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Factors Caribbean Overseas Students Perceive Influence their Academic Self-Efficacy

Arline Edwards-Joseph, EdD
Georgia Southern University (USA)

Stanley Baker, EdD
North Carolina State University (USA)

Abstract

This study investigated factors that influenced the academic self-efficacy of Caribbean overseas students attending universities in the United States, and the themes that emerged from their perceptions of variables impacting their academic self-efficacy. Seven major themes (educational background, faith in God, finances, age and maturity, influence and support of others, self-determination, and previous success of other and of self) emerged as factors that influenced the students' academic self-efficacy. Recommendations for counselors and areas for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Caribbean students, self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, international students

The migration of international students to pursue degrees in higher education has become a consistent trend. These individuals are different from other immigrants who travel from their home countries to work and live in other cultures because their status is as temporary sojourners (Martin & Harrell, 1996). In 2004, the U.S. led the world in having the most students involved in international education (Arthur, 2004). Six years later, *The Open Doors* (2010) annual report, published by the Institute of International Education, reported that the U.S. continued to host more international students than any other country in the world. The report also stated that there were 723,277 international students at associates' level, bachelor's level, master's level and doctoral level enrolled in the colleges and universities throughout the U.S. during the 2010-2011 school year. This number represented 3.5% of all higher education students throughout the U.S.

There is a tendency to treat these sojourners as members of a homogenous group of learners (Arthur, 2004); however, the variability in their academic and personal preparation makes exploring their differences imperative. In addition, the lack of international standards for educational programs in many countries leads to variability in the knowledge base of this group (Arthur, 2004). Arthur (2004) believes that the one size fits all view about academic performance may be unrealistic since international students come from different academic backgrounds. It can therefore

be presumed that these transient immigrants will have varying levels of academic self-efficacy that is probably influenced by varying factors. Therefore, the intent for this study was to discover what Caribbean overseas students believed influenced their academic self-efficacy, while attending U.S. universities.

As the international student population continues to grow in the U.S. there is increased attention placed on the educational and mental health issues of these students to ensure that they are able to perform as expected academically (Mori, 2000). These students often experience various stressors related to academic and social interpersonal adjustment, financial concerns and language barriers (Chen, 1999). These adjustment stressors can affect a student's general self-efficacy about navigating through the host culture. Although all of these stressors need to be considered, this study focuses on one possible stressor concerning academic self-efficacy.

The Open Doors, 2011 fact sheet, stated that there were 461,903 international students from the Asian region attending various universities throughout the United States. Not surprisingly, most professional literature about foreign students and their psychosocial and academic needs in the U.S. refers to Asian students (e.g., Indian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese). Although the research data on Asian international students are helpful, these data are not always applicable to international and overseas students from other regions of the world. Therefore, there is a need to further explore issues, such as academic efficacy, that may be affecting other international sojourner populations.

Caribbean Overseas Students

The Caribbean overseas student population, the group of interest for the present study, is defined as individuals from that region who are in the United States to engage in academic activities. This group includes students from the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, and some South American islands (Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana) that are considered to be a part of the Caribbean geopolitically. Additionally, any student who grew up in the region, but may have been born elsewhere, including the United States, was also considered a Caribbean overseas student.

Much of the academic efficacy and performance information about this population is anecdotal and generalized. These students are generally thought to be successful. It is believed that students who grew up in the Caribbean bring a strong sense of academic efficacy with them to U.S. universities. For students from the former British colonies as well as the current ones, this efficacy is often attributed to them being immersed in the British school system model for most, if not all of their academic lives. In fact, some Caribbean people believe the system is superior to the U.S. school system. Anecdotally, parents from the French islands, Dutch countries, Spanish islands (e.g. Cuba, and Puerto Rico), and the U.S. Virgin Islands share a similar opinion that their academic school system is superior. It is also believed that strict and rigid parental control and a strong religious influence, motivate these students to do well and focus on academic activities to ensure success.

There appears to be no documented evidence that these students reported having a strong sense of academic efficacy while attending U.S. universities. If the unique psychosocial and academic needs of these students are to be met, the gap in the literature needs to be filled to ensure academic success and transition to the U.S. education system.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura's (1963) social cognitive theory has linked students' self-efficacy and motivation in academic settings. Moreover, there is extensive research literature showing that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic performance (Pajares, 1995) and emotional adaptation, such as

adjusting to a new academic environment, is aided when a person has a strong sense of self-efficacy about their abilities and competence (Bandura, 1986). Maddux and Meier (1995) and Maddux (1995) stated that a strong sense of self-efficacy also helps individuals approach challenging situations without experiencing incapacitating anxiety and confusion.

Perceived self-efficacy is the belief individuals have about what they can do in different situations with whatever skills they have rather than a measure of skill (Bandura, 1997). People who demonstrate a strong sense of efficacy enhance their accomplishments and personal well-being (Bandura, 1994) because they have a high assurance in their capabilities and approach difficult tasks as challenges to be conquered and not avoided. Additionally, these individuals recover quickly from adversity and setbacks. On the other hand, individuals who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations, a weak commitment to the goals they have chosen to pursue, dwell on personal deficiencies and obstacles they may encounter and other potentially adverse outcomes instead of concentrating on performing successfully. They reduce their efforts and readily give up when faced with a difficult situation. These individuals have a hard time recovering their sense of efficacy after failure or setbacks (Bandura, 1994, 1997).

Self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four main sources of information: “Enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability; vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with attainment of others; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capabilities, strengths, and vulnerability to dysfunction” Bandura (1997, p. 79). Information that is relevant for judging personal capabilities is informative through cognitive processing of efficacy information and reflective thought. Therefore, a distinction must be drawn between information conveyed by experienced events and information selected, weighted, and integrated into self-efficacy judgment (Pajares, 2002).

As stated previously, efficacy beliefs play an influential motivational part in academic attainment (Bandura, 1997). Academic self-efficacy refers to students’ confidence in their ability to carry out academic tasks such as preparing for exams and writing term papers (Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005). Academic self-efficacy has been consistently shown to predict grades and persistence in college (Bandura, 1989; Lane & Lane, 2001; Owen, 1988; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002). Bandura (1993) posits that self-efficacy beliefs affect college performance outcomes by increasing students’ motivation and persistence to master challenging academic tasks and by fostering efficient use of acquired knowledge and skills. In fact, efficacy beliefs are thought to be so important to academics that Bandura (1997) stated, “Perceived self-efficacy is a better predictor of intellectual performance than skills alone” (p.216).

Self-efficacy theory provides an important framework for evaluating the influence of studying overseas on Caribbean college students. Academic self-efficacy appears to be the most important form of self-efficacy to investigate. The goals of the present study were to discover factors that a sample of Caribbean overseas students perceived influenced their academic self-efficacy while attending U.S. universities, gather information about the most common themes associated with those factors, and provide recommendations for counseling practice and further research.

Research Method

Grounded theory is used when little is known about a phenomenon (Morse & Field, 1995). It is also used to better understand research participants within their cultural context (Silverman, 2000). This approach was deemed to be the most appropriate since the intent of this study was to establish a relationship between the academic self-efficacy and culture shock among Caribbean overseas college students attending universities in the United States. For the current study, a modified grounded theory approach was utilized to analyze the data. Only the participants' beliefs of factors that influenced their academic self-efficacy were sought. Grounded theory was also used to discover the participants' main concern and how they continually tried to resolve it. The investigator's role is to keep asking "what is going on?", "what is the participant's main problem", and "how will they solve it?" The discovery process did not seek to explain how participants dealt with issues of academic self-efficacy, which is a construct of the grounded theoretical approach (Glaser, 1998) as it was not the intent to generate a theory about Caribbean overseas students and their academic self-efficacy. Not developing a theory is how the grounded theory approach was modified.

Participants

Seventy-two Caribbean overseas college students who grew up in the Caribbean participated in the study. Caribbean overseas students were chosen as opposed to Caribbean international students. Overseas students included those born in the U.S. but lived in the Caribbean and those who grew up in U.S. Caribbean countries. The rationale for including U.S. citizens was based on the assumption that their experiences were different from their Caribbean counterparts.

There were 44 women and 28 men (61.1% women and 38.9% men) who participated in the study, ranging in age from 18 to 41. The various islands where participants grew up were: Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the islands of the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States Virgin Islands (St. Thomas and St. Croix). Three participants reported having lived on multiple islands and two did not report where they grew up. Some participants were citizens of the U.S. The participants attended 25 different universities in 13 different states throughout the U.S. Most of the participants attended universities in Texas. Forty-eight of the participants were pursuing undergraduate degrees, 15 pursued master's degrees, and nine pursued doctorate degrees. Forty-seven of the participants had non-immigrant visas, four were permanent residents, eight were U.S. citizens and 13 did not report their immigration classification. Most, participants (46) had been in the U.S. for five years or less. Ten participants were in the U.S. between six and 10 years and five had been in the U.S. for more than 10 years.

Several convenience-sampling strategies were used to recruit participants including Caribbean student associations (CSAs), Facebook.com, and Google.com searches. A list of name of the presidents and/or public relations officers of CSAs was compiled based on information gathered through Google.com searches and by acquaintances and friends of the primary investigator. An email was sent to the presidents or public relations officer and they were asked to forward an email with an embedded link to the survey for constituents. In some cases, because the e-mail addresses of members were public, e-mails were sent directly to the individuals. Other participants were also recruited through referrals from individuals who knew Caribbean students who may not have been on a listserv or part of an organization. These individuals were then sent an email with the link embedded. The institutional review board of the university where the study originated approved the study.

Researchers' Background

The first author was a 30-something year old West Indian female who was an international student in the Counselor Education doctoral program. She grew up both in the Caribbean and the southeastern region of the U.S. and she has been employed as a counselor in the U.S. and in the Caribbean. Since the first author has had experiences as a Caribbean overseas student, which could have created researcher bias, an auditor was employed to help alleviate bias.

The second author was a 70-something year old White male who had over 40 years of experience as a counselor educator. He grew up in the upper mid-western region of the U.S. and had been employed in two mid-Atlantic states before moving to North Carolina where he had resided for 16 years. He can be classified as a White, Anglo-Saxon Male (WASP). His work settings have led to interactions with and appreciation of individuals of virtually all cultural backgrounds, including the first author and principal investigator.

Instrumentation

The principal investigator, for the purpose of this study, designed a 22 question demographic questionnaire, consisting of multiple choice, Likert scale and open-ended questions. Participants were asked to provide information such as gender, age, educational level, islands where they grew up, visa type/residency status, and length of time in the U.S. Additionally, as part of the demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to complete a qualitative, short answer question. A working definition of academic self-efficacy was provided to the participants: The term "academic self-efficacy beliefs" refers to people's beliefs about their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required of them in an academic institution. Participants were also asked the following question: What are some factors that you believe influence (d) your academic self-efficacy here in the U.S.?

It is estimated that almost 200 prospective participants received an invitation to participate in the study, which was based on the number of members that the various Caribbean Students Associations had on their roster and the number of individual invitations that were sent out by the researcher. Therefore, it appears that approximately 36% of individuals who received invitations participated in the study

Procedure

Data collection. The prospective participants received the link to the Web-based survey via email, either from the principal investigator or through one of the previously mentioned avenues. They were asked to follow the link to the survey website and to read an informed consent statement prior to deciding whether or not they wished to participate. One week after the initial invitation, a follow up e-mail was sent to participants as a reminder.

Data analysis. The responses were downloaded from surveymonkey.com as a data set rather than as individual responses and converted to a Microsoft Word document for analysis. The constant comparative method of simultaneously coding and analyzing the data was then employed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Working from the transcripts, the primary researcher read the downloaded data multiple times in order to refine the concepts, identify the properties, explore relationships and enhance trustworthiness and authenticity. The data were sorted and coded and the codes were combined to identify themes (Basit, 2003).

Validity in its traditional sense is not an issue in grounded theory, which instead should be judged by fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978;

Glaser, 1998). For this study, as a modification of the grounded theory, only fit and relevance were utilized using only factors that influenced participants' academic self-efficacy. How the participants' academic self-efficacy affected their academic performance was not investigated. Relevance of a study refers to the real concern of participants, captures the attention, and is not only of academic interest. Additionally, since there were no existing data to compare the current data to, modifiability was not utilized for the study. In the current study the intent was not to generate a theory about Caribbean overseas students and how they utilized the factors that influence academic self-efficacy. Rather, the intent was to gather preliminary data about their perceptions about factors that affected their academic self-efficacy.

An auditor reviewed the codes and themes determined by the primary researcher in order to ensure fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Glaser, 1998). The auditor had prior experience using qualitative data analyses. She was a 37-year old African American woman from a rural community in the Southeastern U.S. who was not acquainted with the participants or with the study. The background of the study and a description of the data collection method were presented to the auditor prior to her participation. The auditor reviewed the raw data and the primary researcher's analysis of the data, including the coding and the major themes the researcher had identified. The final themes were a result of discussions between the auditor and primary researcher following the auditor's analysis. She was not directly involved with participants or with the study.

Results

The major emerging themes that participants attributed to their academic self-efficacy were: educational background, faith in God, finances, age and maturity, influence and support of others, self-determination, and previous success of other and of self.

Educational Background

Many of the participants attributed their academic self-efficacy to their educational background. Coming from a British influenced school system for primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (A-Levels) of education was one factor participants felt influenced their academic efficacy. Participant 1 stated, "Coming from the Caribbean where the academics is still mainly British, gives us a head start, when we come to America." The British system, according to some participants, provided a strict environment that required them to be more disciplined than their American counterparts when attending universities in the U.S. Participants from non-British school systems, that is, Dutch and the U.S., also attributed their academic efficacy to their educational foundation in the Caribbean. Faith based school environments were also mentioned as affecting academic efficacy. Participant 7 stated that "going to Catholic school with a strict academic environment" has greatly influenced her/his current efficacy in the classroom.

Conversely, a few participants said that their academic self-efficacy was negatively affected as a result of their academic background in the Caribbean. Participant 9 reported that in America the education level was more advanced, therefore causing some academic difficulties; another reported that, although the Caribbean system gave Caribbean students a head start it also encouraged them to be somewhat lazy in U.S. classrooms, hence affecting their grade. It was reported that this laziness was a result of getting comfortable and sometimes bored with the information being taught, hence they did not feel the need to exert a lot of energy over in-class and out of class assignments.

Additionally, some older students reported that their past training in specific skills such as general and multiple disciplinary and teacher education training helped to boost their academic self-efficacy. Participant 9 stated, "I had a solid foundation and had already developed the skills necessary to succeed in a higher institution of learning."

Faith in God

Several participants attributed their beliefs in their faith in God and their strong religious/spiritual background. They also reported their academic efficacy was influenced by the knowledge that with God's help and with "His" guidance they could succeed. This knowledge, some reported, came from their parents telling them that God would influence anything they did. This knowledge and growing up in a church community also fueled academic efficacy.

Finances

Various issues related to finances and being in school were listed as factors that influenced academic self-efficacy among the participants. A common theme was the high cost of education in the United States for international students and the worries over how to pay for it. The difficulty of acquiring a student loan and other financial aid required, as well as the general lack of personal money was mentioned as sources of stress, hence sometimes adversely affecting academic efficacy. Participant 10 stated that "taking a student loan [in his/her home country] isn't easy." Additionally, some participants reported that their parents were investing considerable amounts of money for them to attend a university and accomplish their academic goals, which played a significant role and was a source of positive motivation. This parental investment, some participants stated, encouraged a positive belief in oneself. Participant 1 stated, "my parents have invested a lot of money so that I may accomplish this goal and so I think that plays a significant role in motivating me to do the best that I can do to better myself and make them and myself proud."

Age and maturity

Age and maturity were also reported as sources enhancing levels of academic efficacy when the participants arrived in the U.S. to attend college. Coupled with age and maturity, they stated that their responsibilities after high school, personally and professionally, contributed to their maturity. These factors included the responsibilities of being the primary wage earner for their families and previous work experience. For some participants their prior work experience helped their academic efficacy since it provided prior experience in the field of study here in the US. Participant 7 stated, "the fact that I came to school at such an older age and the fact that I worked before coming here and get mature in the working world has impacted my belief in my abilities." Additionally, some reported that working in a strict work environment also helped them develop a sense of maturity and good work ethic that they have used in the classroom and which has fostered a positive sense of academic efficacy.

Influence and support of others

Participants reported parental influence as a source of positive academic efficacy. This influence was reportedly manifested in various ways. Participants felt the need to live up to high parental expectations. They also reported that parental encouragement impacted their beliefs in their academic abilities. Participant 68 reported "that my parents told me I could excel." This encouragement was constant and was a motivator to perform even harder and provide the confidence to be successful. Participants also reported that the encouragement and support from extended family members (aunts and uncles), friends, high school counselors, college recruiters, faculty and other mentors influenced their academic efficacy positively. A couple of participants reported that the academic and social support of fellow Caribbean students who were in the U.S. prior to their arrival and those who arrived around the same time helped them adjust to the new academic environment. The support and adjustment, they reported positively impacted their belief

that they could be academically successful. Participant 69 stated, "It is helpful to have like-minded students around me."

Participant 12 reported a different kind of influence. The individual stated that being an influence on younger siblings and cousins was a motivator. This motivation boosted academic efficacy since s/he felt like there was the need to do well, knowing that s/he was being emulated. Additionally, Participant 12 stated that this provided confidence in academic abilities, since a priority, "is to set a good example with the hope of being able to encourage them to do good in school so that they too could attend university."

Self-determination

Another theme that surfaced was the participants' self-determination. Many stated that the determination to excel and be successful helped them to believe in their ability to accomplish academic tasks required of them. Additionally, the willingness to work hard, learn and pay attention to details were also stated as contributing factors to academic efficacy. Participant 70 credited the belief in level of intelligence as a factor. The individual stated, "I consider myself to be fairly intelligent and so I know I can be successful in attaining my degree." Other factors mentioned were self-motivation, strong-will, desire to achieve greatness in life in the "academic arena", passion, wanting to have a better life for myself and the desire to increase self-development.

Previous success of other and of self

Participants stated that the past success of others around them and their own past success influenced their academic efficacy. Some stated that observing and learning experiences of others who were successful was helpful. They also stated the successes of other students before them served as an inspiration and signal that they could also be successful.

The academic success of family members, who attended university prior to the participants, was reported as having an impact on a participant's academic efficacy. One participant stated that growing up with both my parents who had advanced degrees played a role while another reported that looking up to a very successful older brother also boosted academic efficacy.

Participants listed their own past success as a contributing factor to their belief of self in college. Some reported that they were always good students and worked hard to maintain grades. They stated their prior success helped them to believe that they could achieve their academic goals. Students, who received "impressive grades" during their undergraduate studies, reported yielding scholarships and as a result, their success encouraged them to continue doing well, which enhanced academic efficacy.

In addition to past and present success, some participants reported that the potential for future success boosted their academic efficacy. Some stated that they were aware that academic success could lead to a good job after college and that knowledge fueled their belief that they could be successful in college.

Discussion

The findings support Bandura's (1997) theory that academic self-efficacy is influenced by mastery of experiences, vicarious experiences provided by social models, social persuasion and allied types of social influences, and physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capabilities. The findings also support Zajacova et al. (2005) position that academic self-efficacy is a demonstration of a student's confidence in her/his ability to carry out academic tasks.

Participants in the current study indicated factors that influenced their academic self-efficacy; several themes associated with their academic self-efficacy emerged from the analysis of the interviews.

One goal for conducting this study was to empirically support or disprove the perception that a British school system had a strong effect on the academic efficacy of Caribbean overseas students. Hence, it was not surprising that “coming from a British educational system” was the most common reason reported to have influenced academic self-efficacy across the sample. Surprisingly, however, is that Caribbean overseas students who attended schools modeled from the U.S. and Dutch school system paradigm echoed the same belief as students from the British system that a Caribbean education provided them with confidence in their academic abilities. The anecdotes indicated that this academic background caused students to have a positive academic self-efficacy, excel, and find the U.S. academic setting to be an easy one. Therefore, it was unusual to discover, as one participant reported, that the American school system was difficult and more advanced than what s/he was used to, adversely affecting her/his academic self-efficacy. Often, Caribbean overseas students, especially those from a British background, reported having to get used to the differing teaching methods and testing formats in the U.S. but not about the difficulty of the advanced system.

Knowledge of “God” and “His” guidance as well as growing up in a strong church community were the main reasons why faith in “God” was an example of how social persuasion and allied types of social influences impact the participants’ academic self-efficacy. The participants did not specify their God. However, based on her own experiences with the Caribbean culture, the first author speculated that participants referred to the Christian God. This speculation was based on the idea that Christianity and Catholicism was the predominant religion in the Caribbean. However, the researcher was cognizant that this assumption was because of her own religious experiences and observations while living in the Caribbean. She was also cognizant that the assumption could be deemed a bias. Future research would help to clarify what Caribbean overseas students meant when they referred to “God”. Moreover, it would help to ascertain whether or not these students referred to a Christian God.

The most common reasons for how finances affected the academic efficacy of international students were the high cost of U.S. education, and lack of personal resources and financial aid to pay for the education. Finances had a significant influence on their academic efficacy because the participants believed that getting an education in the U.S. was a major investment. Some stated they were making the investment for themselves while parents were supporting them financially. Regardless of who made the investment, participants reported that it was important to do well, which in turn boosted their academic efficacy. This support in academic self-efficacy helped participants with financial challenges. Maddux and Meier (1995) and Maddux (1995) found that financial challenges motivated students’ academic self-efficacy and that a strong sense of self-efficacy would help them manage challenging situations without experiencing incapacitating anxiety and confusion.

Since the Caribbean is often thought of as a collectivist society (Delgado-Romero & Sanabria, 2007), input of parents, other family members and friends is not uncommon. Hence, it was not surprising that the support of parents, parental expectation and other family members and friends, were reported as boosters of academic self-efficacy. This input extended beyond academic support into personal issues individuals experienced. In keeping with the themes of influence of others, many participants reported that their academic efficacy was influenced by the previous success of family members and other Caribbean students. Some also reported that their own success contributed to their academic efficacy. Factors that influenced the academic self-efficacy of the

participants were aligned with Bandura's (1986, 1997) assertion that self-efficacy beliefs were constructed from sources of information. For these Caribbean overseas students, their sense of academic self-efficacy was informed by vicarious experiences (the success of others who attended university prior to participant), enactive mastery experience (personal previous success such as good grades), and verbal persuasion (the support and strong influence of family members).

Being surrounded and supported by other Caribbean overseas students who attended the same university or lived in the surrounding area while in the U.S. were also reported as having influenced academic efficacy. This is an example of what Bandura (1997) referred to as allied types of social influences. It is not surprising that being around other like students had a positive impact on the participants since they were from the Caribbean, which Delgado-Romero and Sanabria (2007) purported is often viewed as a collectivist society.

The limitations of the present study included having an unbalanced sample and having only one coder and auditor rather than a consensual approach. Most of the participants (n=33) attended a Texas university, which was known to have a strong Caribbean student's Association that provided social support. Purposeful sampling was a challenge because potential participants were scattered throughout the U.S. In addition, one participant attempted to recruit other participants through sources which would have made the output unpredictable.

There are still gaps in the literature about Caribbean overseas students in the U.S. Therefore, continued research about this population and its psychosocial needs is necessary. Based on the themes established in the present study, several additional research questions seem important to consider. Knowledge about factors that positively influence academic self-efficacy would provide helpful information to determine possible strategies for working with students experiencing academic self-efficacy challenges. It would also provide counselors with possible interventions to better serve the students' needs. Further investigation is needed to compare Caribbean overseas students with other Caribbean immigrants and Caribbean overseas students with overseas students from other nations. This comparison may provide helpful information about important similarities and differences. Using experimental studies to further analyze ideas gleaned from future descriptive research could prove to be helpful in determining the efficacy of intervention strategies designed to bolster academic self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to carry out academic tasks (Zajacova et al., 2005). Additionally, research has shown that this efficacy is a predictor of grades and tenacity in college (Bandura, 1989; Lane & Lane, 2001; Owen, 1988; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002) and influential in academic attainment (Bandura, 1997). Consequently, it is imperative that professionals working with Caribbean overseas students find ways to help them maintain or develop a healthy sense of academic self-efficacy to overcome obstacles they may encounter. One recommendation for working with students experiencing a low sense of academic efficacy is to help them cognitively process the difficulty of adjusting to the U.S. academic environment. This help might affect academic efficacy and students' academic performance. Using a behavioral approach such as journaling about their thoughts and emotions with cognitive processing may be helpful when doing tasks they lack confidence in.

As globalization continues and individuals move fluidly across the world's borders, interacting with international students will be inevitable for counselors and other helping professionals. Interest in helping these individuals be academically successful is an indication of the movement towards further acceptance and inclusion of diversity and multiculturalism. The findings of this study provide insight about academic efficacy, which could affect the academic success of many identified cultural groups on university campuses in the United States. Therefore, it would be incumbent upon counselors and other helping professionals to utilize the data in studies

such as this one to develop models for serving Caribbean overseas students and other individuals who may be experiencing similar challenges.

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About the Authors:

Dr. Edwards-Joseph is from the twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda in the West Indies. She earned her doctorate degree in Counselor Education from North Carolina State University, in 2008. She has been an Assistant Professor of Counselor Education at Georgia Southern University, since 2008. Her research interests include international issues in counseling and counselor education, including international students, immigrant populations and counseling in the Caribbean. E-mail: aej@georgiasouthern.edu

Dr. Stanley Baker is a professor of counselor education at North Carolina State University. His professional K-12 teaching and school counseling experience was in rural and small city locations in western and southern Wisconsin.