

The Self-Efficacy among Early Adolescents in Southern Rural Taiwan

Cheng-Hsien Lin
Lamar University
(chlin@lamar.edu)

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Abstract

Self-efficacy is one of the most important self-concepts critical to one's motivation for success and their psychological well-being. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a person's belief and perception in their ability to accomplish specific goals or tasks. It is related to one's feeling of his/her competence on a task in a situation or environment. There are two types of self-efficacy: overall self-efficacy (or generalized self-efficacy) and specific self-efficacy (for example, academic self-efficacy). The literature has suggested that both types of self-efficacy are significant predictors of one's future achievement, and their predictive power is even greater than another related self-concept, self-esteem. The current study surveyed 361 young Taiwanese adolescents living in a rural agricultural countryside area and examined their level of general self-efficacy and the contributors of their self-efficacy. The OLS regression analyses suggest that Taiwanese young teens' (11-13 years of age) level of self-efficacy varied in terms of their family backgrounds. Their interactions to parents and peers were correlated with their perception of self-evaluation and competence. The findings also provided support for Bandura's thesis on the sources of self-efficacy.

keywords: self-efficacy, family relationship, peer, delinquency, adolescents, and psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy has excited a good deal of attention from behavioral scientists not only because of the intrinsic interest it stimulates but also because of the wide range of salient consequences that have been attributed to self-efficacy. A good deal of attention has been paid to the processes by which self-efficacy is cultivated. The present research is situated in the theoretical and research traditions that attempt to account for the development of self-efficacy from young adolescents' immediate environments. A theoretically informed model is estimated in which adolescent self-efficacy is explained in terms of the interactions at home and their schools, given that the young adolescents still heavily relying on their parents for caring and beginning their transition to the need of peer friendship. In addition, several variables of the social backgrounds were included to examine their relative influences on the development of self-efficacy among the participants.

Research on self-efficacy and its correlates since the 1990s have reported that self-efficacy has been highly related to varied forms of behavior (Bandura, Adam, Hardy & Howells, 1980) and emotional/psychological well-being (McFarlane, Bellissimo, & Norman, 1995). In addition, social support (including family support) seems to serve as a protective influence on the emotional well-being and self-efficacy (Dubois, Felner, Brand, Adam, & Evans, 1992; McFarlane, Norman, Bellissimo, & Lange, 1994). McFarlane et al. (1995) studied nearly 700 10th grade high school students and

found that family and peer support are both positively related to social self-efficacy, and the relationship of peer support to SSE was stronger than family support.

During the transition from childhood to adolescence, children have to learn new skills to deal with the pubertal changes and challenges in the network of adolescence. Adolescence has often been characterized as a period of psychological turmoil due to the foreseeable challenges of its transition in nature between childhood and adulthood. A successful transition in the adolescence would rely on their personal efficacy built up through their prior and recent mastery experiences.

For adolescents, school is one of the main realms where they compete with other peers and gain self-perception as efficacious persons and increase feelings of self-worth (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Hernandez Jozefowicz, 1997; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971). Bandura et al. (1996) argued that children's perception of academic efficacy, social efficacy, and self-regulatory efficacy contribute to academic achievement and attainment both directly and through the promotion of higher educational aspirations. Such results are understood to be the case because those adolescents who feel a stronger perception of self-efficacy are more likely to set goals and well-structured plans (Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Connell, 1998). Since educational attainment reflects the resources actors possess to enact efficaciously, efficacious adolescents are more likely to prepare their education as valuable resources for future occupation and career development (Bandura, 1990). Betz and Hackett (1981) and Lent and Hackett (1987) showed that if one perceives a high degree of occupational efficacy one will consider more choices for future careers and will prepare for this through higher education.

The current study contends that self-efficacy is cultivated through children's immediate environments such as their home and school and those agents who had frequent and intimate contacts with them regularly. Parents' education attainment and experiences (which may affect parents' adoption of certain types of parenting styles or techniques). A child's gender (role), school performance and deviant behavior can be reciprocally influencing his/her self-concepts through other appraisals and self-appraisals; and the reinforcement of the other would further validate the child's evaluation on their self-concepts.

While self-efficacy has been studied for varieties of groups, it was only moderately examined in foreign societies. Some foreign sample studies examined urban samples due to the availability of the data. However, studies on foreign rural young adolescents have been rarely done to assert their self-efficacy could be cultivated from similar social and environmental factors. Rural adolescents in Southern Taiwan have much less of educational resources just like many other rural areas in other countries. However, the parental or familial emphasis and expectations on children's good academic performance are not less because Confucianism influences the whole society in the philosophy on education. Under such an environment, adolescents would need stronger self-efficacy to face the disadvantageous conditions and conquer the failure embedded in the environment. Therefore, it is important to identify factors that will most benefit the adolescents' self-efficacy, so they can elevate their strengths for success. Parents and teachers may not much to offer to these disadvantageous adolescents due to the limited resources they have in hands. The current study may offer

ideas they can exercise in their power to motivate and appraise for their learning and success.

THE LITERATURE

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's estimate of his or her capacity to orchestrate performance on a specific task (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Strauser (1995) interpreted Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy as an individual's perception of his/her skills and abilities to act effectively and competently. Self-efficacy influences actions and coping behavior, the situations, and environments that individuals access, and their persistence in performing certain tasks. According to Ozer and Bandura (1990), self-efficacy is "concerned with the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over given events" (p. 472). This description extended and illustrated Bandura's (1977) early construct of self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to successfully perform a particular behavior. Extended descriptions of self-efficacy bring the environmentally based elements into the foundations of self-efficacy and incorporate both the knowledge of requisite behaviors and perceptions of whether the social system will be supportive of one's actions (Gecas, 1989). The construct of self-efficacy is interwoven with the knowledge of the particular behaviors they relate to and the perceptions of situational contingencies (Coleman & Karraker, 1998).

Self-efficacy is one of the most important variables in research of self-conception. As noted by Gecas and Schwalbe (1983:77), "the notion of human agency and self-creativity, which have been a hallmark of the symbolic interactionist tradition, can be brought into the studies of self-concept through self-efficacy. The concept of self-

efficacy emphasizes ‘self-determination’ in the process of self-concept formation and thus underscores the reciprocity between self and social structure.” Self-efficacy entails individuals’ experiences and social structure, while self-esteem is a self-evaluation of goodness or personal worth (Gecas, 1989). Kaplan (1986) argues that self-efficacy is one important basis of self-esteem. This is particularly the case in Western culture.

Causes and Consequences of Self-Efficacy

Besides its influence on self-esteem, many studies have found that self-efficacy is associated with various favorable consequences, within the realms of physical health (Barnwell & Kavanagh 1997), mental health (Kiecolt, 1994; Milligan, Burke, Beilin, Richards, Dunbar, Spencer, Balde, & Gracey, 1997; Gecas, 1989; Schafer, Wickrama, & Keith, 1998; Seff, Gecas, & Ray, 1992), AIDS prevention and treatment (Bandura, 1990; Jemmott, Jemmott, Spears, Hewitt, & Cruz-Collins, 1992), risky sexual behaviors such as condom (non-) use (Jemmott et al. 1992; Steers, Elliott, Nemiro, Ditman, & Oskamp, 1996; Taris & Semin 1998; Zimmerman, Sprecher, Langer, & Holloway, 1995), academic performance (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Moriarty, Douglas, Punch, & Hattie, 1995; Wentzel, 1996; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992), problem behaviors (Agnew & White, 1992; Ellickson & Hays, 1990; Jackson, 2000; Kumpfer & Turner, 1990), and many other areas. Such studies also have reported self-efficacy to be an important moderating (Jackson, 2000) and mediating variable (Teti & Gelfand, 1991) in explaining many psychosocial correlates of self-conception (Gecas & Seff, 1989). The more influential of these studies address the causes (Juang & Silbereisen, 1999; Tashakkori & Thompson, 1991) and effects (Ludwig & Pittman, 1999) of self-efficacy in the contexts of family environment by examining the

intergenerational congruence of self-efficacy or related attitudes (e.g., the sense of control, competence, and self-esteem). Seeman and Monto (1999) reported that mothers' sense of control and self-esteem were mirrored in children's self-perception of achievement independent of the effects of a child's sex, race, and family structure. Moskowitz (1992) examined self-efficacy of three generations of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and of Jewish-Americans not directly exposed to the Holocaust and reported that the survivors measured higher in self-efficacy than the comparison generation group.

Parenting. On theoretical grounds, parenting patterns would be expected to have impacts on children's self-efficacy. Parents who have low levels of self-efficacy would have experienced parenting patterns that communicate to them the inability to control outcomes, and the necessity to respond to the demands of others to avoid extrinsically administered punitive responses. Coercive or rejective parenting responses would be such that they would militate against the development of self-confidence in one's own ability to control one's destiny. As the object of consistently punitive responses, the person would become self-derogatory, attitudes that would be reflected in the expectation that one could not act on one's own behalf to produce benign outcomes, since such outcomes are not deserved by those who evoke and, perhaps, merit punitive responses. Having developed such attitudes and expectations, when they become parents, model these attitudes and expectations for their children and consciously or unconsciously enforce conformity using the same punitive responses with similar consequences.

These theoretical expectations are consistently observed in the empirical literature. Research in the past two decades has shown a positive association between high parental (mainly focused on maternal) self-efficacy and specific adaptive parental skills, such as responsive, stimulating, and nonpunitive caretaking (Donoven, 1981; Unger & Wandersman, 1985), a negative association between higher parental self-efficacy and maternal defensive controlling behaviors (Donovan, Leavitt, & Walsh, 1990), a passive coping style in the parenting style (Wells-Parker, Miller, & Topping, 1990), and use of coercive discipline (Bugental, Blue, & Cruzcosa, 1989). In summary, the literature suggests that parents who hold higher self-efficacy are less likely to exert coercive parenting practices. These parents' elevation of competent feelings or self-efficacy may negate the impact of uncontrollable environment circumstances that low socioeconomic status parents often face in daily life (Coleman & Karraker, 1997). Parents' incapability of coping with adverse life circumstances has led to learned helplessness and attenuated the feelings of competence in the parenting role, and in turn, led to the use of coercive parenting (Bugental et al., 1989).

Some interactional and developmental theories (Thornberry, 1987, 1996; Jang & Smith, 1997), and socialization theories also suggest that parent-child bonds are an essential component of healthy development and provide the motivation to invest the time and energy (e.g., for monitoring) that is required to socialize children toward conventional behaviors (Peterson & Rollins, 1987). Weakened parent-child ties often make it difficult for parents to involve themselves in their children's activities in order to provide strong supervision. This leads to further detachment and delinquency (Patterson, 1982).

Parental attachment refers to relational bond existing between a parent or guardian and child. Parental attachment is established through proximity, safety, and security that is offered by a parent or guardian and experienced by a child; however, the parental attachment is expressed through varying levels of trust, communication, and alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Schnyders, 2012).

An implication of this literature review shows the significance of attachment security in child improvement and its initiation in times of crisis or stress. Supporting parents through group-based parent education or individual consultation on ways to increase attachment security (typically through behaviors showing consistency, availability, and responsiveness) would appear to be an important role for school psychologists. The importance of raising securely attached students cannot be undervalued given that research has shown that attachment schemas formed in early childhood can have behavioral consequences well into the adolescent and early adult periods and beyond. When students faced with a crisis although they use parents as sources of support.

Armsden and Greenberg (1987) reported that students with secure parental attachment are better able to develop and maintain positive relationships and are better able to handle unfamiliar or stressful situations. In addition, some studies have shown that young adults who have the secure attachment to caregivers report lower levels of perceived stress (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988).

Parents have a crucial person in manipulating their adolescent's improvement. The adolescent-parent attachment has deep special effects on reasoning, societal and emotive operative. Secure attachment is related to less engagement in high threat

behaviors, fewer psychological health difficulties, and improved social skills and coping strategies (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Attachment dynamics have been investigated in various contexts and across a spectrum of age ranges. Secure attachment is related to self-confidence, healthy adjustment, and positive life transitions (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995). Children want close relation and physical obtainability of parents to deliver ease when they are upset; they do not want the same closeness and can derive ease from knowing their parents are reassuring even when they are not present. The parental feeling continues to be critical in upholding attachment safety during adolescence, particularly in the province of independence needs (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Insecure attachment is related to anxiety, stress, depression, personality disorders, marital distress, and suicidal ideation (DiFilippo & Overholser, 2000). Therefore, one factor to decrease stress is the attachment.

Secure person attachment acts as a defensive mechanism and decreases the stress (Petroff, 2008; Solberg & Viliarreal, 1997). Related to previous studies, securely attached students have fewer psychological health problems, lower levels of depression, stress. Also, they less likely to engage in substance use and disruptive manners (Doyle & Moretti, 2000). Those students that had the stronger attachment with their parents had less stress and more adjustment (Mattanah, Lopez, & Govern, 2011; Power, 2004). Howard and Medway (2004) examined that coping with stress is one of the most important functions of attachment style among students. Their attachment security was positively connected to family communication and negatively connected to negative avoidance behaviors such as drinking or using drugs. According to the results of many studies, there is a negative relationship between attachment and stress (Howard &

Medway, 2004; McCarthy et al., 2001; McCarthy, Lambert, & Moller, 2006; Vogel & Wei, 2005). Results proved that difficulties in attachment were revealed in emotional stress and dysfunctional interactive relations (Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Although there was a negative relationship between attachment and stress, the investigators highlighted that this was a correlational, not causative, relationship. The low parental attachment was definitely correlated with stress indications and stress created feelings. Secure attachment was related to lower levels of stress indications and lower levels of stress-produced feelings than insecure attachment (McCarthy et al., 2006). As secure attachment augmented, stress indications and stress-produced feelings weakened (Petroff, 2008).

Maltreatment by parents such as rejections, physical punishments, indifference, and hostility was detrimental to the development of a strong parent-child bond (Gross and Keller, 1992 and Hirschi, 1969). When problems in the parent-child relationship increase, parental influence over children tends to weaken. The void that is left in the absence of a close bond may be filled with associations conducive to deviant attitudes and values favorable to delinquency (Agnew, 2006, p. 37). Empirical studies have shown these associations emerge in the form of delinquent peers and other relations in which informal social controls are disrupted.

Peers. Peer association is a unique and very important relationship for adolescents. The literature shows that peer association is one of the strongest related variables with deviance and delinquency. During adolescence, teenagers change their attention from parents to peers and the newly developed relationships bring them a sense of autonomy and independence. While no one can choose their parents, everyone can choose who to be with as their new social network to spend their free time. Due to the

age proximity, peers can share the feelings that their parents or siblings may not closely resemble them. The approval or acceptance from peers would elevate their self-approval and self-esteem. On the other hand, if rejected or isolated by peers, adolescents may generate the sense of negative affect or self-derogation. Therefore, the adolescents' self-efficacy would be attenuated during the process by losing confidence in self and doubt about their capability to make friends or even to achieve anything. Both peer relations and academic self-efficacy can be mediator variables between parenting styles and academic performance (Llorca, A., Richaud, & Malonda, 2017). If parents cannot exercise a close relationship with their teenagers to help build stable emotions for learning and everyday living, the adolescents would have to seek for alternative support from peers, usually the only choice other than their own families. With peers' support, adolescents could gradually rebuild their self-efficacy through effective learning and eventually perform well academically.

School Performance and Deviance. Kaplan (1975) found that deviant behavior may be an adaptation and self-protection against the feelings of self-derogation. If a sense of self-esteem and positive self-evaluation cannot be gained through socially acceptable methods, a motivation for continuing in such an acceptable behavior will gradually decline. Children and Adolescents may try to regain self-esteem and attention through other means that may include deviant behavior. As a result, having a low sense of self-esteem has often been regarded as a motivation for deviant behavior.

However, it is not the deviant behavior itself, but rather the acceptance and recognition gained from deviant peers after committing an act of deviance that enhances adolescent's self-esteem (Goodnight, Bates, Newman, Dodge, & Pettit, 2006; Becker &

Luthar, 2007). Deviants' sense of self-enhancement and protection can be gained by strengthening the emotional/psychological bonding with other deviants when they engage in similar behavior. Therefore, there is not necessarily a direct relationship between deviant behavior and self-esteem, which can be enhanced through "deviant association" (Sung & Thornberry, 1998). The correlation between negative self-esteem and deviant/delinquent behavior have been supported by empirical studies (Kaplan & Lin, 2000, 2005)

The negative feelings of coping with adverse circumstances can spill over to other aspects of parental life such as the parental role and thus arouse feelings of low competence. The process is cumulative through one's life trajectory, rather than being a snapshot in time. According to Bandura's (1977, 1989) social learning theory, past experiential history (successes and failures to accomplish life goals) develops an individual's self-efficacy. Individuals develop self-efficacy via vicarious experience: they watched others engage in certain activities and generated estimations of their own capacity for mastering similar activities. Such self-efficacy is also influenced by others' verbal feedback regarding one's potential for accomplishment in an area. Finally, one's emotional arousal contributes to the development of self-efficacy. A higher level of aversive psychological arousal is likely to be associated with expectations of future failures and thus affects one's perception of self-efficacy. Low efficacious individuals tend to rapidly lose faith in themselves when failure results and expect more failure (Bandura, 1989). According to the literature, the development of parental self-efficacy belief seems reciprocally interact with parental behaviors and attitudes, and possibly, with parenting practices that affect the child's psychological well-being.

Luster, Rhoades, and Haas (1989) found the maternal social class to be related to maternal values and child-rearing beliefs, and that these values and beliefs predicted parenting styles. Mothers who valued self-direction were more likely to score high on measures of maternal involvement and warmth than were mothers who valued conformity. Self-efficacy may transmit the effects of a social class of parents on later parenting practices because of the parental values exerted in children's immediate socioenvironments. Teti and Gelfand's (1991) research are noteworthy because they found maternal self-efficacy operated as a mediating variable that accounted for the relationship between diverse psychosocial variables (such as demographic status, maternal depression, and social, marital support) and parenting quality. Various psychosocial variables do not directly attenuate parental functioning, but only through their ability to undermine maternal competency perceptions. This pattern of transmission then influences children's self-evaluation and beliefs about themselves through parental discipline or other dimensions of parenting practices.

In the everyday lives of children, experiences with parents are inextricably linked. Whitbeck, Simons, Conger, Lorenz, Huck, and Elder (1997) found that the use of inductive parenting style (explanations or reasons in disciplining) and avoidance of harsh parenting style (yelled, spanked, corporally punished at children) contribute to children's self-efficacy and positive adolescent development (Patterson, 1982). A child's self-efficacy is also associated with consistent parental support (parental sensitivity, predictability and school involvement) which was measured in two points of time (Juang & Sibereisen, 1999). Research on parenting styles showed that authoritative parenting was positively related to self-perception (Buri, 1989; Klein, O'Bryant, & Hopkins, 1996)

and self-esteem (Pawlak & Klein, 1997), while authoritarian parenting was negatively related to self-esteem (Buri, Loiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988). In summary, the literature suggests that parental self-efficacy may transmit to offspring through the effects of parenting practices, as well as role modeling of self-efficacy as suggested by social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). In the present study, the researcher focuses on family and school interaction that could have influenced a child's self-efficacy. The development of self-efficacy should be most affected by this category of parenting and peer relationship because they directly threaten the child's autonomy and social support.

Educational Attainment. On theoretical grounds, a parent's educational attainment would be expected to influence a child's self-efficacy. Highly educated parents would value more on a child's self-management, which in turn, increases the youth's self-confidence and motivation to attain higher levels of education. Educational attainment would increase the youth's self-efficacy by increasing skills, the understanding of one's own capabilities, and consequent self-confidence. While one's self-efficacy affects his/her educational attainment, the latter can also impact offspring's self-efficacy because children observe their parents' educational and career experiences (Bandura's "vicarious experience", 1989). In addition, efficacious parents are more able to provide avenues (e.g., encouragement, and/or the parents often occupy a higher social status) enhancing their children's beliefs in their own potential. Grabowski, Call, and Mortimer (2001) found that young adolescent's economic self-efficacy fosters educational expectation and future educational attainment (months from post-secondary education). They also found that parental educational attainment influences the child's economic self-efficacy through an increase in grade point average. This research

supports the proposition that self-efficacy influences educational attainment and that parental educational attainment affects the child's self-efficacy.

METHOD

The theoretical model specifies the relationship between children's immediate social factors and the adolescent's self-efficacy. Specifically, the hypothesized model included independent variables of parental attachments, parental rejection, peer rejection with the control variables of gender, school academic performance (GPA), parents' educational attainment, subjective perception of wealth by the child, and school deviance. The origins of self-efficacy were explored for their relative contributions to children's self-efficacy.

Data

The research was conducted in several rural elementary schools in Ping-Dong County, one of the major agricultural counties in southern Taiwan. Among Twenty-one cities/counties in Taiwan, Ping-Dong is one of the top three rural and agricultural counties that has the highest numbers of foreign-born brides. The researcher chose one township in Ping-Dong county and was granted the permission from the local schools for having the survey conducted in their campus.

There were 14 classes from 5 elementary schools included for data collection. All students who attended the class on the survey day were asked to complete the survey. All class sizes were ranged from 20 to 30 students in Taiwanese elementary schools and the class size is no difference in Ping-Dong County. To project a panel study in the future from this cohort of students, 5th graders were chosen for their early adolescent experiences at home, in school and peer groups. A self-administered questionnaire was

conducted in classrooms and given by a trained research assistant. A total of 361 students completed the survey but there were about 5% of the participants left few questions unanswered. Therefore, the analytical models have about 340 cases for analyses due to the loss of those uncompleted questionnaires. The questionnaire covers varieties of issues including family backgrounds, school activities and performance, parent-child interactions, teacher-student relationship, peer relationship, relationship with other relatives and grandparents, psychological and emotional well-being, and deviant and delinquent behavior. Table 1 shows some basic demographics of the participants.

Measures

Parenting variables. The variable “parental attachment” is comprised of nine observed items toward mother and father. The respondent’s self-report (father or mother) their subjective feeling of interactions with their either parents on the 9 items for the variable of parental attachment: “I love my mother/father,” “I respect my mother/father,” “I talk to my mother/father about my learning,” “my mother/father assists me with homework,” “my mother/father understand me,” “my mother/father expects high on me,” “my mother/father cares about me,” “I want to be like my mother/father when I am grown up,” and “I am close to my mother/father.” The Cronbach’s alpha for questions of fathers is .877, while it is .841 for questions of mothers.

The variable of “parental monitoring” is comprised of seven questions asking if their parents: “know their friends?” “know their whereabouts?” “what do they do during spare time?” “where do they spend their allowance?” “what do they do after school?” “what do they do during the weekend?” and “what do they have in mind?” The scale was from 1 (they do not know), 2 (they know sometimes), 3 (they know most of time), to 4

(they know all the time). The Cronbach's alpha for the parental monitoring variable is .860.

Rejection by parents includes eight items asking participants if they agree "my parents do not accept me," "my parents are harsh on me," "I do not feel loved at home," "my parents are strict," "my parents get angry easily for little mistakes I did," "my parents put down my ideas," and "I feel I am useless at home." The Cronbach's alpha for this variable is .904.

School Variables. These factors include the participant's overall GPA, the child's school deviant behavior, rejection by teachers and rejection by peers. School deviant behavior is a multi-item variable that comprises eight types of deviant actions specified in school settings. Students were asked how often they have conducted the following behaviors in the last academic year: tardy, pretended to be sick and absent, copying classmates' assignments, cheating in tests, quarreling to teachers, bullying others, doing something in the classroom that was not allowed by teachers, and forging parent's signature. Student's responses to these items were added up so that the higher numbers indicate greater school deviant behavior commitment. The Cronbach's alpha for the variable is .620.

Rejection by teachers includes 5 items asking students if they agree the following statements: my teachers "did not like me," "... looked down on me," "... made me embarrassed in the public," "... were not interested in what I do," and "... criticized me in front of others." The Cronbach's alpha for the measure is .945. Rejection by peers includes 4 items asking participants if they agree with the following statements: my

classmates “did not like me,” “...bullied me,” “...discriminated against me,” and “I feel alone at school.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the measure is .905.

Dependent variables. Self-efficacy was assessed with six items that children described themselves in the statements in the questionnaire. They were asked how much they agree within the following items, from disagree, somewhat-agree, to agree (3-point scale). The responses were recoded as to indicate the higher number means a greater level of items in self-efficacy. These six items include “I have some good quality in me,” “I am satisfied with myself,” “my self-feelings is pretty good,” “my self-confidence is strong,” “I can achieve anything I made up in my mind,” and “my future depends on my effort.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the measure is .680.

Demographic variables. These factors include the child’s gender, perceived wealth, and each parent’s educational attainment.

Another control variable was gender (male =1, female = 0). Empirical studies (Lac & Crano, 2009) suggest that parental attachment and monitoring have a stronger deterrent effect on girls’ deviant behavior comparing to that of boys, while boys are more involved in delinquent behavior than girls. Furthermore, studies have inconsistent findings on the effects of parenting factors on boys and girls (Hoeve et al., 2009). The current study thus considers a child’s gender as the important control variable in the analytical model.

Young adolescents usually have no knowledge of their parents’ earning. An objective and clear idea of their family financial condition can never be accurate from these young participants. However, they could easily tell if they are richer or poorer than their classmates since they live within a walking distance and interactions among

neighbors are frequent in rural Taiwan. A single item was used to ask if they feel they live in a specific economic condition (from the very rich to very poor). The larger number indicates the poorer their family is. Each parent's educational attainment was specified in the analysis separately due the consideration of father and mother's differential commitment in child-rearing and interactions with children.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants' demographic distributions. There were more boys in the samples (52.9%) and it is near to the natural gender ratio at birth (105 males to 100 females). All students were from the 5th grade of the all participating schools so their ages were close to each other. There were about 60% of families are small families with 4 or fewer family members. There were about a quarter of families had 5 or 6 members at home, which mostly had one or two grandparents living with them at the time. Young adolescents rarely have a clear idea of their family financial situation, but they usually have a sense of their financial capability as their family buying power in stores and their relative wealth compared to their neighbors and relatives, and friends' families in terms of the luxury items each family owned or used on the everyday basis. This may not represent the family's wealth but what the child feels from their own interpretations could be critical to affecting their behavior. For example, a child feels his/her family being poor would be less likely to request their parents for expensive sports gears or clothes since they did not think their parents could afford them. Due to limited social network and exposure to the news, most young adolescents could not really understand where their family economic condition on the national scale. Most likely they will compare it within their accessible environment like

neighbors, relatives, and friends' families, those who also more likely to experience the similar economic environment due to social class segregation. Therefore, most children or young adolescents would feel their family economic conditions were about similar to those living within their network and feel their condition were about the average.

The correlation matrix Table 2 suggests that General Self-Efficacy was significantly correlated with several study variables including Child Perceived Wealth, Parental Attachment, Rejection by Parents, Rejection by Teachers, Rejections by Peers, Overall GPA, Mom's Educational Attainment, School Deviance, and Parental Monitoring. The only two variables not correlated to the General Self-Efficacy were the child's gender and Dad's Educational Attainment. The bivariate zero-order correlations suggest that more wealthy the child perceived of their family condition, the high overall GPA achieved, the more education their mom received and the more parental attachment and parental monitoring they experienced, the child would have higher self-efficacy toward themselves. On the other hand, children would feel lower self-efficacy if they were rejected by parents, teachers, or peers, and/or they had done school deviant behaviors. These correlations were expected except the correlation between self-efficacy and parental monitoring. This correlation can be positive, negative, or non-significant, depending on how the variable Parental Monitoring is measured and the age of the adolescents. In general, the less severe measures of the parental monitoring variable and the younger age of the adolescent are more likely to observe a negative significant correlation between the two variables. The young adolescents are in the transition from childhood to adolescence and many of them may still see those constraints and close supervision from parents are legitimate and less threatening. While older adolescents

begin their broader social networks with peers and less depending on parents; therefore, they may see parental monitoring (especially those measures with coercive disciplines) as threats to their needs for autonomy and independence. In rural Taiwan, the role of fathers is conventional and their involvement in the child-rearing and was usually much less than their spouse. This may partially explain the lack of significant correlation of father's educational attainment was not correlated to the child's self-efficacy. As a result, the zero-order correlations between the general self-efficacy and other variables were not unexpected.

The multivariate analyses of several model specifications suggest consistent findings of the possible sources of self-efficacy among the young adolescents in rural Southern Taiwan. The Model 1 included all independent variables, and it suggests that Boys was related to a higher general self-efficacy (.509*, unstandardized). Adolescents who experienced greater attachment with parents reported higher general self-efficacy (.066*, unstandardized), while rejection by parents and parental monitoring were not correlated with general self-efficacy. The latter two variables were significantly correlated with general self-efficacy in the zero-order correlation. This would suggest that parental attachment was the key parenting variable that was significantly related to the child's self-efficacy, and the other two parenting variables were either secondary or spurious to the relationship with self-efficacy.

Rejection by peers was significantly correlated with lower self-efficacy among young rural Taiwanese adolescents (-.203**, unstandardized), while rejection by teachers was not a significant factor to the child's self-efficacy (albeit rejection by teachers was significantly related to the child's self-efficacy in the zero-order correlation). This may

signify the importance of the peer relation to the adolescents in general. The adolescence is characterized by the emphasis of peer associations. The prior attention toward the authority figures such as parents and teachers became less important or retreated to the secondary for social support.

The good performance in academic works or extracurriculum could boost students' self-confidence and self-image, which in turn, raise self-appraisal on the personal capability of achieving intended activities. Therefore, a good GPA or continuous good performance in extracurriculum should be associated with greater self-efficacy for children and adolescents. On the other hand, commitments in school deviant activities usually bring disciplines or punishment from teachers and are less likely to be welcomed by their peers. The process could lead deviant students to be isolated from the good students. In order to receive social support, these isolated deviants then would turn to other deviants for support and commit more deviant behaviors due to mutual influences. The process of isolation and derogation by peers could lead to further self-derogation (Kaplan & Lin, 2000) and negative self-appraisal. Consequently, these deviants may see themselves less capable to compete in the traditional school settings and academic fields. However, from the current multivariate analysis, school deviance was not correlated with self-efficacy. It is likely that the current participants were so young that their deviant commitments were still more tolerable to their peers and even teachers. When they get older in the following years, the correlation between their school deviance and self-efficacy should be more perceptible.

The literature has suggested parents' education attainment may play some role in the child's self-efficacy through many pathways and their direct correlations maybe not

as strong as those variables in the pathways. Parents who had more interactions with children would have more influences on a child's psychological and behavioral outcomes. The results shown in the Model 1 suggests that mother's educational attainment was positively correlated with the child's self-efficacy (.311*, unstandardized) but the correlation was not found with father's educational attainment. The result was expected given that fathers in rural Southern Taiwan were more likely to hold the traditional gender division ideals that men are bread earners and women were home caregivers. The child-rearing responsibilities have heavily relied on mothers while fathers mostly serve as an authority figure at home. The fathers' often distance themselves from their children so their influences on the children became less visible.

From the Model 2 to Model 5, those variables which were the least related to the child's self-efficacy were gradually taken away in terms of the strength of each correlation. The purpose of conducting these model specifications was to provide a more parsimonious analysis on the analysis. As shown in Table 3, all the significant correlations remained statistically significant throughout Models 2 to 5 and the strengths of the correlations were also almost unchanged. The only noticeable change between the models was that the correlation between parental monitoring and self-efficacy seemed to be strengthened in Models 4 and 5. This seemed to suggest that the parental monitoring might be moderately related to a greater level of self-efficacy. The results actually may reflect the complexity of the countervailing effects of parental monitoring on the child's psychological and behavioral outcomes (Lin, 2013). The parental monitoring may exert both positive and negative impact on the child's psychological and behavioral outcomes so the observed positive or negative correlations from parental monitoring might just

show a compromised result of the two opposite correlations. In the current study, it might suggest that parental monitoring may both increase and decrease the child's self-efficacy, but its positive impacts might just be slightly stronger. Another interpretation from the Table 3 might suggest that the relationship between parental monitoring and rejection by parents might explain the differences between Model 3 and Models 4/5.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Since the concept of self-efficacy has been introduced to differentiate itself from other self-concepts, its correlations with psychological and behavioral factors have been broadly theorized and empirically tested for its formation and impacts in varieties of social groups. According to Bandura (1994), people with higher self-efficacy shape the type of anticipatory scenarios they construct and rehearse. They visualize the success scenarios and are more likely to invest and commit themselves into an effective strategy for the goal challenges. The sequence requires both cognitive processes and the motivational process will be cohesively explained by attribution theory, expectancy-value theory, and goal theory. In other words, people who regard themselves as highly efficacious would attribute their failure to insufficient effort (not due to low ability); regulate their motivation by the expectation that a given course of behavior will produce certain outcomes and the value of those outcomes; and enhance and sustain a high motivation for success by exercising explicit and challenging goals. In short, self-efficacy contributes to goal motivation, challenge sustainability, and the resilience to failures. People have strong self-efficacy have a strong belief in their abilities to master their tasks and would exert greater effort when they fail. More importantly, their strong

perseverance as one of their critical characteristics makes them perform better and more effective in any acts they set for goals.

Rural adolescents in Southern Taiwan have limited educational resources critical for their success in learning and higher education, the pathways to lead them for upward mobility. While the parental or familial emphasis and expectations on children's good academic performance influenced by Confucianism could levy students' efforts on learning, parents and teachers need ideas to better prepare children other than material resources. Under such an environment, adolescents who have stronger self-efficacy can take the challenges in positive ways and be consistently invest themselves for higher goals. The current study identifies that parental attachment and peer acceptance are critical in cultivating stronger self-efficacy among the rural Taiwanese adolescents aged between 11-13. The monitoring from parents regarding knowing their child's whereabouts, who-to-be-with, what-do-they-do, etc. is moderately related to higher self-efficacy. The results may suggest the busy schedule among these rural parents (they are mostly blue-collar working class) allowed them to show their affections to children while their capability to monitoring of children's daily activities may be challenging, or the monitoring may not be important in the rural villages due to the environment was not as complicated and/or dangerous as in cities. The moderate correlation could be owing to the countervailing effects exerted by the monitoring variable.

Peer association is one of the key social life for adolescents. For young adolescents, it is critical if they are isolated while they transited to the developmental stage in needs of autonomy and independence. Without peers as their new social support, they will feel alone and excluded from their family and school. The ideal condition

would be that they still receive parental warmth while they develop their new relationship with peers to whom they share their age-sensitive feelings for support.

What parents and teachers can offer adolescents differ greatly from what peers can do. Sometimes, what adolescents want could be those things discouraged or even banned by parents and teachers. For example, adolescents may pay attention to the other gender and spend much time to develop and maintain a romantic relationship; while parents and teachers may not forbid their social activities and relationship with the other gender, they may have a great concern to adolescents' allocations of time and efforts during this age period. The results support the theoretical arguments that early adolescence is the period children still heavily rely on their parents' acceptance and closeness while they are also reaching out to find a close relationship with their classmates and friends for social support.

The results suggest the young male adolescents had significantly higher self-efficacy than their counterpart. Studies in the self-concepts have repeatedly reported that girls are more likely to suffer from psychological distress due to their sensitivities to the environment and the gender inequality in treatments by their significant others. The research findings of differential effects on the child's self-efficacy from either parent's educational attainment were expected. In rural Taiwan, the gender division of labor between mothers and fathers are still in so-called old-fashioned family style, that fathers work outside to support the family and mothers take care of the domestic chores including child-rearing responsibilities even mothers may also hold a full-time or part-time job to support family economy. Under the circumstance, children are more likely to have a close relationship with mothers and mothers' disciplines over children should

exert a greater impact on the child's outcomes. It does not mean fathers do not have an impact. Some studies suggest that fathers' ambition in their career is related to the child's future career development and goals. Girls who have a close relationship with fathers are more likely to have a healthier and intimate relationship with their lover.

The study may offer some ideas what may influence young adolescents in rural Taiwan and shed a light on suggestions that parents and teachers can exercise in their power to motivate and appraise the child's learning and success through the elevation of the child's self-efficacy. Although the results seem to suggest that teachers may not have direct influences on a child's self-efficacy teachers can help build an environment to facilitate students' healthy peer association.

Although the current study did not find significant correlations between self-efficacy and GPA/School Deviance, it is possible the correlations were not critical during the early adolescence. While children grow order to mid- and late adolescence, the importance of their academic performance and school deviance may become crucial to their level of self-efficacy, given that the school performance become one of the key indicators of their future college choices and the school deviance may bring harsher punishment and negative consequences for older adolescents. To answer the questions discussed above, it is necessary to conduct the follow-up survey among these students and re-examine these variables and their relationships.

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Table 1. Sample Demographic Distribution by Boys/Girls

Gender	Boy	191	52.90%
	Girl	170	47.10%
Age	11	30	36.70%
	12	39	26.10%
	13	133	36.90%
	14	1	.30%
Number of Families	4 & under	215	60.60%
	5 to 6	89	25.00%
	7 to 8	36	10.20%
	9 & more	12	3.40%
	missing	3	.80%
Perceived wealth	very well	6	1.70%
	well	69	19.10%
	average	229	64.00%
	lower than average	27	7.50%
	poor	20	5.60%
	very poor	6	1.70%
	do not know	4	1.10%

Table 2: The Zero-Order Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. General Self-Efficacy	--											
2. Boy	.074	--										
3. Child Perceived Wealth	.140**	.047	--									
4. Parental Attachment	.243**	-.001	.079	--								
5. Rejection by Parents	-.178**	.041	-.127*	-.469**	--							
6. Rejection by Teachers	-.165**	-.004	-.105*	-.223**	.570**	--						
7. Rejection by Peers	-.255**	.053	-.125*	-.246**	.553**	.642**	--					
8. Overall GPA	.134*	-.076	.315**	.032	-.025	-.115*	-.117*	--				
9. Dad's Education	.066	.022	.269**	.071	-.018	-.048	.006	.232**	--			
10. Mom's Education	.127*	-.005	.209**	.027	-.019	-.045	.009	.191**	.582**	--		
11. School Deviance	-.159**	.055	-.153**	-.251**	.184**	.194**	.227**	-.131*	-.136*	-.080	--	
12. Parental Monitoring	.183**	-.201**	.136*	.316**	-.229**	-.149**	-.222**	.217**	.096	.089	-.261**	--
Mean	13.562	.530	3.989	42.642	10.792	6.726	5.699	3.046	3.365	3.436	2.345	22.065
SD	2.383	.500	.845	6.263	4.698	2.844	2.527	.791	1.019	.996	2.374	4.962
N	349	361	357	355	356	358	359	359	359	358	351	352

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Table 3. Unstandardized (Standardized) Coefficients on General Self-Efficacy among Southern Taiwanese Young Teenagers

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	8.806***	8.476***	8.900***	9.840***	9.777***
Boy	.509* (.107)	.499* (.105)	.521* (.109)	.509* (.107)	.503* (.106)
Child Perceived wealth	.153 (.054)	.164 (.058)	--	--	--
Parental Attachment	.066** (.173)	.069** (.182)	.069** (.182)	.061** (.161)	.061** (.159)
Rejection by Parents	.020 (.039)	.025 (.049)	.022 (.044)	--	--
Rejection by Teachers	.022 (.026)	--	--	--	--
Reject by Peers	-.203** (-.215)	-.198*** (-.210)	-.200*** (-.213)	-.188*** (-.199)	-.189*** (-.200)
Overall GPA	.197 (.066)	.198 (.066)	.242 (.080)	--	--
Dad Education	-.150 (-.064)	-.142 (-.061)	-.119 (-.051)	-.084 (-.036)	-.084 (-.036)
Mom Education	.311* (.130)	.308* (.129)	.316* (.132)	.328* (.137)	.279* (.117)
School Deviance	-.047 (-.047)	--	--	--	--
Parental Monitoring	.036 (.076)	.040 (.084)	.041 (.086)	.048+ (.101)	.048+ (.099)
N	339	339	339	339	339
R ²	.143***	.141***	.139***	.131***	.130***

Dependent Variable: General Self-Efficacy. * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

