

The logo for Studiosity, featuring the word "Studiosity" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A yellow brushstroke underline is positioned under the letter 'i', ending in a small black dot.

Studiosity

Evaluating the Impact of Online Tutoring (YourTutor)

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In August 2017, *YourTutor* changed to a more inclusive name for educators, students, and administrators: *Studiosity*. Our service, people, and high standards remain exactly the same.



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Overview

This study focused on capturing students’ experiences with the online tutoring service, YourTutor, and their perceived academic capabilities (self-efficacy) and academic performance (grade).

Results found that students’ experiences with YourTutor, in terms of the perceived usefulness of the service, positively predicted academic confidence. In turn, academic confidence positively predicted students’ grades with the model accounting for 20% of the variance in students’ self-reported grades. (Figure 1).

Notably, the perceived usefulness of YourTutor can have a positive effect on student grades, via its positive relationship with academic confidence.

Implications of the study include the evidence that YourTutor can be considered a valuable instructional aid for improving students’ academic confidence which, in

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turn, can contribute to improvements in student grades.

A theoretically informed model, incorporating variables from the technology acceptance literature, *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use*, a variable from educational psychology, self-efficacy, and students' self-reported grades was developed and tested in this study.

Data were collected through an online survey that was completed by 506 undergraduate students from a university located in Sydney, Australia. Data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling.

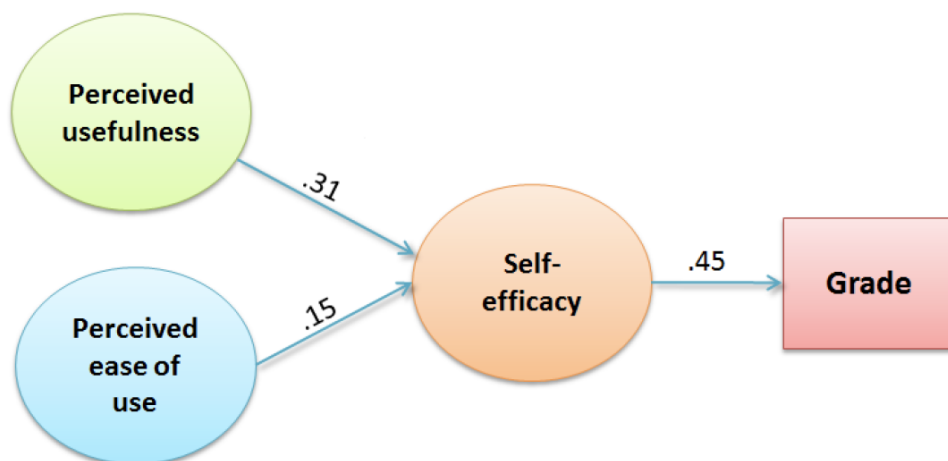


Figure 1. Structural model of hypothesized relationships

“The more self-efficacious students were in their academic skills, the higher the academic grade the students were likely to report in the unit of study (subject) for which they had used the YourTutor service.”

Findings

1. **Perceived Usefulness of YourTutor had a direct positive relationship with Academic Self-Efficacy.** The higher the students rated the perceived usefulness of YourTutor as reflected in assignment structuring, completion, and understanding, the more confidence students were likely to have in their academic capabilities.
2. **Perceived Ease of Use of YourTutor predicted Academic Self-Efficacy.** The easier students found using YourTutor, the more likely they were to have confidence in their academic capabilities.
3. **Academic self-efficacy predicted students self-reported grades.** The more self-efficacious students were in their academic skills, the higher the academic grade the students were likely to report in the unit of study (subject) for which they had used the YourTutor service.

Implications

EduTech services must consistently work with and support universities to provide evidence of outcomes to ensure services are aligned with academics and support staff to support entire cohorts of diverse students, holistically.

The direct, positive relationship between the perceived usefulness of the YourTutor service and academic self-efficacy is important. Our analysis suggests that this online tutoring service is an important instructional aid for

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improving students’ academic confidence which in turn, can contribute to improvements in academic achievement.

It is also worthwhile to note that the online tutoring system requires little effort to use. Specifically, the positive relationship between effective user-experience and academic confidence has implications for a wider context and for further research. In general, most higher education students must now complete some or all of their studies online. Universities around the globe are seeking to provide students with anywhere, anytime access to educational support. Online tutoring services are likely to be critical in helping universities achieve such goals, which ultimately contribute to the development of students’ academic and future workforce skills (e.g. writing and communication skills).

Another implication of the study points to the need for long-term scaffolding, including integration with University data, to support the overall learning experience of each student.

As the key variables in this study are dynamic, it is important for future research to utilise longitudinal designs which involve the collection of data at various time intervals. Indeed, we know that self-efficacy beliefs are not static, but vary over time, so longitudinal designs are more likely to capture the changing nature of self-efficacy.

Finally, future research should also focus on collecting data from tertiary students from additional universities in order to increase the generalizability of the findings.