### Perceived Competence Influencing Academic Performance Of Students At The Under-Graduate Level

#### M.Venkatesan<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. S. Prabu Shankar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>\*Ph.D. (Full-time) Research Scholar Reg.No:PHDJU2018023 Institute of Advanced Study in Education (Autonomous) Saidapet, Chennai - 600 015. Affiliated to Tamilnadu Teachers Education University E-mail:aaravamuthanv8@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor of Education Department of Education Institute of Advanced Study in Education (Autonomous) Saidapet, Chennai-15.E-mail: drsps.edn@gmail.com

\*Corresponding Author: - M.Venkatesan

#### Abstract

This paper aims at studying the influence of perceived competence on academic performance of students studying at the undergraduate level. The conceptual and statistical significance between perceived competence and academic performance has been investigated in this article. The theoretical framework of self-determination theory is used to conceptualize perceived competence (Deci& Ryan, 2002). Based on the review of studies Martzoukou & Fulton (2020), Guay& Pierre (2017), Zhang et al. (2019), Burgermeister et al. (2016), Jeno et al.(2018), Luo et al. (2019) it has been observed that a majority of students at the undergraduate level are to a greater extent aware of their perceived competence. The major goal of this study is to determine the relationship between perceived competence and academic performance of undergraduate students in selected non-professional and professional institutions in the Chennai and Thiruvallur regions. A total of 210 samples were selected at random from 6 government institutions and 4 private colleges, with 125 of the male and 85 of the female candidates chosen at random. The investigator constructed the perceived competence scale and validated it. The main goal of the study is to determine the impact of perceived competence and its sub-variables namely perceived reality, self-efficacy, and decision making. The data has been analysed and interpreted using correlation and regression analysis. Based on the data analysis, it has been found that there exists significant relationship which establishes that perceived competence influences academic performance of students at the under-graduate level.

Key terms: Perceived competence, Self-efficacy, Academic performance

#### Introduction

In sociology, psychology and other faculties of developmental sciences, vast literature sources related to the variable perceived competence may be cited. Perceived competence is described in all of these domains as a highly specialized system of individual and collective talents sufficient to achieve a certain goal, identifying oneself of their abilities and skills in the specified domain of knowledge. Studies indicate that an individual's perceived competence may be determined based on one's cognitive abilities, such as their ability to learn, perform, their self-esteem and well-being to beyond improve, the other significant psychological criteria involved (Desi & Rayn, 2000). Individuals with a strong sense of selfawareness are more inclined to accept difficult conditions, learn new abilities and perform well excelling others. In the academic context perceived competence, may be interpreted that the capacity of each student to exhibits his or her abilities to the maximum capacity. In general contexts, the term perceived competency refers to human resource capacity to perform, the perceived strength and belief of the individual to perform, the abilities and skills that an

individual believes to possess in comparison to others.

According to the US National Research Council (2012b) concept of 21st-century competences, an individual gains expertise in a certain subject of knowledge and performance via deeper study. Critical learning based on perceived competence produces transferable information, which includes domain-specific content knowledge as well as understanding of how, why, and when to use that knowledge to answer questions and solve issues. Perceived competence, critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and creativity and invention are the most significant 21<sup>st</sup> century abilities identified in worldwide frameworks that have been demonstrated to give measurable benefits in various aspects of life. Perceived competency on the other hand is an underlying feature meaning they are an in-built mechanism of one's perception regarding the understanding of one's skills and abilities to perform. It aids in the prediction of an individual's behaviour in a range of situations or activities applying a set of skills, motivation, knowledge, talents and attitudes that contribute to performance.

## Studies on Perceived competence and related variables

Individuals, self-perceptions of their talents and capacity to manage their surroundings or circumstance are referred to as perceived competence. It refers to how skilled effective a person believes they are in a certain scenario. Individuals usually select tasks that are appropriate for their skill level. Nevertheless, perceived competence is conceptualized as the cognitive component of self-concept. Marsh and colleagues have shown a link between a sense of competence and accomplishment results (Marsh & Craven, 2006).

Perceived academic competence is recognised to be a good predictor of academic achievement (Pajares&Schunk,2002). In many educational contexts, researchers have stressed the need of improving student's perception of competence (Burnett, 2003). According to studies, student success is linked to their motivation and selfesteem (McInerney & Ali, 2006). Student's motivation and self-concept have been shown in studies to have a substantial impact on important academic outcomes such as achievement scores (Craven et al, 2003).

Competency-based education is gaining popularity across the world, from identifying individual talents to learning depending on competence; it allows everyone to master their skills at their own speed. Academic competence is a multifaceted concept made up of a learner's skills, attitudes, and behaviours that help them succeed in the classroom. Student self-regulatory learning refers to how students select, arrange, or build their own learning environment, as well as how they plan and manage their own learning. The ability of students to organise their own learning activities adds to their academic performance. Many different terms have been used in the literature to describe perceived competence; however, in this article terms such as perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision-making are used to represent perceivedcompetence and its dimensions.

#### Variables of the study

Perceived competence and its related terminologies spread across in the literature in its variedness however the following dimensions of the variable have been carefully selected to signify the operational meaning of the variable in terms of its application to suit the context of the present study. The terms have been preferred from the selfdetermination theory study carried out by Deci & Ryan (1984) and the terms such as perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making have been sternly studied to the context of perceived competence.

The independent variable of the present study is perceived competence and its dimensions namely perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making.

The dependent variable of the study is Academic performance; the cumulative percentage scores acquired in the semester examinations. For the first year students the average of I and II semester scores and for the second year students the average of the I to IV semester scores were considered as the academic performance scores which were considered for data analysis after converting it to z-scores.

#### Need and Significance of the study

Anintensive search to find out the empirical evidence of possible relationships between perceived competence and academic performance of undergraduate college students has been carried out. Students have a broad range of abilities perform better in college and the review of studies carried out in the context of the present study majorly relates it the areas namely perceived reality, self-analysis, self-efficiency etc. The study's finding signifies the importance and need for research in this area and it contributes to a significant corpus of research that covers many facets of perceived competence. Assessing perceived competence and its influence on academic achievement this study will contribute to the structuring of studies in the related areas such as need for goal orientation, understanding academic resilience and knowledge of competence. This study is majorly intended to examine the factors related to student's perceived competence and academic performance.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study,

• does perceived competence hold any influence on academic performance?

- does the factors of perceived competence namely perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making determine academic performance?
- whether the selected sub-variables namely gender, stream of study, types of college, locality, and mode of study, intrapersonal skills, competency level, and parental qualification have in perceived competence and academic performance?

#### **Objectives of the study**

- to study the perceived competence of students studying at the undergraduate level.
- to determine the influence of perceived competence on academic performance of under-graduate students.
- to examine the need for perceived competencebased orientation at the under-graduate level. .
- to analyze whether the sample subgroups differ in their perceived competence.
- to contribute to the findings and provide up with suitable outcomes to indicate the necessity for under-graduate students to have awareness of perceived competence.

#### Hypotheses of the study

H.1. There is no significant relationship between perceived competence and academic performance of under-graduate students.

H.1.1 Perceived Reality

H.1.2 Self-Efficacy

- H.1.3 Decision Making
- H.1.4 Overall Perceived competence

H.2. There is no significant difference among the sample subgroups with respect to the independent variable, perceived competence.

- H.2.1 Gender : (Male / Female)
- H.2.2 Stream : (Professional / Non-Professional)
- H.2.3 Type of Institution : (Government / Private)
- H.2.4 Locality: (Rural / Urban)

H.2.5 Mode of study : (Self-motivated learning / Rely on external motivation)

H.2.6 Intra Personal Skills: Activity-oriented / Subject-oriented

H.2.7 Competency Level: Self / Others

H.2.8 Parental Qualification: School level / College level

#### Methodology, Tool and Sample of the study

The methodology adopted for the present study is descriptive survey. The Perceived Competence

scale used in the present study has been constructed by the investigator. The scale consisted of fiftythree items with 4 point rating. The three dimensions considered for the study to understand perceived competence are (a) perceived reality (b) self-efficacy, and (c) decision making. To understand the difference between the sample subgroups t-test has been applied and to assess the relationship correlation and regression analysis has been applied.

The study has been conducted on the sample of 210 undergraduate college students studying in government and private colleges in Chennai and Thiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu. Students studying in 6 government colleges and 4 private colleges were chosen at random. The samples were stratified on the basis of fact that the sample has (i) selected the course of study on their own choice (ii) aware of the perceived competence, and (iii) had attended bridge course, life-skill course or orientation course conducted by the institution and further they are (iv) aware of the perceived reality and achievement process.

#### Measurement of the research tool

The tool consists of 53 items which are indicative of perceived competence. Items that is indicative (positive) and non-indicative (negative) of perceived competence of undergraduate students has been presented in the tool. The items are categorized under three dimensions namely perceived reality, self-efficacy, and decision making.

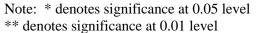
#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This study on perceived competence examines student's acquiring knowledge about their need for abilities in perceived reality, self-efficacy, decision making successes and failures. Further this study examines the influence of perceived competence on academic performance of undergraduate students.

Table 1, represents the mean and standard deviation scores of the independent variable, perceived competence based on the chosen subgroups of the samples.

**Table: 1** Mean, standard deviation and t- values of perceived competence based on the subgroups

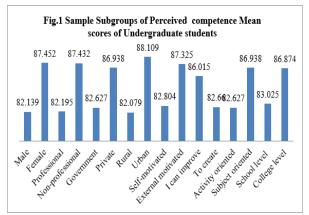
Variables	Group	Ν	Mean	S.D	t-Value	Level of significance
Gender	Male	125	82.139	9.613	4.349**	Sig.
	Female	085	87.452	8.000		
Stream	Non-Professional	126	82.195	11.238	4.864**	Sig.
	Professional	084	87.432	3.629		
Types of	Government	129	82.627	11.325	4.043**	Sig.
College	Private	081	86.938	3.395		
Locality	Rural	133	82.079	10.613	5.688**	Sig.
	Urban	077	88.109	4.618		
Mode of the	Self-motivated	141	82.804	10.866	4.510**	Sig.
Study	External	069	87.325	3.398		
	motivation					
Competency	Self	102	86.015	9.731	2.628**	Sig.
level	Others	108	82.660	8.706		
Intrapersonal	Activity oriented	129	82.627	11.235	4.043**	Sig.
skills	Subject oriented	081	86.938	3.395		
Parental	School level	141	83.025	10.204	3.279**	Sig.
Qualification	College level	069	86.874	6.642		



# Results based on difference among the sample subgroups based on perceived competence scores

From the table 1 it is observed that the mean scores of female students (M=87.452; SD=8.000) are comparatively greater than their male counterparts (M=82.139; SD=9.613) respectively, t(208) =4.349, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between male and female students based on the perceived competence scores. Female students are found to be better in their perceived competence than the male students. Hence null hypothesis H.2.1 is rejected at 0.01 level. This may be perhaps due to the fact that female students are comparatively sincere in getting abilities themselves than their counterparts.

The mean scores among the professional stream students (M=87.432; SD=3.629) are found to be greater than their non-professional group students (M=82.195; SD=11.238) respectively, t(208) = 4.864, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between professional and non-professional group students based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.2 is rejected at 0.01 level. It may be interpreted that students with professional stream are found to be better in their perceived competence.



The mean scores with respect to private college students (M=86.938; SD=3.395) are comparatively greater than their government college students (M=82.627; SD=11.325) respectively, t(208) = 4.043, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between private and government college students based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.3 is rejected at 0.01 level. It may be interpreted that students with private institution are found to be better in their perceived competence.

The mean scores based on locality of college with regard to urban area (M=88.109; SD=4.618) are found to be greater than their rural area students (M=82.079; SD=10.613) respectively, t(208) =5.688, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between rural and urban areas based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.4 is rejected at 0.01 level. With regard to locality, urban students have the library facility, internet usage and have the opportunity of learning together with peer students, but for rural students such as opportunities are very rare, hence urban students are found better in their perceived competence.

The mean scores with respect to mode of the study among the students rely on external motivation (M=87.325; SD=3.398) are comparatively greater than their the self-motivated (M=82.804; SD=10.866) respectively, t(208) = 4.510, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between students who are self-motivated and those rely on external motivation based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.5 is rejected at 0.01 level. Self-motivated depend on other self-efficacy belief and students rely on external motivation depend on special coaching, tuition, coaching classes and learn using online facilities. It is found that students who rely on external motivation are better in their perceived competence.

The mean scores of student with competency level others (M=82.660; SD=8.706) are found to be less than the self students (M=86.015; SD=9.731)

respectively, t(208) = 2.628, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between students competency level with to create and I can improve based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.6 is rejected at 0.01 level. It may be interpreted that students with selfawareness have improved competency levels and are found to be better in their perceived competence.

The mean scores of student intra-personal skills with subject oriented (M=86.938; SD=3.395) are comparatively greater than their activity oriented (M=82.627; SD=11.235) respectively, t(208) = 4.043, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between students intra-personal skills with subject oriented and activity oriented based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.7 is rejected at 0.01 level. It may be interpreted that students with subject oriented intra-personal skill are found to be better in their perceived competence.

The mean scores (M=86.874; SD=6.642) of students with their parental qualification till college level are found to be greater than their school level qualified counterparts (M=83.025; SD=10.204) respectively, t(208) = 3.279, p<0.01. There exists significant difference between parental qualification with school level and college level based on the perceived competence scores. Hence null hypothesis H.2.8 is rejected at 0.01 level. Students with their parental qualification till college level found to be better in their perceived competence.

## Correlation between perceived competence and academic performance

There is no significant relationship between perceived competence and academic performance of students studying at the undergraduate level. Correlation between perceived competence its dimensions and academic performance is presented in Table, 2

**Table: 2** Pearson correlation result for the subscales of perceived competence and academic performance (N=210)

Sub-variables of 1	2	3	4	
Perceived competence				
1.Perceived reality	.597**			
2.Self-efficacy	.641**	.815**		
3.Decision making	.624**	.812**	.846**	
4.Perceived competence	.662**	.936**	.938**	.939**

Note: \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level N = 210, df = (N-2) = 208 Table 2 represents the correlation between the perceived competence and its sub-variables with academic performance of students studying at the undergraduate level. It can be seen that there exists statistical relationship between perceived competence and academic performance among undergraduate students.

It is observed from table 2, that the calculated rvalue for the perceived competence and its dimensions namely, perceived reality r (208) = .597, p=.181, p<0.01, self-efficacy, r (208) = .641, p=.181, p<0.01, decision making r (208) = .624, p=.181, p<0.01, and perceived competence r (208) = .662, p=.181, p<0.01 respectively.

#### **Regression Analysis**

Regression is a statistical technique used to determine the relationship between one response variable (dependent variable) with other changing variable (independent variable). The dependent variable is also termed as outcome variable, which is denoted as Y and the independent variable is also denoted as predictor variables. Regression analysis for the case, where there are several independent or predictor variables X1, X2, X3 etc., and one dependent variable or criterion variable Y. In this study, the correlation of perceived competence (X) and its sub-variables namely perceived reality $(X_1)$ , self-efficacy  $(X_2)$  and decision making  $(X_3)$  with academic performance (Y). This has been studied using multiple co-efficient (R) and the analysis has been carried out for each of the sub-variables of the independent variable perceived competence. Variables selected for the presentmultiple regression analysis are one independent variable namely perceived competence. The dependent variable selected for the present study is academic performance.

There is no significant contribution of perceived competence on academic performance of students studying at the undergraduate level. Variables and codes of the independent variable perceived competence and academic performance of students with studying at the undergraduate level are presented in Table 3.

**Table: 3** Variables and codes used for Regression

 Analysis

S.No.	Variables	Code
Percei	ved competence and its sub variables	
1.	Perceived reality	$X_1$
2.	Self-efficacy	$\mathbf{X}_2$
3.	Decision making	$X_3$
4.	Perceived competence	$X_4$
Depen	dent variable	
5.	Academic performance	Y

Regression analysis depicts the contribution of perceived competence on academic performance. All the sub variables of perceived competence ( $X_1$  to  $X_4$ ) are entered and it has been subjected to the correlates of academic performance (Y). The results of the same are tabulated and presented in Table 3a.

**Table:** 3a Multiple correlation of independentvariableperceived competence and its subvariables with academic performance

Code	Variables entered	Multiple R	R <sup>2</sup>	- dfl	df2	F-ratio	Level of significance
X <sub>1</sub> to X <sub>4</sub>	Perceived reality Self-efficacy Decision making Total perceived competence	- - 0.666 -	0.444	4	205	40.889	0.000**

Multiple R= 0.666,  $R^2$ = 0.444 \*\* 0.01 level of significance

The results of the Table 3a clearly indicate the significance among the correlation of the independent variable perceived competence and its sub-variables ( $X_1$  to  $X_4$ ) with the dependent variable academic performance (Y).

These variables of perceived competence together had contributed to the extent of 44.4 percent ( $R^2=0.444$ ) of the variance towards academic performance.

#### **Regression coefficients and equations**

The regression coefficients of the independent variables perceived competence towards academic performance (Y) are presented in Table 3b.

**Table: 3 b** Regression co-efficient of predictor variable perceived competence towards academic performance

perio	manee	_	-	
S.No.	Variables	B coefficient	Level of	't'
	(Perceived	(Unstandardized)	significance	values
	competence)			
1	Perceived reality	-0.185	0.461	0.738
2	Self-efficacy	-0.009	0.972	0.035
3	Decision making	-0.108	0.693	0.395
4	Total perceived	0.878	0.240	1.180
	competence			
	Constant	25.167	0.000	6.456

The general form of regression equation is as follows,

 $Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4$ 

Results that were represented in table 3b are used to form the regression equation as given below: Y=25.167-0.185-0.009-0.108+0.878Where Y is the dependent variable  $b_0$  is the estimated constant  $X_i$  is the independent variables and its sub-variables.

 $b_i$  is the predicted coefficient of the independent variable called partial regression coefficients, which represent the change in the predicted variable of Y per unit change in the i<sup>th</sup> X value provided that the other X<sub>i</sub>'s are held constant.

As it is observed from the results, total perceived competence have significant contribution on academic performance of undergraduate students.

**Table: 3 c** Contribution of perceived competence

 factors towards the dependent variable academic

 performance of undergraduate students

S.No.	Perceived competence	Academic	Academic performance		
		<b>R</b> <sup>2</sup>	Sig.		
		(0.444)	0.001		
1.	Perceived reality		-		
2.	Self-efficacy		-		
3.	Decision making		-		
4.	Total perceived comp	etence -			

It can be noted from table 3c that the sub variable of perceived competence with codes  $X_4$  contributes towards academic performance.

This shows that there is no significant contribution of perceived competence and its sub variables namely perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making towards academic performance.

## Regression analysis of perceived competence with academic performance

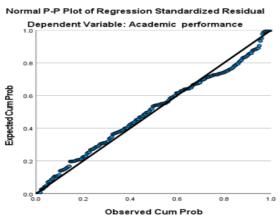
The sub variables of perceived competence namely perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making together had contributed to the extent of 44.4% variance towards the academic performance. This means that the variables of perceived competence influence academic performance to a considerable extent of 44.4% for which the calculated value is (F=40.889), the table value being F (4, 205) = 3.32, p<0.01. Since the calculated 'F' value is greater than the table value of 'F' there exists significance at 0.01 level. This represents that positive influence of perceived competence on academic performance.

The result of the present study is related with various research findings. In this section the researcher discuss the results with various research findings.

The current study result shows that significant relationship was found between perceived competence and student academic performance. This result is similar to the result of Nesdoly et al. (2020) and Li-fang et al. (2019) states that gender or stream shows positively influence on student score in the examination. The present study result shows that significant difference was found between male and female in their academic achievement his results similar to the findings of Lessard (2020). This results also found in Mancini & Jan (2018), Borooah (2017) & Negovan (2013) research studies. Sikhwari (2014) reports that females show better performance in academic when compare to males the same result, is also observed in the current study. According to the results of this study, female students have a higher level of selfconfidence compared to male students and female students have more self-regulated learning strategies.

According to Yadav (2011) & Leung (2012), students from urban areas had the better performance in comparison to their rural counterparts. Singh (2011) & Morris (2013) reports that significant differences was found between rural and urban students with regard to academic achievement. Urban students scored higher in academic achievement. According to the findings of a recent study, urban students better performed academically than rural students.

Marziyeh (2017) report that students with high selfconfidence will have high levels of academic achievement and future aspiration when compare to their counterparts. In the present study close relationship was found between self-efficacy and academic performance of students. Similar results found in the research of Brock et al. (2014), William (2017) & Jotham (2018) shows significant correlation was found between academic performance and self-confidence.



**Fig.2:** Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for Academic performance

#### **Results and Discussions**

The study's purpose was to assess the link between perceived competence and academic performance. Table 2 and Table 3 indicate that there exists a substantial beneficial relationship between perceived

competence and academic performance. As a result of this finding, academic performance in the two categories of perceived competence was modest. Several aspects have been identified as determining student retention in higher education, including academic and social integration, cognitive capability, motivation, individual circumstances (Bean & Eaton, 2000; Kantanis, 2000; Tinto, 1993). Time management, learning abilities, self-monitoring, technology competence, and research skills were all consistent academic qualities for higher education courses (Mah & Ifenthaler, 2017). Study revealed that adolescents with strong control, social isolation, loss of privileges, problem solving, emotional management, stress capacity to deal, and general psychosocial competence were shown to have higher levels of perceived competence. The findings of the study demonstrate the importance of perceived reality, self-efficacy and decisionmaking process in the development of life skills

students who express high protectiveness, obedience, reward, critical thinking, self-awareness, self-beliefs interpersonal interaction and effective communication.

#### Perspectives based on the study

- Perceived competence allow students to form ideas about thought that contribute to understanding their capacities, strengths and weaknesses. Education at the under-graduate level may be improved by identifying one's own capacities of persistence self-awareness and success related skills which begins basically reflecting upon one's skills.
- A developmental framework of intra and interpersonal competencies that may be important to college learning experiences may be studied on the following areas namely orientation needs, resilience factors, major dispositions, beliefs, and futuristic perspectives in a general viewpoint that may serve to be the focus of further studies.
- The perceived competencies that are grouped under certain significant areas such as ethics, intercultural, diversity competence, civic engagement, citizenship, communication, career orientation, lifelong learning and teamwork have been identified as valued outcomes of education at the under-graduate leveland are a major contributing factor for academic achievement.
- The present study on perceived competence helps in creating new information, add knowledge in the field of education to address educational challenges, and solve societal problems that pertains on the individual's academic achievement at the under-graduate level.

• The results of the study indicate that, students must transform their planning methods of learning to achieve success in their achievement. The finding clearly illustrates that the perceived competence and its dimensions namely perceived reality, self-efficacy and decision making are good predictors of academic performance for undergraduate students.

#### Conclusion

Students studying at the undergraduate level enhance their skills by creating and adapting to appropriate learning. By exposing their talents to academic, employment, and lifestyle options, students may better identify their strengths and shortcomings. As a result, students will need to make behavioural, social, and lifestyle changes beyond their enhanced capacities in academics and related aspects such as goal orientation and academic resilience. Throughout the conduct of the study it has been perceived that the variable perceived competence plays a significant role in students understanding of the self-efficacy and beliefs along with other aspects such as perceived reality, decision making, self-analysis etc., As a consequence in the development in perceived competence, students may use their knowledge in a range of situations by successfully utilising the abilities of students, they may build a name for themselves in society. Through perceived competence students learn the abilities necessary to deal with them successfully, such as confidence building, decision making, integrity, communication ability, the capacity to confront obstacles, the ability to solve problems and achieve academically.

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