

Title: The relationship between teachers' educational styles and the perceived academic efficacy of primary school students

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Abstract:

The presented doctoral thesis examines the issue of perceived academic efficacy in relation to teachers' educational styles in the transitional period between the first and second half of primary school (equivalent to transition from primary school to secondary school). The main research aim was to test the hypothesis that teachers' educational styles influence the perceived academic efficacy of students using quantitative statistical methods. The second aim was to compare regular schools with schools using the teaching programme 'Step by Step' in both main variables and to determine the extent to which these schools differ. The research sample was comprised of fifth-grade students from both types of schools (N = 896). The data was obtained using three questionnaires: the questionnaire 'Interaction of the teacher and students' examines the teacher's educational style; questionnaires 'Myself as a learner scale' and 'Children self-efficacy scale' focus on measuring the students' perceived academic efficacy.

The results confirmed a statistically significant though weak correlation between the perceived academic efficacy of students and the educational style of their teacher. A regression analysis has shown that the perceived academic efficacy is related to the students' rating of their teacher's requirements and lenience (two important aspects of the teacher's educational style). The higher the requirements and at the same time the lower the lenience perceived by the student, relative to the class average, the higher the student's perceived academic efficacy. Apart from that, there is also a relationship between the perceived academic efficacy and the average level of the teacher's requirements: in classes where the teacher has higher requirements the students typically have a higher academic efficacy. The strongest relationship was confirmed – in line with previous research – between the perceived academic efficacy of students and their grades. A relatively strong correlation can be seen here – the better the grades, the higher the academic efficacy.

The comparison of students from regular schools and students from schools using the teaching programme 'Step by Step' showed a statistically significant but small difference between the perceived academic efficacy of both groups. On the other hand, a significant difference between both samples can be observed when comparing the relationships the students have with their teachers. The 'Step by Step' students rate their relationship with their teachers more positively than students from regular schools. There is almost no difference between the groups' ratings of the teachers' requirements, freedom, incompetence and lenience.

Key words: perceived academic efficacy, parenting styles, teacher educational style, alternative schools, transitional period.