

**Employee self-efficacy in the workplace: Sources, obstructions,
and strategies for its promotion**

Nasrollah B. Conding*

Northeastern College, Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy is important in helping government employees manage responsibilities, challenges, and changing workplace demands. However, limited local evidence has examined how employees' self-efficacy, its sources, perceived obstructions, and possible strengthening strategies are experienced within a Bureau of Internal Revenue office. This study assessed the self-efficacy of 30 employees at the Bureau of Internal Revenue Regional Office in Region III–Tuguegarao City using a descriptive research design. Data were gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire, supplemented by an informal interview and documentary analysis. Frequency, percentage, ranking, weighted mean, and Chi-square test were used to analyze the data. Results showed high self-efficacy, with mastery experiences identified as the strongest source. Respondents also demonstrated high awareness of self-, collective, and means efficacy. Organizational structure and culture emerged as the leading obstruction, while skill development was rated the most effective strategy. No significant differences were found in perceived obstructions across the respondents' demographic and employment characteristics. The findings support organizational measures that strengthen employee autonomy, development, resources, and support.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, mastery experiences, organizational barriers, employee development, Bureau of Internal Revenue.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capability to organize and perform the actions necessary to achieve desired outcomes. The concept was developed within Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that human behavior is shaped by the reciprocal interaction of personal factors, behavior, and environmental conditions. According to Bandura (1986), individuals are not merely passive recipients of environmental influences; rather, they exercise agency by regulating their thoughts, motivation, behavior, and responses to changing circumstances. Thus, self-efficacy is concerned not simply with what a person knows or can do but with the extent to which the person believes that he or she can effectively use existing or acquired capabilities in a particular situation.

*Corresponding author

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Bandura (1997) further explained that perceived self-efficacy influences the choices individuals make, the effort they exert, their persistence when difficulties arise, and their reactions to failure. Individuals who possess strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to approach difficult tasks as challenges that can be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They tend to establish challenging goals, remain committed to them, exert greater effort, and recover more readily from setbacks. In contrast, individuals with weak efficacy beliefs may avoid difficult tasks, reduce their effort when problems occur, and become more vulnerable to discouragement. Self-efficacy, therefore, has important implications for motivation, performance, adjustment, and personal development.

As explained by Bandura (1997), self-efficacy develops through four major sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Mastery experiences are particularly important because successful performance strengthens an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform similar tasks in the future. Vicarious experiences may also strengthen efficacy beliefs when individuals observe others who successfully accomplish comparable tasks. Verbal persuasion, such as encouragement and constructive feedback from supervisors and colleagues, can further influence an individual's confidence, while physiological and affective conditions may affect how individuals interpret their capacity to cope with demanding situations.

In the workplace, these beliefs are particularly relevant because employees regularly encounter tasks that require initiative, persistence, decision-making, adaptation, and problem-solving. Self-efficacy can influence how employees interpret work demands and how they respond when confronted with difficult or unfamiliar responsibilities. Sadri and Robertson (1993), in their review and meta-analysis of self-efficacy and work-related behavior, demonstrated the importance of efficacy beliefs in understanding workplace behavior. More recent evidence continues to support this relationship. Fida et al. (2025), through a systematic review and meta-analysis covering 172 independent studies, found that self-efficacy was positively associated with citizenship performance and negatively associated with counterproductive work behavior. These findings suggest that self-efficacy extends beyond the successful completion of assigned tasks and may also influence how employees contribute to their organizations.

The Philippine context provides further support for examining self-efficacy among employees. Abun et al. (2021) investigated self-efficacy and work performance among faculty and employees of Divine Word Colleges in the Ilocos Region. Their findings showed that employees reported high self-efficacy and that self-efficacy influenced task and contextual performance. The researchers also found that the work environment affected both self-efficacy and work performance. This finding is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that self-efficacy should not be viewed solely as an internal psychological characteristic; it can also be understood in relation to the organizational environment in which employees perform their duties.

In the words of Bandura (1997), efficacy beliefs are central to human agency because they influence how individuals regulate their motivation, behavior, and emotional responses. For employees, this means that possessing knowledge and technical competence alone may not necessarily guarantee effective performance. Employees must also believe that they can apply their knowledge and skills successfully when confronted with actual workplace demands. Consequently, understanding employees' self-efficacy may provide valuable information about their readiness to undertake responsibilities, persist in difficult situations, adapt to changes, and pursue organizational goals.

The importance of self-efficacy is particularly evident in government organizations, where employees are expected to perform responsibilities systematically, comply with established procedures, respond to public needs, and adapt to changes in policies, technologies,

and organizational requirements. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), as a government agency responsible for tax administration and revenue collection, operates in an environment in which employee competence, responsibility, accuracy, and persistence are essential. Employees may encounter demanding workloads, changing regulations, technological developments, and interactions with various stakeholders. These conditions make it worthwhile to examine not only what employees are capable of doing but also how confident they are in their ability to perform their responsibilities effectively.

For this reason, the present study examines the self-efficacy of employees at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Office in Region III–Tuguegarao City. The study considers the employees' personal circumstances, personality characteristics associated with high self-efficacy, knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy, awareness of its types, perceived obstructions to its development, and strategies that may contribute to its promotion. By examining these dimensions, the study seeks to provide an empirical basis for understanding employees' self-efficacy and for identifying possible measures that may strengthen it in the workplace.

Statement of the problem

The study was conducted to assess the self-efficacy of employees at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Office in Region III, Tuguegarao City. Specifically, it sought to determine the respondents' personal circumstances, examine the personality traits associated with high self-efficacy, assess their knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy, determine their awareness of the types of self-efficacy, identify the perceived obstructions to the promotion of self-efficacy, and assess the effectiveness of strategies for promoting self-efficacy among the respondents.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the respondents' personal circumstances in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, latest performance rating, present position, number of years of working experience, and level of in-service training?
2. What are the personality traits of employees with high self-efficacy, and to what extent were these traits manifested among the respondents?
3. What is the extent of the respondents' knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy?
4. What is the extent of the respondents' awareness of the types of self-efficacy?
5. How difficult are the obstructions encountered in the promotion of self-efficacy among the respondents?
6. How effective are the strategies for promoting self-efficacy among the respondents?
7. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions of the obstructions encountered in relation to self-efficacy when they were grouped according to age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, present position, and number of years of working experience?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design to determine and describe the prevailing conditions concerning employees' self-efficacy at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Regional Office, Region III, in Tuguegarao City. The descriptive approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe observable conditions and obtain information concerning the status of the variables under investigation. Costales and

Zulueta (2003) described descriptive research as appropriate for examining the nature and condition of observable situations. Similarly, Van Dalen and Meyer (1999) explained that descriptive research goes beyond simple fact gathering and may be used to identify relationships among variables. Whitney (1999), meanwhile, characterized descriptive-normative research as an approach concerned with determining prevailing conditions and establishing the facts regarding existing situations.

The study was conducted at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Regional Office, Region III, Tuguegarao City. The locale was selected because the study specifically focused on the self-efficacy of employees assigned to the said office.

The respondents were thirty (30) BIR employees stationed at the Regional Office in Tuguegarao City. However, the uploaded Methodology section did not state the exact number of employees who participated in the study. Therefore, the exact number should be supplied from the study's respondents/population record rather than inferred from the available text.

This is an important detail that should appear explicitly in the final thesis because the number of respondents is essential to establishing the scope of the study and to interpreting the statistical results.

The principal data-gathering instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire, supplemented by an unstructured interview. The interview was used to obtain additional information and to check and counter-check the validity and reliability of the responses obtained through the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of six parts. Part I obtained information concerning the respondents' personal circumstances. Part II dealt with the personality traits of employees associated with high self-efficacy. Part III focused on the sources of self-efficacy, while Part IV examined the types of self-efficacy identified in the study. Part V dealt with perceived obstructions to the promotion of self-efficacy, and Part VI examined strategies for promoting self-efficacy in the Bureau.

Before the questionnaire was administered to the actual respondents, it was subjected to a try-out among employees who were not included in the study. The participants were requested to complete the questionnaire and provide suggestions regarding the instrument. Their comments and recommendations were considered in revising and finalizing the questionnaire. The revised instrument was subsequently presented to the Dean of Graduate Studies and the researcher's adviser for further comments and suggestions. The recommendations obtained from the pre-testing and academic reviewers were incorporated into the final version before reproduction and distribution.

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the head of the BIR office to conduct the study. After approval was secured, the researcher sent the questionnaire link to the head of the office, who informed the employees about the study. The respondents accessed the online questionnaire through the link and completed it in accordance with the instructions provided.

An informal interview was also conducted through Google Meet. Randomly selected respondents were invited to participate in the online interview to obtain supplementary information relevant to the study. The interview was conducted during the retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires and was intended to provide additional information and to check the responses obtained through the questionnaire.

In addition, the researcher conducted documentary analysis by requesting permission from the head of the office to access the respondents' latest performance ratings for Fiscal Year 2025–2026.

The data gathered from the questionnaire were tallied, tabulated, and statistically analyzed. Frequency, percentage, and ranking were used to describe the respondents' personal circumstances, including age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, latest

performance rating, present position, length of work experience, and level of in-service training or seminars related to their functions.

The weighted mean was used to analyze the responses concerning the personality traits of employees with high self-efficacy, sources of self-efficacy, types of self-efficacy, perceived obstructions to the promotion of self-efficacy, and strategies for promoting self-efficacy. The Chi-square test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in the respondents' perceptions concerning the identified obstructions to self-efficacy when the respondents were grouped according to the specified personal circumstances. The study used a 0.05 level of significance as the basis for determining whether the observed differences were statistically significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' profile

The study involved 30 BIR employees from the Regional Office in Tuguegarao City. The respondents were predominantly young adults, with 13 (43.33%) aged 26–30 and 5 (16.66%) aged 31–35. Females comprised 20 (66.67%), while males accounted for 10 (33.33%). In terms of civil status, 16 (53.33%) were married and 14 (46.67%) were single.

Educational attainment was relatively high. Twenty respondents (66.67%) held master's degrees, while 10 (33.33%) held bachelor's degrees; none had a doctoral degree. More importantly, all 30 respondents (100%) received an Outstanding performance rating in their latest performance evaluation.

The respondents also represented different positions in the organization. Revenue Officer II constituted the largest group with 7 (23.33%), followed by Revenue Officer I and Administrative Officer V with 6 (20.00%) each. The smallest group was Chief Revenue Officer I, with 1 (3.33%). Regarding length of service, 14 (46.67%) had 1–5 years of experience, while 6 (20.00%) had 6–10 years and another 6 (20.00%) had 26–30 years of experience.

Training exposure was concentrated at the regional level. All 30 respondents (100%) had attended regional seminars, followed by 21 (70%) who had attended national-level seminars and 13 (43.33%) who had attended division-level seminars. None had attended an international seminar.

Taken together, the profile describes a relatively well-educated group with strong documented performance and varied work experience. However, the concentration of all respondents in the Outstanding category should be considered when interpreting subsequent findings. The study therefore describes a particularly high-performing employee group rather than the entire BIR workforce.

Personality traits associated with high self-efficacy

The respondents strongly identified with the personality traits associated with high self-efficacy, obtaining an average weighted mean of 4.41, interpreted in the study as Fully Subscribed to. The strongest trait was being goal-oriented and committed (WM = 4.78), followed by optimism and positive outlook (WM = 4.70), willingness to learn (WM = 4.60), confidence in their abilities (WM = 4.55), and resilience and persistence (WM = 4.53).

These results suggest that the respondents generally perceived themselves as motivated, persistent, confident, and willing to develop their capabilities. Such characteristics are consistent with the respondents' uniformly Outstanding performance ratings. At the same time,

the findings should be interpreted as self-reported perceptions, not as independent evidence that these personality characteristics objectively caused their performance.

The respondents also reported low agreement with characteristics associated with low efficacy, producing an average weighted mean of 1.61. The highest-rated negative characteristics were low resilience ($WM = 1.95$), dependency on others ($WM = 1.88$), and high anxiety levels ($WM = 1.82$). Avoiding initiative received the lowest mean (1.20).

Overall, the two sets of findings point to a consistent pattern: the respondents strongly endorsed positive efficacy-related characteristics while generally rejecting behaviors associated with low efficacy.

Knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy

The respondents demonstrated a very high level of knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy, with a grand weighted mean of 4.55. Among the sources examined, mastery experiences ranked first ($WM = 4.58$), followed by social persuasion and imaginal experiences ($WM = 4.56$ each), vicarious experiences ($WM = 4.55$), and physiological and affective states ($WM = 4.52$). All five sources were interpreted as Very Knowledgeable.

Mastery experiences obtained the highest rating. The respondents gave the strongest recognition to the importance of successfully completing challenging tasks ($WM = 4.80$) and the effect of repeated success on self-belief ($WM = 4.75$). This finding is theoretically important because successful performance provides direct experience of one's capability. The result also fits the respondents' profile as employees who had all received Outstanding performance ratings.

Vicarious experiences likewise received a high rating ($WM = 4.55$). The highest-rated indicator concerned seeing someone similar to oneself achieve a goal ($WM = 4.76$), while observing a coworker succeed also received a high rating ($WM = 4.73$). This suggests that employees recognized the value of relatable role models and workplace observation in developing confidence.

Social persuasion obtained a 4.56 average weighted mean. The respondents particularly recognized the importance of being persuaded that they possess the capability to master activities ($WM = 4.75$) and of receiving interpersonal encouragement regarding their capabilities ($WM = 4.72$).

Physiological and affective states obtained a 4.52 average weighted mean. Emotional regulation was the highest-rated aspect ($WM = 4.75$), indicating that the respondents recognized the importance of managing emotional responses during difficult or frustrating situations.

Imaginal experiences also received a 4.56 average weighted mean. Visualization of achieving one's goals was the highest-rated indicator ($WM = 4.75$), followed by visualizing oneself performing effectively in a given situation ($WM = 4.72$).

The overall pattern indicates that respondents did not view self-efficacy as dependent on one source alone. They recognized the contribution of actual accomplishments, observation, encouragement, emotional regulation, and visualization. This broad understanding is consistent with the multidimensional treatment of efficacy in the study.

Awareness of the types of efficacy

The respondents were fully aware of the types of efficacy examined in the study, obtaining a grand weighted mean of 4.61. Means efficacy ranked first ($WM = 4.63$), followed closely by self-efficacy ($WM = 4.60$) and collective efficacy ($WM = 4.59$). The differences

among the three means were very small, indicating a generally consistent level of awareness across the dimensions.

For self-efficacy, the respondents were particularly aware of the belief in one's capabilities to mobilize skills and resources to meet situational demands (WM = 4.78). For collective efficacy, employee collaboration received the highest rating (WM = 4.75), suggesting strong recognition of the role of shared capability in organizational functioning.

Means efficacy obtained the highest overall rating. The respondents strongly recognized that modern, efficient, well-maintained, and appropriate tools can increase confidence in accomplishing work (WM = 4.75). They also recognized that inadequate resources may undermine otherwise adequate internal capabilities (WM = 4.72).

This finding has practical significance for the organization. The respondents' perceptions indicate that confidence in one's ability was not viewed independently of the availability and quality of workplace resources. In other words, employee capability and organizational support were perceived as complementary rather than competing factors.

Obstructions to the promotion of self-efficacy

The overall level of difficulty associated with the identified obstructions was moderate, with a grand weighted mean of 3.00. Among the eight categories examined, organizational structure and culture ranked first (WM = 3.08), followed by negative self-talk (WM = 3.02) and overestimation of abilities or overconfidence (WM = 3.01). Social support ranked fourth (WM = 3.00). Negative feedback and lack of support and access to resources both obtained 2.97, while lack of resilience and low self-esteem obtained 2.96 and 2.95, respectively.

The results indicate that the major difficulties were not concentrated solely in employees' personal characteristics. Organizational conditions emerged as the most prominent category. Within this category, centralization was the highest-rated obstruction (WM = 3.25). Negative work environment followed at 3.10.

Internal psychological factors were also relevant. Excessive self-criticism obtained a mean of 3.12, while negative self-talk associated with unrealistic expectations obtained 3.22, the highest score within that category.

Access to resources was another important concern. Limited access to appropriate resources obtained 3.25, while economic insecurity received 3.10. Social support was similarly relevant, with insufficient support in buffering stress obtaining 3.18.

These results suggest that even employees who perceive themselves as highly capable may encounter conditions that make maintaining self-efficacy more difficult. The findings therefore point to a useful distinction: high self-efficacy does not mean the absence of obstacles. Employees may remain confident while still experiencing organizational, psychological, and resource-related difficulties.

Strategies for improving employee self-efficacy

The strategies for improving self-efficacy received an overall average weighted mean of 4.31, interpreted as Very Effective. The most highly rated strategy was providing opportunities for skill development (WM = 4.63). This was followed by fostering a supportive environment (WM = 4.50) and offering training, mentorship, and feedback (WM = 4.47). Setting achievable goals also received a high rating (WM = 4.42).

The results indicate that respondents placed greater value on concrete developmental opportunities than on abstract motivational approaches. Training and opportunities to acquire

new skills may provide employees with direct experiences of accomplishment. Supportive environments, meanwhile, can provide encouragement and constructive feedback.

The least-rated strategy was emphasizing a growth mindset ($WM = 3.95$), although it was still considered effective. Role modeling ($WM = 4.15$) and encouraging autonomy and involvement ($WM = 4.08$) also received comparatively lower ratings.

The findings suggest that employees preferred strategies that directly strengthen competence through practice, training, feedback, and manageable challenges. This is consistent with the strong rating given to mastery experiences as a source of self-efficacy.

Test of significant differences

The Chi-square test showed no significant difference in respondents' perceptions of the obstructions to self-efficacy when grouped according to their profiles. At the 0.05 level of significance, all obtained p-values exceeded .05: age ($\chi^2 = 12.45$, $p = .645$), gender ($\chi^2 = 5.32$, $p = .256$), civil status ($\chi^2 = 8.15$, $p = .419$), highest educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 7.88$, $p = .445$), present position ($\chi^2 = 10.22$, $p = .333$), and years of experience ($\chi^2 = 11.05$, $p = .272$).

Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected for all profile variables. The findings indicate that the respondents' perceptions of the obstructions were statistically similar across the demographic and employment groups examined.

This is an important finding. It suggests that the identified barriers were not strongly associated with age, gender, civil status, education, position, or length of experience within this sample. The results instead point toward challenges that may be experienced across different employee groups. However, because the sample consisted of only 30 respondents, and some profile categories contained very few individuals, the statistical findings should be interpreted cautiously.

The findings present a generally consistent picture of the respondents as a high-performing group with strong self-perceived efficacy and substantial knowledge of the factors that influence it. Their personality assessments showed strong endorsement of goal orientation, optimism, willingness to learn, confidence, and persistence. Their knowledge of the sources of self-efficacy was likewise very high, particularly with respect to mastery experiences. Their awareness of self-, collective-, and means efficacy was also high.

At the same time, the findings showed that self-efficacy existed alongside identifiable obstacles. Organizational structure and culture emerged as the most prominent category of obstruction, while negative self-talk, overconfidence, social support, and access to resources were also perceived as moderate difficulties. This suggests that strengthening self-efficacy should not focus exclusively on the individual employee. Organizational conditions matter as well.

The strategy findings reinforce this point. Employees considered skill development, supportive work environments, training, mentoring, feedback, and achievable goals particularly effective. These strategies can provide opportunities for successful performance while also creating social and organizational conditions that support confidence.

On the whole, the study suggests that employee self-efficacy was strong but not self-sustaining. It was supported by experience, learning, social interaction, and adequate resources. Conversely, organizational rigidity, limited development opportunities, negative internal dialogue, and resource constraints could weaken its expression. The absence of significant differences across the respondents' profile variables further suggests that these concerns were broadly shared within the group rather than confined to a particular demographic or employment category.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the respondents are a highly efficacious and high-performing group, as reflected in their Outstanding performance ratings and strong perceptions of self-efficacy. Their professional confidence is closely associated with goal orientation, accountability, persistence, and willingness to learn. Among the sources of self-efficacy, Mastery Experiences received the highest rating, indicating that previous accomplishments and successful experiences are important foundations of their confidence. The respondents also demonstrated high awareness of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and means efficacy. They recognize that individual capability, team cooperation, and adequate resources work together in achieving organizational goals.

Despite their strong self-efficacy, the respondents still encounter moderate difficulties. Organizational Structure and Culture emerged as the most significant obstruction, followed by Negative Self-Talk and Overestimation of Abilities. Centralization was the most prominent organizational concern, while limited access to appropriate resources was also identified as a significant barrier. These findings indicate that high self-efficacy does not eliminate the effects of organizational and environmental constraints. Employees may possess the skills and confidence to perform well, yet their effectiveness can still be affected by limited decision-making authority, inadequate resources, stress, and high self-imposed standards.

The study further found no significant differences in the respondents' perceptions of the obstructions to self-efficacy when grouped according to age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, present position, and years of experience. The results therefore suggest that the identified barriers are generally shared by the respondents rather than being associated with particular demographic or employment characteristics.

In view of these findings, the Bureau should strengthen conditions that allow employees to use and further develop their capabilities. First, decision-making authority should be delegated where appropriate to provide employees with greater participation and responsibility. This may help address the difficulty associated with organizational centralization and strengthen employees' sense of agency. Second, the Bureau should continue to improve its technical infrastructure by providing modern, appropriate, and well-maintained equipment and systems. Adequate resources are essential to complement employees' skills and confidence.

The Bureau should also provide clearer opportunities for professional growth through training, career development, and assignments that allow employees to take on new and more challenging responsibilities. Such opportunities can provide additional Mastery Experiences, which were identified as the strongest source of self-efficacy. A peer mentoring program may likewise be established to encourage knowledge sharing and provide employees with relatable models of successful performance. Existing training opportunities may be expanded, including participation in national and, when feasible, international seminars or professional exchanges.

Because stress, self-criticism, and unrealistic expectations were also identified as moderate concerns, employee development programs should include appropriate activities on stress management, resilience, and maintaining a healthy approach to professional expectations. Managers should also strengthen regular and constructive feedback mechanisms. Recognition of progress and accomplishments, together with specific guidance for improvement, can reinforce employees' confidence and encourage continued development.

Finally, the Bureau should provide opportunities for employees to contribute ideas, participate in small-scale projects, and test improved work processes where appropriate. Such initiatives can encourage innovation while allowing employees to develop their skills through practical experience. Further research is also recommended using other variables, larger

samples, and other organizational settings to provide a broader understanding of the factors that influence employees' self-efficacy.

Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents already possess strong personal and professional foundations for effective performance. The greater challenge is to ensure that organizational structures, resources, professional development opportunities, and support systems are sufficiently aligned with these capabilities. Strengthening these conditions may help sustain employees' self-efficacy and support their continued professional growth and performance.

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