

Research on English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Junior High Schools from the Perspective of Rural Revitalization

Yang Tianfu¹ & Wang Hongyuan^{1,*}

¹Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China

*Correspondence: Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China. E-mail: leon3327@qq.com

Received: September 26, 2021

Accepted: November 2, 2021

Online Published: December 22, 2021

doi:10.5430/ijelt.v9n1p13

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijelt.v9n1p13>

This paper is supported by The Innovation Fund of Postgraduate, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering. (y2021130)

Abstract

Currently, English learners in Chinese rural junior high schools have been increasingly focused by people in all walks of life, especially the government for they will function as an impetus to promote the construction as well as the growth of the new rural areas. Accordingly, this study will utilize the rural revitalization, a national strategy for rural areas to investigate some current situations on English learning self-efficacy of rural school students, which is an important factor affecting their learning, taking students of several rural middle schools in Suining, Sichuan province as participants and including the following research questions by virtue of the method of questionnaire, interview and literature analysis: 1) What is the current situation about English learning self-efficacy of rural junior high school students under the background of rural revitalization? 2) What factors can affect English learners' learning self-efficacy against the background of rural revitalization? 3) Is there any positive or negative correlation between learners' English learning self-efficacy and their academic achievements in the context of rural revitalization? Based on the outcomes of this research project, some valid and feasible strategies can be introduced to promote English learners' self-efficacy and facilitate better achievements in English learning in rural junior high schools.

Keywords: English learners' self-efficacy, rural junior high schools, rural revitalization

1. Introduction

The strategy of rural revitalization was put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping in the Nineteen Major Reports of the Party on October 18, 2017. This design is guided by general Secretary Xi Jinping's important exposition on the work of agriculture, rural areas and farmers, and makes phased planning for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy (Zhang, 2021). The Central Document No. 1 in 2021 pointed out that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China deems that the work of agriculture, rural areas and farmers in the new stage of development is still of great importance and we mustn't relax our vigilance for a moment. Consequently, they should persist in solving the "three rural issues" as the top priority of the whole Party's work, comprehensively promoting rural revitalization as a major task to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and speed up the modernization of agriculture and rural areas by gathering up the power of the whole Party and the whole society, so that the vast number of farmers can live a better life. As one crucial national strategy for rural areas, the goal of rural revitalization strategy is to realize "prosperous industry, livable ecology, rural civilization, effective governance and affluent life", reflecting the general requirements for the layout of the five-sphere integrated plan. The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy can provide a better solution for problems such as the "three rural" development limitations and the imbalance of urban and rural economic development as it is the key to comprehensive building of a well-off society (Liu, 2021). Additionally, rural revitalization strategy, as an important strategic deployment of China's work related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers in the new era, has marked a milestone in the process of China's development of agriculture, rural areas and farmers for the factor that it has been equipped with the connectivity of the concept and graduality of the stage.

Rural revitalization is to promote the overall revitalization of rural economy, society, life and culture. As an important part of rural economic, social and cultural development, rural education is still faced with many problems, especially the education in middle schools. With the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy in China, the cultural quality of farmers will also become a focus of attention. In the new era, there are still some problems in rural education, such as a lack of teachers especially excellent teachers, low learning efficiency of students, poor educational resources and so on. Therefore, it is very necessary for the country to vigorously implement rural revitalization in order to give sufficient support to rural education. However, to achieve the revitalization of rural education, the most fundamental is the substantial improvement of students' self-efficacy apart from some external forces such as the policy support, rich resources, or the advanced equipment. At the same time, in the context of the rural revitalization strategy in China, the learners' self-efficacy of rural middle schools will be more or less affected, and the improvement of students' self-efficacy is bound to play a certain role in the revitalization of rural education, and even comprehensive rural revitalization. Still, a large population is distributed in Chinese rural areas, which makes the learning development of rural junior high school students have an important impact on the construction of new countryside in the future. Therefore, it is very meaningful and necessary to study rural English learners' self-efficacy combined with the national strategy of rural revitalization.

The Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standard (2011 edition) also clearly points out that emotional attitude is an important factor affecting students' development. As the student-centered concept that attaches great importance to students' individual training is put forward in the education field, self-efficacy as an important psychological factor affecting the individual learning efficiency, plays a pivotal role in whether students can complete the learning task psychologically. Therefore, an increasing number of scholars focus on academic self-efficacy, which has become a hot topic in the field of education in recent years. In view of this, this research project mainly studies the self-efficacy of English learners in rural middle schools from the perspective of rural revitalization, the purpose of which is to explore the current situation, problems, influencing factors and the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance of English learners in rural middle schools under the background of rural revitalization, and then to study the valid path of promoting students' self-efficacy. This is of great importance for a deeper understanding of the country's strategic plan, as well as seeking more effective ways to enhance students' self-efficacy, promoting the in-depth development of rural English education, and realizing the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Self-efficacy and English Learning Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, which was originally put forward by Albert Bandura, an American psychologist and scholar, in his book *The Social Foundation of the Thought and Behavior* in 1978, refers to the subjective judgment of an individual's ability to organize and implement specific actions in order to achieve a specified objective. According to Bandura, he discovered that most people understand what they are supposed to do while the outcome is always not in accordance with their expectations, which will be indisputably the imbalance between their thought and behavior so that personal self-efficacy will be bolstered to regulate their thought and behavior. Eventually, the theory of self-concept, which was considered as one type of one's judgment or tendency to fulfill the expected tasks, gradually emerged.

When it comes to English learners' self-efficacy, it is taken into account as one specific reflection and application of self-efficacy in English learning. It is not exaggerating to say that the self-efficacy will be more employed in English learning than any other subjects, for English learning, whether the vocabulary, reading, listening or writing, will integrate personal subjective efforts. In English learning, learners need to think carefully on whether they are equipped with corresponding capacity for accomplishing the specific learning task or goal and they also need to regulate their thought and behavior in English learning, that is to say, learners not only have to realize what they should do but spare no efforts to put them into practice, which can be summarized as two crucial words: plan and practice. In view of this, it is of great necessity and significance to study the self-efficacy combined with English learning for English learners will find their current situations in learning English to make targeted plans and practice accordingly, which will facilitate their higher learning efficiency to some degree.

The domestic scholars in China began to study self-efficacy in English learning in the 1990s. Zhou Guotao, a well-known researcher in China who has been concentrating on the theory of self-efficacy, put forward the concept, function and influencing factors of self-efficacy in his passage "*Review of Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory*" (Zhou, 1991). After that, another domestic scholar, Zhou Yong, who was engaged in the correlation analysis of self-efficacy,

bravely published the article “*The relationship between learning motivation, attribution, self-efficacy and students’ self-monitoring learning behavior*” in the Journal of psychological development and education (Zhou, 1994). Accordingly, the research on learners’ self-efficacy officially started and looked through the researches of the past 30 years at home and abroad, the researches on learners’ self-efficacy mainly include two aspects: the study on the correlation of learners’ self-efficacy and the connotation and function of learners’ self-efficacy which will be the main literature analysis.

2.2 Related Literature on the Correlation Analysis of Learners’ Self-efficacy

Among the different literature of English learners’ self-efficacy, many scholars tend to relate the theory to other learning strategies and hence make a correlation analysis on the learners’ self-efficacy. On the one hand, some learners embark on the correlation research between their own learning behavior and learning self-efficacy. Taking Dong Jie, an academic researcher in China as an example, he mainly focuses on the relationship between self-efficacy and middle-aged people’s healthy behavior and mentioned that middle aged people’s fitness behavior is influenced by external reinforcement and self-reinforcement, but in the final analysis, it can affect the fitness behavior by virtue of influencing self-efficacy (Dong, 1999). Then, according to Gao Shenchun, a domestic scholar in China who studied the subjective mechanism of self-efficacy, proposed that keeping optimistic self-efficacy is also of great practical significance in preventive medicine for improving the function of immune system and promoting personal health (Gao, 1998).

On the other hand, quite a few researchers did a correlation analysis between the application of subject and learners’ self-efficacy. For example, Taylor, a foreign scholar in the field of learners’ self-efficacy, insisted that career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) was found to be moderately and negatively related to vocational indecision and locus of control whereas a moderate positive relationship was found between CDMSE and vocational decidedness and occupational self-efficacy (Taylor, 1999). At the same time, Richard, another researcher abroad who explored advocacy self-efficacy among K-12 STEM teacher leaders has drew a conclusion that STEM teacher leaders’ participation in professional development programs that specifically focus on development of policy knowledge and advocacy activities help to develop and sustain STEM teacher leaders’ advocacy self-efficacy, given that participating teachers have numerous opportunities to fully engage in mastery experiences in STEM education advocacy (Richard, 2021). Jeffrey, who fixed his eyes on cognitive modeling and self-efficacy, and has emphasized and highlighted that the cognitive modeling groups made more references to teacher activity, and the self-efficacy groups made more references to student activity in their protocols (Jeffrey, 1990). And then, focusing on the correlation between the formative assessment and self-efficacy in English reading, Li Xue, a domestic scholar in China, deemed that through the implementation of the formative assessment intervention experiment, the English reading self-efficacy of the experimental class has been significantly improved, which shows that the formative assessment has a positive impact on the English reading self-efficacy of senior students (Li Xue, 2020).

Besides, some researchers are inclined to study English learners’ self-efficacy connected with learning methods, learning motivation and learning strategies. For example, one recent research conducted by Jang Kyeongmin, who mainly studied effectiveness of self-re-learning using video recordings, showed that self-study with videos taken during an ALS skills test helps enhance the sustainable effects of training such as knowledge, self-efficacy, and skills performance (Jang, 2021). Another scholar, Se Hyun Kim, who worked hard in the field of Second Language Learners’ Self-efficacy and English Achievement, claimed that adolescents with higher self-efficacy reported more integrative motivation, and greater integrative motivation was associated with higher English achievement (Kim, 2021). Also, a recent study by a domestic researcher, Wang Chongguang, who paid attention to the impact of self-efficacy on academic performance or achievements, suggested that the academic achievement of normal university students is closely related to their college environment and academic self-efficacy level (Wang, 2021).

2.3 Related Literature on Connotations and Functions of Learners’ Self-efficacy

There is a large number of researches on the connotations and functions of learners’ self-efficacy at home and abroad. For one thing, some scholars analyze definitions and explain connotations on the learner’s self-efficacy. For instance, Liu Peipei, has defined self-efficacy as people’s judgment of their own ability in the face of difficulties, which is extended to the personal evaluation of students’ learning situation, living standard and working ability by the counselors of higher vocational schools. Specifically, it refers to whether the counselors have enough self-confidence to engage in the education and guidance of College students, and what kind of work efficiency depends on whether they have work motivation and clear work objectives (Liu, 2016). Then, based on what Liu Chengke has mentioned, self-efficacy was defined as the degree of people’s confidence in whether they can use their skills to complete a certain work behavior (Liu, 2019). Also, Luo Jia, a researcher in China, states that positive education self-efficacy is

a teacher's belief in completing positive education tasks and achieving positive education goals and it is also a judgment and evaluation about the influence of education on the formation of students' skills and personality (Luo, 2020).

For another, quite a few scholars study the influence and functions of learners' self-efficacy. For example, a relevant study by Mickwitz Åsa, a foreign researcher, showed that self-regulatory skills and self-efficacy beliefs have a greater impact on learning academic writing skills in traditional learning settings than in learning settings where the students are supposed to work more independently, and where teacher support is not available to the same extent (Mickwitz, 2020). At the same time, Polycarp O. Gor has discovered that boys outperform girls in science and record higher scores in self-efficacy than girls. In addition, the variance shared in common between self-efficacy and performance is higher for boys than girls (Polycrap, 2020). Also, according to Hammer Molly, he did a research on the influence of self-efficacy, finding the importance of parents' beliefs regarding digital media and the need for future research into at home factors that influence students' digital media self-efficacy (Hammer, 2021). Besides, Wang Xin, a domestic scholar who studied the influence of family socioeconomic status and academic self-efficacy on the academic performance of the offspring, concluded that in the process of family socio-economic status affecting the academic performance of the offspring, academic self-efficacy plays a mediating role and the socioeconomic status of the family will have an impact on the children's self-efficacy, thus affecting the children's academic performance (Wang, 2020).

2.4 Summary of Previous Literature at Home and Abroad

By virtue of the massive literature analysis on the correlation of learners' self-efficacy, it can be easily summarized that scholars advocate the combination of learners' self-efficacy with other learning behaviors and learning strategies. It can be obviously seen that learners' self-efficacy possesses the characteristics of universality and relevance, through which self-efficacy can be applied to more fields. However, such research involves a wide range of fields and it may be in disorder so it is not easy to study the relationship among multiple fields, which will be very likely to lead to unclear conclusions or insufficient arguments.

When it comes to the research on the connotations and functions of learners' self-efficacy, every reader can have a deeper understanding of students' self-efficacy in learning through a large amount of research on the connotation and function of learners' self-efficacy. It is this type of research that focuses more on theoretical discussion and qualitative research that provides theoretical support for future researchers to study this theory, but there is less empirical research and a lack of credibility. Although scholars have studied more about learners' self-efficacy, their research methods and the presentation of theories are not deep enough. Furthermore, in spite of much research on self-efficacy conducted in the past 30 years, few researchers laid emphasis on English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle school, which also indisputably provides an innovative opportunity for this research project.

3. Research Design

According to the brief introduction on background information and literature analysis on self-efficacy, this research intends to figure out the current situation on learners' efficacy in English learning and the relationship between English learners' self-efficacy and their academic performance in rural middle schools in the context of rural revitalization so as to seek effective strategies to promote learners' self-efficacy, which will more or less lay a foundation for the construction and development of new countryside to comply with the national strategic deployment. Accordingly, this research project will endeavor to answer the following questions.

3.1 Research Questions

In this research project, three questions were raised.

- 1) What is the current situation about English learners' efficacy of rural junior high schools under the background of rural revitalization?
- 2) What factors can affect learners' learning self-efficacy in the context of rural revitalization?
- 3) Is there any positive or negative correlation between learners' English learning self-efficacy and their academic achievements under the background of rural revitalization?

3.2 Research Participants

To answer the above research questions, 200 students are chosen to be the research participants for questionnaire investigation and 6 of them for interviews in Grade 2 from 4 different rural junior high schools including Pengxi

Middle School, Pengnan Middle School, Pengxi Experimental Middle School and Renlong Middle School in Pengxi County of Suining City. The students mainly serve the purpose of studying their current situation of self-efficacy in the context of rural revitalization and the correlation between their learning self-efficacy and academic achievements, which can be accomplished through questionnaire investigation while 6 students serve that of studying on what can have an impact on learners' learning efficacy, which will be fulfilled through interviews. Consequently, the detailed information on the research participants is as follows.

Table 1. The Detailed Information on the Research Participants

	Variables	Students for questionnaire	Percentage (%)	Students for interview	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	105	52.5	2	33.3
	Female	95	47.5	4	66.7
	Total	200	100	6	100

From table 1, it is clear that there are totally 200 students involved in this investigation, 105 of them male, accounting for 52.5%, 95 female, accounting for 47.5%, while 6 students are interviewed, two for male, accounting for 33.3%, four for female, accounting for 66.7%. In terms of questionnaire investigation, 200 copies of questionnaire are sent out and then finished under the instruction and supervision of the holder for 200 students. After that, they are all valid by carefully checking.

3.3 Research Instruments

This research project mainly involves qualitative and quantitative research methods, including literature analysis, questionnaire investigation and interview. At the early stage of this research, some definitions, functions and any other relevant theories on self-efficacy and the fundamental background information on rural revitalization deserve realizing and understanding by virtue of massive literature reading and analysis to discover the merits and defaults of previous research in order to make improvements and innovations in this field. Meanwhile, based on the literature review, the monotonous research method and rough presentation of theories have been the evident deficiency in this research field. Therefore, this study mainly utilizes the questionnaire investigation for collecting data and interviews for seeking relevant information as the research instruments to study the English learners' self-efficacy against the background of rural revitalization.

3.4 Research Procedure

This research procedure is divided into three sections: the preparation period, implementation of questionnaire investigation and interview. For the preparation period, some early preparations need making, such as reading relevant literature on English learners' self-efficacy, thinking and confirming carefully the research questions, designing the questions of the questionnaire and interviews.

After that, to realize the current situation on learners' self-efficacy and correlation between their self-efficacy and academic performance, the questionnaire investigation should be implemented in Grade 2 from 4 different junior high schools in Pengxi county in Sichuan Province, China to collect data in June 2021. In the process of completing this questionnaire, students can fill it out without exposing their identity so that they can choose answers based on their own authentic feeling with the help of their teachers' instructions. Once they finished the questionnaire, it would be retrieved immediately to check on its effectiveness and reliability through SPSS 25.0.

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The main data is collected in the questionnaire investigation and the contents can be divided into four scales: learners' confidence and consciousness in English learning, the influential factors in students' English learning, learners' overall evaluation on English learning self-efficacy as well as their attribution on English learning. And there are 32 items in this questionnaire and the scores are based on the degree of students' feeling. (1=completely disagree, 2=basically disagree, 3=uncertain, 4=basically agree, 5=totally agree.) Among 32 items in this scoring form of 5-point scale, items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22 belong to learners' confidence and consciousness in English learning, items 9, 10, 13, 15, 19, 20 belong to learners' overall evaluation on English learning self-efficacy, and the rest of the items belong to the influential factors in English learning and learners' attribution on English learning. In the process of checking on the reliability of the questionnaire, it is judged by the Cronbach's alpha and the Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire is up to 0.732, which actually indicates that this questionnaire has a good

reliability.

Besides, with respect to the interview, 6 students are chosen to have an interview, which is mainly used to find information about what factors can have an impact on English learners' efficacy and seek effective strategies to promote learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools.

Table 2. Interview Questions

Item number	Questions
1	Do you have confidence in English learning?
2	What do you think of your English test scores and do you think whether they would have an impact on your English learning self-efficacy?
3	How do you feel about your English learning?
4	What or who do you think will affect your English learning self-efficacy?
5	Do you know why you have to learn English?

4. Research Results and Discussions

Based on the research design, this study mainly focuses on realizing the current situation, influential factors, and the correlation analysis on rural English learners' self-efficacy in the context of rural revitalization through questionnaire investigation, interviews and test performance.

4.1 The Current Situation of English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Middle Schools

According to the research design, the questionnaire functions as a way to collect data and seek relevant information on the status quo of rural English learners' self-efficacy, which was designed based on the traditional 5-point Likert scale to observe learners' answers on this section. Score 1-5 represents strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, respectively to show the learners' true conditions. And the higher the score is, the higher the degree of rural English learners' self-efficacy will be. And the degree of English learners' self-efficacy in rural junior high schools can be classified to be poor, ordinary, medium, fine and excellent.

Table 3. The General Assessment on English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Middle Schools

Degree	Number	Percentage
Poor	20	10%
Ordinary	19	9.5%
Medium	55	27.5%
Fine	60	30%
Excellent	46	23%

Table 4. The Overall Situation of English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Middle Schools

	N	Mean	SD
1. Learners' confidence and consciousness in English learning.	200	3.07	.4953946
2. The influential factors in English learning.	200	3.29	.4617588
3. Learners' attribution in English learning.	200	2.87	.7595850
4. Learners' overall evaluation on English learning self-efficacy.	200	3.66	.3173896

According to table 3, it can be easily seen that the number of students who possess certain English learning self-efficacy adds up to 106, and accounts for 53% of the total number, outweighing those who lack English learning self-efficacy, only to account for 19.5%, which is clearly lower than that of rural areas 10 years ago based on the existing research results in this field and actually states a fact that the English learners' self-efficacy is being gradually enhanced in rural middle schools with the further implementation of rural revitalization, which has offered so many opportunities and conditions for English teaching and learning in rural middle schools.

However, one thing that cannot be neglected is the number of the students who are not sure on whether they have self-efficacy in English learning or not, accounting for 27.5%, which is even higher than that of students with lower

self-efficacy in English learning. Moreover, from table 4, the mean scores of learners' overall evaluation on self-efficacy in English learning is 3.66, which reflects that the majority of students are at the medium level of self-efficacy. Thus, the status quo of rural English learners' self-efficacy should be still noticed and improved through some valid measures.

In this section, apart from questionnaire, several interview questions, such as the first and third question can also provide reference for the current situation of rural English learners' self-efficacy. According to the first question: Do you have confidence in English learning? and the third question: How do you feel about your English learning? There are 2 participants interviewed on these questions and their answers are as follows:

I am confident in learning English, because the first time when I was exposed to English, I think it was a particular subject and language, in other words, to my astonishment, I was extremely interested in learning English so that I began to study every part of English including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Later, it is my dense interest that makes the great academic performance, which deepened my interest and confidence in English learning. To sum up, I think I have sufficient confidence in learning English. (Participant 1)

When it comes to the confidence of learning English, I think I was weak in learning English, especially in the rural areas, where the resources and conditions of learning English are unavailable to us, so that I think I lack enough confidence in learning English. Although our country has given the support of policy and strategy to the development of education, there is imbalanced distribution of learning resources. Of course, apart from this, maybe as a boy, I was vulnerable in learning English so I don't have confidence in learning English. (Participant 2)

Based on the answers on the confidence and the general feeling in learning English, it is nearly in accordance with the results of questionnaire investigation, that is, not all students have confidence in learning English, and diverse perspectives on English learning vary from person to person so that it is a must for researchers to study the influencing factors on self-efficacy and corresponding strategies to promote English learners' self-efficacy.

4.2 The Influential Factors of English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Middle Schools

According to the questionnaire investigation, in the process of English learning, there are more or less internal and external factors that will have an impact on English learning, such as school, family, and even students themselves.

Table 5. The Influential Factors of English Learners' Self-efficacy

The Influential Factors	Number	Percentage
Personal successful experience	46	23%
Psychological states	33	16.5%
Verbal persuasion	22	11%
Teachers and parents	14	7%
Attribution	23	11.5%
Environment	13	6.5%
Learning plan making	24	12%
Personal learning ability	25	12.5%

From table 5, it is obviously discovered that the influential factors of rural English learners' self-efficacy can be categorized as learners themselves including personal successful experience, psychological states, verbal persuasion, attribution, learning plan making and personal learning ability which totally accounted for 86.5%, other people such as teachers or parents accounting for 7%, and surroundings accounting for only 6.5%, which actually suggests that students themselves have been playing a crucial role in the process of English learning while other factors cannot be ignored for they will also more or less facilitate their English learning.

Among all the influential factors, learners' personal successful experience occupies a pivotal position in English learning for it will offer a correct direction of learning and reduce students' time and energy in the pursuit of fresh knowledge. Besides, in spite of small proportion of teachers or parents, they are still equipped with more knowledge and successful life experience, which will give learners not only physical but psychological instructions in the process of English learning. Moreover, one thing that should be worthy of mention is the surroundings for the saying goes, one who stays near vermilion gets stained red, and one who stays near ink gets stained black so that the influence of social environment on English learning goes without saying. Of course, an advanced learning plan and

comprehensive learning ability are an indispensable part in English learning in that they will enhance your English learning efficiency to some degree.

Furthermore, besides questionnaire, the interview question on the influential factors of English learning is asked like this: What or who do you think will affect your English learning self-efficacy? Consequently, some other influential factors on English learning are mentioned by two participants in the interview and they talk about their ideas about influential factors like this:

If you ask me on what or who will affect my self-efficacy in English learning, I think the external facilities or conditions will exert a vital function on English learning for English is inherently a subject of language that deserves an array of input through all kinds of channels, such as digital library, e-book or any other online learning resources on account of the rapid growth of information. It is by no means sufficient to read and learn the existing books. However, for English learners in rural areas, these sophisticated facilities and resources are so difficult to touch with. (Participant 3)

With respect to the influential factors on English learners' self-efficacy, I think the national policy is also of great significance to English learning. Currently, rural revitalization, a national strategy, is being implemented in rural areas but as one important component of rural revitalization, educational revitalization has seemingly no obvious outcomes and students in rural areas cannot be exposed to professional English teachers so that there is no remarkable progress in English learning. Accordingly, what I mean is to strengthen the supervision on the implementation of national policy and achieve the authentic rural revitalization. (Participant 4)

According to the answers of two participants, they have taken into account the external facilities and conditions as well as the national policy, which actually will be conducive to English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools. In fact, the general situation on English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools has been bolstered in a large scale under the background of rural revitalization and many rural English learners have been conscious of importance of learning English and constantly enhance their confidence in learning English and completing related tasks and goals. However, with the imbalanced distribution of resources and the slow process of implementation, there are still myriads of rural English learners who cannot be in touch with advanced resources and facilities, which is also the reason why a large proportion of rural English learners are not sure on whether they can learn English well and even feel that they lack self-efficacy in English learning.

4.3 The Correlation between English Learners' Self-efficacy and Their Academic Achievements

In terms of the third research question on whether there is a positive or negative relationship between English learners' self-efficacy and their academic performance in English learning, the related questionnaire and interview have been conducted to collect data and seek for information. According to the general assessment of English learners' self-efficacy (table 4.1), the degree of English learners' self-efficacy, which can be classified as the poor, ordinary, medium, fine and excellent, is evaluated on the basis of the scores on the general assessment of English learners' self-efficacy, and then the figures on academic achievements in the final exam are collected in order to make correlation analysis with English learners' self-efficacy. Consequently, the table and chart on the relationship between English learners' self-efficacy and their academic performance are as follows:

Table 6. The Correlation between English Learners' Self-efficacy and English Academic Achievements

Degree	Number	Percentage	Score (max)	Score (min)	Score (mean)
Poor	20	10%	98	74	85
Ordinary	19	9.5%	103	92	95
Medium	55	27.5%	108	99	100
Fine	60	30%	115	107	103
Excellent	46	23%	118	109	105

Table 7. Difference on English Learners' Academic Performance among Different Degree of English Learners' Self-efficacy

	Poor	Ordinary	Medium	Fine	Excellent	P (Sig 2-tailed)
Score (max)	98	103	108	115	118	.000
Score (min)	74	92	99	107	109	.010
Score (mean)	85	95	100	103	105	.000

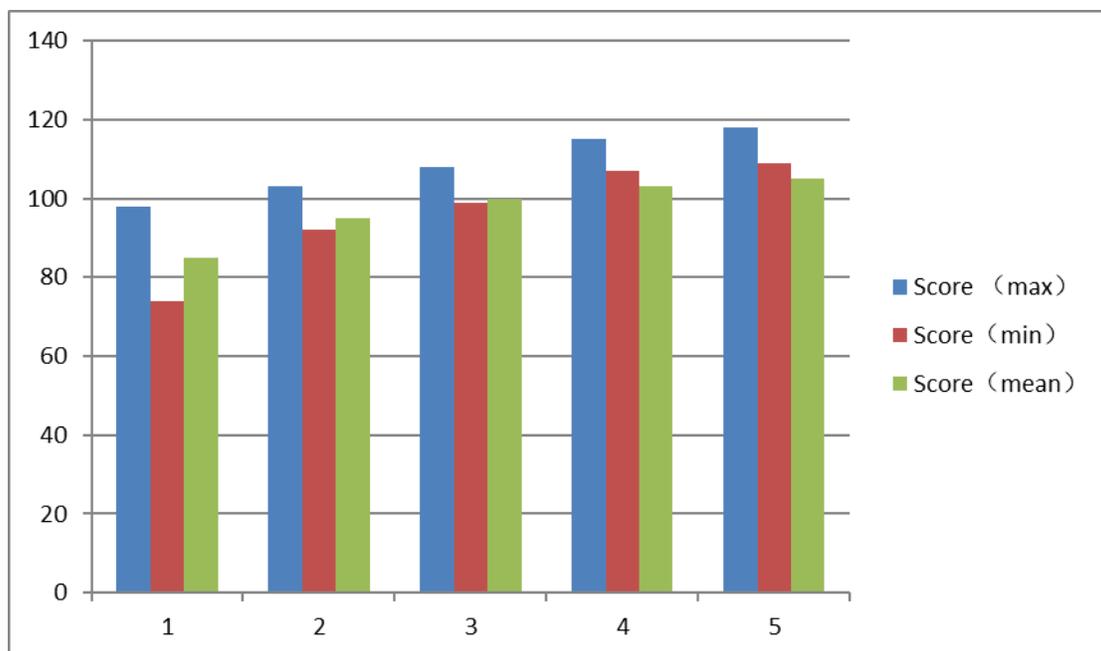


Figure 1. Changes on the Scores among Different Degree of English Learners' Self-efficacy

(Note: Score 1-5 represents respectively the degree of self-efficacy: poor, ordinary, medium, fine and excellent.)

According to the table 6 and table 7, it is easily found that there is a significant difference on English learners' academic performance among different degree of English learners' self-efficacy based on the p value of different scores ($P < 0.01$). Furthermore, from the figure 1, it is evident that there is a gradual increase in the scores among different degree of English learners' self-efficacy, and the general tendency of changes on English academic achievements in the final exam is identical to the general assessment of English learners' self-efficacy, that is to say, the English academic achievements for those students with higher degree of English learners' self-efficacy are naturally superior to those with lower one or those who are unaware of the existence of their own self-efficacy, be they in the maximum score, minor score or the average score, which will be called the positive correlation between English learners' self-efficacy and English academic performance.

Meanwhile, apart from the results of questionnaire, two interview questions were asked like this: what do you think of your English test scores and do you think whether they would have an impact on your English learning self-efficacy? And why do you learn English? Accordingly, two participants in the interview also expressed their views on the correlation between English learners' self-efficacy and English academic performance.

When you asked me about the English test scores, I have to say that the reason why I am determined to learn English thoroughly is that I was inspired by the score in the first English test. Because from my perspective, it is this excellent beginning of learning English that may be the aptitude in English learning. So I think I learn English mostly because I do well in English learning and the English academic achievements will have exerted positive functions on bolstering English learners' self-efficacy but these are only my personal perspectives. (Participant 5)

As to the English test scores, I am always worried about it and I am frightened to see the test scores because I was defeated by the several terrible test scores and from then on, I began to be worried and annoyed about the test scores and it is my extreme diffidence that makes me stagnant in English learning. Thus, if you asked me about the impacts of English test scores on my English learning self-efficacy, I only say it will be a negative impact. As to reasons on why I have to learn English, I think I may be forced to learn English on account of the demand of national policy and employment in the future. (Participant 6)

According to the outcomes of questionnaire and interview, it is easily concluded that there is a positive relationship between English learners' self-efficacy and English academic achievement. However, what can account for this ubiquitous phenomenon? It is universally acknowledged that learners' self-efficacy will regulate their thoughts and behavior so that English learners will learn English with purpose and plans and arduously integrate plans with

practice to achieve effective English learning, through which English learners will find it simple to make great English achievements. At the same time, not all are willing to learn English for they cannot be inspired or encouraged by great scores in English tests and once they can experience the sense of happiness brought by great test scores, their self-efficacy will be indisputably enhanced, which will give them an impetus to learn English.

4.4 Some Strategies on Enhancing English Learners' Self-efficacy in Rural Middle Schools

According to the main findings of this study, some suggestions or implications on how to improve English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools under the background of rural revitalization can be accordingly induced so as to comply with the national strategic deployment and promote the construction and development of new countryside to achieve the comprehensive revitalization in rural areas.

Firstly, based on the status quo on rural English learners' self-efficacy, those students who are equipped with higher degree of self-efficacy should lay more emphasis on combinations between their own self-efficacy and English learning while those with uncertain or unavailable self-efficacy are supposed to deeply dig out the essence of English learning to strengthen their own self-efficacy in English learning.

Subsequently, in terms of the influential factors of rural English learners' self-efficacy, learners themselves have been occupying a pivotal position in enhancing their self-efficacy in English learning so that they are asked to be clear on the definition of self-efficacy and then establish appropriate learning objectives and eligible learning plans combined with personal or others' successful learning strategies or experience to bolster English learning ability so that their own self-efficacy in English learning can be improved. Then, for teachers, they should acquaint students with the definitions of self-efficacy and more importantly, they also have to endeavor to improve their own teaching self-efficacy to give correct guidance for learners' learning. Meanwhile, what they should also notice is learners' psychological states in learning English, in other words, teachers should create a relaxing and interesting situation and build a harmonious relationship with students to alleviate learners' pressure in English learning.

Besides, as to parents, what they can do is to encourage and care for their children when their capacity for knowledge reserve cannot be consistent with learners' learning. Also, when it comes to external surroundings, people from all walks of life should make joint efforts to create the environment suitable for learning English. Especially the government, it should provide accessible facilities and conditions for English learners in rural areas to be in accordance with the arrangement of rural revitalization, which can be conducive to the improvement of English learners' self-efficacy. At the same time, despite the repetitive mention of rural revitalization in national conferences in China, the effects are still less remarkable in the aspect of rural education, which demands that the government should attach great importance to educational revitalization in rural areas and some related departments should be responsible for the implementation of rural revitalization to make contributions to the enhancement of rural English learners' self-efficacy.

Finally, when it comes to the correlation between English learners' self-efficacy and their English academic achievements, there is a mutual impact on each other, that is, the degree of learners' self-efficacy affects their academic achievements and vice versa. Thus, the first and foremost thing that learners have to do is learn to make attributions correctly for the outcomes of English tests. For teachers, they must praise students who behave well in the test while they also give encouragement to those who have made progress in English tests to guide students to treat their academic achievements appropriately. For parents, they only need to support and believe in their children and even make their children feel vigorous in learning English instead of being at a loss on what they should do. As parents, they should compare children's academic achievements with their earlier stages rather than those excellent students, through which parents can show a correct way to make attributions on academic achievements for their children to boost their children's self-efficacy in learning English.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

Taking the questionnaire investigation, literature analysis and interview as research methods, 200 English learners in grade 2 of 4 different rural junior high schools as research participants, this research mainly focuses on the status quo, influential factors of English learners' self-efficacy and correlation between English learners' efficacy and their English academic achievements, through which three major findings can be easily concluded:

1) With the implementation of rural revitalization, a national policy for rural areas, the overall current situation of English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools has been improved, but there is nearly a half of English

learners who are uncertain or even lacking the self-efficacy in English learning.

2) In the context of rural revitalization, the influential factors of English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools can be classified into 5 categories including English learners themselves, such as personal successful experience, psychological states, verbal persuasion, attribution, learning plan making and personal learning ability, teachers, parents, external surroundings, such as external conditions, accessible resources and facilities, as well as national support of policies for rural education.

3) With respect to the correlation analysis, there is a positive correlation between English learners' self-efficacy and their English academic achievements.

5.2 Limitations

Although the qualitative and quantitative research methods involving questionnaire investigation, literature review and interviews are employed in this research to collect relevant data and information, there is still an array of problems hidden in this study.

To begin with, the data analysis is not comprehensive and it deserves further comparison and analysis among different categories, especially the correlation between English learners' self-efficacy and their academic achievements, which was only given a general contrast between the degree of self-efficacy and scores of certain final exam.

Then, in terms of the current situation on English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools in the context of rural revitalization, a previous circumstance about English learners' self-efficacy is not analyzed in detail so that it is ambiguous on whether rural English learners' self-efficacy has been noticeably boosted or not under the background of rural revitalization.

Finally, the number of participants in the interview on the influential factors of rural English learners' self-efficacy is so small that more related influential factors cannot be considered in the context of rural revitalization, causing insufficient arguments and lopsided conclusions.

5.3 Some Suggestions or Implications

On the basis of the limitations of this research, some related suggestions should be listed as follows.

1) Further studies should be done on data collection and analysis by virtue of various books, dissertations, or videos to analyze the data of this study thoroughly.

2) Obvious comparisons should be made between current situations and previous circumstances on this field to make every reader clearly understand their remarkable changes.

3) The number or category of interviewees such as students, teachers, and even headmasters should be increased to accommodate more possible influential factors of English learners' self-efficacy in rural middle schools in the context of rural revitalization.

References

- Dong, J., & Fu, Q. (1999). Research on the Application of Self - Efficacy Theory in Middle - Aged People's Fitness Behavior. *Shandong sports science and technology*, (1), 85-88.
- Gao, S. (1998). A Study on the Subjective Mechanism of Self-Efficacy. *Foreign education research*, 6, 1-5.
- Hammer, M., Scheiter, K., & Stürmer, K. (2021). New technology, new role of parents: How parents' beliefs and behavior affect students' digital media self-efficacy. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 116, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106642>
- Jang, K., Kim, S. H., Oh, J. Y., & Mun, J. Y. (2021). Effectiveness of self-re-learning using video recordings of advanced life support on nursing students' knowledge, self-efficacy, and skills performance. *BMC Nursing*, 1, 52-62. <https://doi.org/10.1186/S12912-021-00573-8>
- Jeffrey, G. (1990). Cognitive Modeling and Self-Efficacy: Effects on Preservice Teachers' Learning of Teaching Strategies. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(5), 15-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248719004100503>
- Kim, S. H., & Shin, H. W. (2021). Second language learners' self-efficacy and english achievement: the mediating role of integrative motivation. *English Teaching & Learning*, 45, 325-338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S42321-021-00083-5>

- Li, X. (2020). The influence of Formative Assessment on Senior One Students' self-efficacy in English reading (Master's thesis, Yunnan Normal University). Retrieved from <http://gffiy3066c973e9140a1sbk0966pcppnp6unn.fffb.suse.cwkeji.cn:999/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202101&filename=1020760699.nh>
- Liu, C., Kong, Y., & Chen, Y. (2019). The connotation, measurement and influence of scientific research self-efficacy. *Research on science and technology management*, (20), 144-149. <https://doi.org/CNKI:SUN:KJGL.0.2019-20-020>
- Liu, J, Zhang, Q., & Zeng, X. (2021). Research on the Development of City Financial Systems under the Rural Revitalization Strategy. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 5(5), 14-19. <https://doi.org/10.26689/JCER.V5I5.2139>
- Liu, P. (2016). A Study on the connotation, causes and promotion path of counselors' self-efficacy in Higher Vocational Colleges. *Heilongjiang Animal Husbandry and veterinary*, (18), 281-282. <https://doi.org/10.13881/j.cnki.hljxmsy.2016.1664>
- Luo, J. (2020). The connotation and structure of educational self efficacy in the context of positive education. *Journal of Pingxiang University*, (01), 85-90.
- Mickwitz, Å., & Suojala, M. (2020). Learner autonomy, self-regulation skills and self-efficacy beliefs – How can students' academic writing skills be supported? *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 10(2), 381-402. <https://doi.org/10.1515/CERCLES-2020-2026>.
- Polycarp O. G., Lucas, O., Othun, A., & Quinter, A. M. (2020). Gender Difference in the Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Performance in Science among Secondary School Students in Migori County, Kenya. *Education, Society and Human Studies*, 1(2), 154-170. <https://doi.org/10.22158/eshs.v1n2p154>
- Richard, C. L. V., Rebecca, H., & Jeff, M. (2021). Exploring Advocacy Self-efficacy Among K-12 STEM Teacher Leaders. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 2021(2), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10763-021-10176-Z>.
- Taylor, K. M., & Popma, J. (1990). An examination of the relationships among career decision-making self-efficacy, career salience, locus of control, and vocational indecision. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 37(1), 17-31. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(90\)90004-L](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(90)90004-L).
- Wang, C., & Zhang, Z. (2021). The influence of Normal University Students' self-efficacy on their academic achievement -- Based on the empirical investigation of four normal universities in Anhui Province. *Journal of Jiangnan University (Social Science edition)*, (02), 112-124+128. <https://doi.org/10.16387/j.cnki.42-1867/c.2021.02.011>.
- Wang, X. (2020). The influence of family socioeconomic status and academic self-efficacy on the academic performance of the offspring. (Master's Thesis, Xiangtan University). Retrieved from <http://gffiy3066c973e9140a1sq59o9f9bc056nqk.fffb.suse.cwkeji.cn:999/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202101&filename=1020408323.nh>
- Zhou, G., & Yuan, L. (1991). The Theoretical Review on Bandura's Self-efficacy. *Journal of Education Review*, (06), 64-66.
- Zhang, Y., & Chen, T. (2021). Planning and Design of New Rural Characteristic Landscape under the Background of Rural Revitalization. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, (1), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/768/1/012072>
- Zhou, Y., & Dong, Qi. (1994). A Study on the Relationship between Learning Motivation, Attribution, Self Efficacy and Students' Self-Monitoring Learning Behavior. *Psychological development and education*, (03), 30-33+15.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).