation, persistence, and self-regulated learning behaviors compared to students with low self-efficacy [17]. They also tend to approach difficult academic tasks as challenges rather than threats, enabling them to maintain stronger commitment and effort toward learning goals.

Previous studies have shown that academic self-efficacy positively influences academic performance, classroom participation, learning engagement, and critical thinking skills [18]. Furthermore, self-efficacy contributes to students' ability to adapt to changing learning environments, particularly in technology-based and online learning contexts. Students with stronger self-efficacy are generally more capable of managing independent learning, utilizing digital learning platforms, and coping with academic pressure effectively.

Academic self-efficacy also affects students' emotional well-being and resilience. High levels of self-efficacy are associated with lower levels of academic stress, anxiety, and burnout, while low self-efficacy may contribute to academic procrastination, disengagement, and decreased academic performance [16].

Student persistence refers to students' ability to remain enrolled and successfully complete their higher education studies [18]. Persistence is influenced by various academic, psychological, social, and economic factors, including motivation, social support, mental health, financial conditions, and academic adjustment [9-10].

Within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, academic self-efficacy is considered a key internal factor influencing student persistence. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to maintain motivation, overcome academic obstacles, and persist despite experiencing academic difficulties. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy are more vulnerable to feelings of helplessness, disengagement, and withdrawal from academic activities.

Several studies have demonstrated that academic self-efficacy significantly predicts students' persistence and retention in higher education institutions [8-10]. Self-efficacy supports students in managing academic workloads, adapting to university environments, and maintaining long-term educational goals. Therefore, strengthening students' academic self-efficacy is considered essential in reducing dropout rates and improving educational outcomes.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett, is an extension of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory that explains how self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals influence individuals' academic and career development [19]. SCCT emphasizes that individuals' beliefs in their abilities significantly affect career interests, educational choices, persistence, and professional performance. In higher education contexts, academic self-efficacy is considered an important predictor of students' career readiness, employability, and long-term professional development.

According to SCCT, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to develop stronger career interests, set higher academic and professional goals, and persist in achieving those goals despite challenges or obstacles [19-20]. Self-efficacy also influences students' willingness to engage in learning experiences that support competency development, including problem-solving, communication, collaboration, leadership, and adaptability skills. These competencies are highly relevant to human resource development because they contribute to workforce preparedness and professional success in dynamic organizational environments.

SCCT further explains that environmental factors such as social support, educational experiences, mentoring, and institutional climate influence students' self-efficacy and career development processes [19-20]. Supportive learning environments and positive academic experiences can strengthen students' confidence in their professional capabilities and encourage active participation in career preparation activities. Therefore, integrating self-efficacy development into higher education practices is essential not only for improving academic achievement and persistence but also for preparing competitive and adaptive human resources capable of meeting the demands of the modern workforce.

Overall, the integration of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and the Human Resource Development (HRD) perspective provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the strategic role of academic self-efficacy in higher education. SCT explains that students' beliefs in their abilities are shaped through performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal, which subsequently influence motivation, behavior, academic engagement, and persistence [2]. Furthermore, SCCT extends this perspective by emphasizing that self-efficacy not only affects academic achievement but also shapes career interests, professional goals, adaptability, and long-term career development [19-20]. In the context of HRD, these competencies are essential for preparing graduates who are adaptive, resilient, innovative, and capable of responding to the challenges of the modern workforce. Therefore, strengthening students' academic self-efficacy through supportive learning environments, mentoring, academic engagement, and positive institutional support is not only important for improving academic success and student persistence, but also for developing competitive and sustainable human resources in higher education contexts.

METHODS

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the role of academic self-efficacy among higher education students in supporting academic success, student persistence, and human resource development based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The research is conducted through a literature review, which involves systematically collecting and analyzing information from secondary sources such as books, journal articles, conference papers, and official reports related to self-efficacy and higher education [21]. According to Snyder, a literature review emphasizes the identification, evaluation, and synthesis of previous studies to develop a comprehensive understanding of a specific research topic [22]. Since this study does not involve field observations or direct interaction with respondents, all data were obtained from existing academic publications. Therefore, the literature review serves as the foundation for constructing the theoretical framework and understanding the relationship between academic self-efficacy, student persistence, and human resource development in higher education contexts.

The literature review applied a rigorous selection process focusing on studies discussing academic self-efficacy among higher education students within the framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. To ensure relevance, articles were identified using targeted keywords such as: academic self-efficacy, higher education students, student persistence, social cognitive theory. The literature search was conducted using several academic databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, etc.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis by identifying major themes, patterns, and relationships found in previous studies. The findings were then categorized into several themes, including the influence of academic self-efficacy on academic achievement, learning engagement, student persistence. This thematic categorization facilitated a structured and comprehensive presentation of the literature analysis related to the role of academic self-efficacy in higher education students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature review revealed that academic self-efficacy plays a significant role in supporting students' academic success, persistence, learning engagement, and professional competency development in higher education. Based on the analysis of recent studies published, the findings were categorized into three major themes: (1) academic self-efficacy and academic achievement, (2) academic self-efficacy and student persistence, and (3) academic self-efficacy and human resource development.

Academic Self-Efficacy and academic achievement

Individuals with high academic self-efficacy tend to demonstrate stronger learning motivation, greater persistence, and more effective self-regulated learning behaviors. From a theoretical perspective, self-efficacy is considered one of the most influential determinants of students' motivation, effort, and resilience in academic settings. According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to initiate actions, sustain effort, and remain persistent when encountering obstacles or challenges. In the context of higher education, students with strong beliefs in their academic abilities are generally more motivated to achieve educational goals and more willing to invest substantial effort in learning activities [23]. This condition is closely related to performance accomplishments, where previous successful academic experiences strengthen students' confidence in handling future academic challenges effectively [12–13]. Students who repeatedly experience success in completing assignments, examinations, and academic projects tend to develop stronger beliefs in their abilities, which subsequently increases their motivation and perseverance in learning activities.

They tend to approach academic tasks with confidence, maintain positive attitudes toward learning, and demonstrate higher levels of commitment to completing assignments and academic responsibilities. Moreover, students with high academic self-efficacy are better able to regulate their

learning processes by setting goals, managing study time effectively, monitoring their academic progress, and applying appropriate learning strategies. This ability to self-regulate contributes significantly to improved academic performance and long-term educational success. In addition, Bandura explained that self-efficacy can also be strengthened through vicarious experience, where students observe peers or individuals with similar characteristics successfully completing academic tasks [2,14]. Through observational learning, students may develop stronger confidence in their own abilities and become more motivated to participate actively in academic activities.

In addition to enhancing motivation, academic self-efficacy also plays a critical role in increasing students' academic engagement. Students who possess strong confidence in their academic capabilities are more likely to actively participate in classroom discussions, collaborative projects, and independent learning activities. Their confidence encourages them to engage more deeply in the learning process and to take initiative in developing academic competencies. Academic engagement reflects students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in educational activities, which is essential for achieving meaningful learning outcomes. Previous studies have demonstrated that academic engagement functions as an important mediating factor linking self-efficacy and academic performance [24]. Students with higher levels of engagement tend to demonstrate stronger concentration, active participation, enthusiasm for learning, and greater dedication to academic tasks. Furthermore, self-efficacy enables students to remain engaged even in challenging academic situations because they perceive difficulties as manageable and solvable through effort and persistence rather than as threats to their competence. This engagement is also influenced by verbal persuasion, including encouragement, motivation, and constructive feedback from lecturers, peers, family members, or other significant individuals [15]. Positive reinforcement strengthens students' confidence in their academic abilities and encourages them to persist in difficult learning situations.

Academic self-efficacy has also been widely recognized as one of the strongest predictors of students' academic achievement and overall academic performance. Students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to achieve better grades, demonstrate stronger academic competencies, and perform more effectively in examinations and coursework compared to students with low self-efficacy [24]. This relationship exists because students who believe in their academic abilities are more likely to utilize effective learning strategies, maintain consistent study habits, and persist when facing academic difficulties. Research findings indicate that the level of academic achievement is positively associated with the level of self-efficacy, suggesting that students with stronger self-efficacy consistently demonstrate superior academic outcomes [25]. High self-efficacy also encourages students to seek academic challenges, explore new knowledge, and maintain optimism regarding their academic capabilities. As a result, they become more resilient learners who are capable of adapting to demanding educational environments and achieving long-term academic goals.

Conversely, students with low academic self-efficacy are more vulnerable to experiencing academic stress, anxiety, frustration, and difficulties in achieving academic targets. They often doubt their capabilities and perceive difficult academic tasks as threats rather than opportunities for growth. Consequently, these students may avoid challenging assignments, reduce their academic effort, and disengage from learning activities. Low academic self-efficacy is also associated with procrastination behaviors, poor self-regulation, decreased classroom participation, and lower academic achievement [5,24]. This condition is closely associated with emotional arousal, which refers to emotional and physiological states such as stress, anxiety, and mood that influence self-efficacy beliefs [16]. Students who are unable to manage stress and negative emotions effectively may experience decreased confidence in their academic abilities, which can negatively affect their learning engagement and performance.

Several previous studies have supported the positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and students' academic achievement. Yusuf [26] confirmed that academic self-efficacy positively influenced students' achievement in university courses in Malaysia. Similarly, Musa [27]

and Basith, Syahputra, and Ichwanto [28] found that students with higher levels of self-efficacy tended to strive harder to achieve academic goals and obtained better examination results. These findings reinforce the argument that self-efficacy serves as an important predictor of academic success because it influences students' effort, persistence, and confidence in completing academic tasks. However, not all studies reported consistent findings. This inconsistency suggests that the influence of self-efficacy on academic achievement may vary depending on contextual factors such as learning environments, subject areas, instructional methods, and students' socio-cultural backgrounds.

In many cases, prolonged feelings of academic incompetence can negatively affect students' emotional well-being and increase the risk of academic burnout and dropout. Students with low self-efficacy may struggle to cope with academic pressure and are less likely to persist when encountering obstacles or setbacks in their studies. Therefore, strengthening students' academic self-efficacy through mastery experiences, observational learning, positive verbal support, and emotional regulation is considered essential not only for improving academic performance but also for supporting students' psychological well-being, persistence, and long-term educational success in higher education environments.

Academic self-efficacy and student persistence

Student persistence refers to students' ability to remain enrolled and successfully complete their higher education studies. Persistence is influenced by various academic, psychological, social, and economic factors, including motivation, social support, mental health, financial conditions, and academic adjustment [29-31]. Within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, academic self-efficacy is considered one of the most important internal factors influencing student persistence. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to maintain motivation, overcome academic obstacles, and persist despite experiencing academic difficulties [2,29]. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy are more vulnerable to feelings of helplessness, disengagement, and withdrawal from academic activities. This condition is closely related to Bandura's concept of performance accomplishments, where previous successful academic experiences strengthen students' confidence in handling future academic challenges effectively [12-13]. Students who repeatedly experience academic success are more likely to develop stronger beliefs in their capabilities, which subsequently increases their persistence in higher education.

Several studies have shown that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between academic engagement and student persistence. Students who actively participate in learning activities, maintain positive academic interactions, and demonstrate higher engagement levels tend to develop stronger academic self-efficacy, which subsequently reduces their risk of dropping out [31]. This process is also associated with vicarious experience, in which students develop confidence in their own abilities by observing peers with similar backgrounds successfully completing academic tasks and overcoming university challenges [2,14]. Through observational learning, students become more confident that they are also capable of succeeding in higher education environments.

Similarly, self-efficacy strengthens students' ability to adapt to university life, manage academic workloads, and cope with emotionally stressful situations such as academic burnout and performance pressure. High self-efficacy also supports students' self-regulation skills, including time management, concentration, effort regulation, and strategic learning behaviors, all of which contribute to greater academic persistence and lower dropout intention [30-32]. In this context, emotional arousal becomes an important factor influencing students' confidence and persistence. Students who are able to manage stress, anxiety, and negative emotions effectively tend to demonstrate stronger self-efficacy when facing academic challenges [16]. Positive emotional conditions enable students to remain focused, resilient, and committed to completing their studies despite academic pressure and institutional demands.

Social support and institutional engagement also play significant roles in shaping self-efficacy and persistence. Students who receive positive encouragement from lecturers, peers, and

family members tend to develop stronger confidence in their academic abilities and stronger feelings of belonging within the university environment. Positive academic interactions and supportive institutional climates enhance students' academic integration and institutional commitment, both of which are strongly associated with persistence and retention [32-33]. Furthermore, students with high levels of social self-efficacy are generally more capable of establishing meaningful social relationships and maintaining active participation in campus communities, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing their motivation to remain in higher education. These findings are strongly connected to Bandura's concept of verbal persuasion, where encouragement, constructive feedback, and motivational support from significant individuals strengthen students' beliefs in their academic capabilities [15]. Positive reinforcement from lecturers, peers, and family members can therefore serve as an important protective factor against academic disengagement and dropout.

Overall, the literature confirms that academic self-efficacy serves as a protective factor against university dropout and plays an essential role in promoting student persistence. The four primary sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura—performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal—collectively contribute to strengthening students' confidence, academic engagement, resilience, and persistence in higher education environments [2]. Strengthening students' self-efficacy through supportive learning environments, academic guidance, mentoring programs, collaborative learning activities, and positive institutional engagement is therefore considered crucial for improving retention rates and supporting long-term academic success in higher education institutions.

Academic self-efficacy and human resource development

Academic self-efficacy also plays an important role in human resource development (HRD) within higher education contexts. In addition to influencing academic achievement and student persistence, self-efficacy contributes to the development of professional competencies, career readiness, adaptability, and employability skills needed in the modern workforce. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), self-efficacy influences students' career interests, professional goals, and confidence in performing tasks related to future occupations [19–20]. Students with high academic self-efficacy tend to demonstrate stronger confidence in their abilities to solve problems, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and adapt to changing work environments. These competencies are highly relevant to human resource development because they support workforce preparedness and long-term professional success.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, the development of these competencies is closely related to the four primary sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura [2]. Performance accomplishments obtained through successful academic experiences, internships, project-based learning, and organizational involvement strengthen students' confidence in their professional capabilities [12–13]. Students who successfully complete academic and practical tasks are more likely to believe that they can perform effectively in professional environments. Similarly, vicarious experience allows students to develop stronger career confidence by observing lecturers, mentors, alumni, or peers successfully performing professional roles [2,14]. Through observational learning, students become more motivated to pursue career goals and develop competencies required in the workforce.

Verbal persuasion also contributes significantly to human resource development. Encouragement, constructive feedback, mentoring, and motivational support from lecturers, supervisors, peers, and family members can strengthen students' confidence in their professional abilities and career potential [15]. Positive reinforcement encourages students to participate actively in competency development programs, leadership activities, internships, and collaborative learning experiences that enhance employability skills. In addition, emotional arousal influences students' readiness to face academic and professional challenges. Students who are able to manage stress, anxiety, and emotional pressure effectively tend to demonstrate stronger adaptability, resilience, and confidence in dynamic work environments [16].

Several previous studies have shown that academic self-efficacy is positively associated with career readiness, professional competency development, and employability among university students. Students with high self-efficacy are generally more prepared to transition from academic environments to professional careers because they possess stronger confidence in their abilities to meet workplace demands, solve complex problems, and continuously develop new skills. Furthermore, supportive institutional environments, mentoring programs, experiential learning, and collaborative academic activities contribute significantly to strengthening students' self-efficacy and professional development.

Overall, the literature indicates that academic self-efficacy serves as an important foundation for human resource development in higher education. The integration of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), and Human Resource Development (HRD) perspectives highlights that self-efficacy not only influences academic success and persistence but also contributes to the development of adaptive, resilient, and competitive graduates capable of responding to the demands of the modern workforce. Therefore, higher education institutions need to create supportive learning environments that strengthen students' self-efficacy through academic support, mentoring, experiential learning, and career development programs to prepare high-quality human resources for sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that academic self-efficacy plays a significant role in supporting academic achievement, student persistence, and human resource development in higher education. Based on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), students' beliefs in their abilities are shaped through performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal, which influence motivation, learning behavior, and resilience. Furthermore, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explains that academic self-efficacy also contributes to career readiness, professional competency development, adaptability, and employability among university students. The integration of SCT, SCCT, and Human Resource Development (HRD) perspectives demonstrates that academic self-efficacy is not only important for academic success but also essential for preparing adaptive, competitive, and sustainable human resources in the modern workforce. Therefore, higher education institutions should strengthen students' academic self-efficacy through supportive learning environments, mentoring, experiential learning, and career development programs to improve both educational and professional outcomes.

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