



Commitment to Philosophy and Job Self Efficacy

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INTRODUCTION

- ◆ The field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is rapidly growing due to the rapid increase in the number of children diagnosed with autism.
 - As a direct result directors of behavioral agencies report that the demand for behavior analysts far exceeds the number of persons with the expertise required to provide effective ABA treatment.
 - Very little data has been collected on employees who work within the field of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- ◆ Are these behavior therapists:
 - Adhering to, or do they truly understand the underlining philosophy of ABA that are being implemented?
 - Feeling efficacious? Self-efficacy is a “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997)
- ◆ Results of a study conducted by Jennette, Harris, & Mesibov (2003) indicated that teacher’s self-reported level of commitment to philosophy score was positively correlated with their self-reported sense of personal efficacy.

Purpose of this Study

- ◆ We hypothesized that those who adhere most closely with the philosophies of ABA would show higher levels of job self-efficacy.

METHOD

Participants

- ◆ Employees, working in the Southern California region as behavior therapists providing behavior therapy to children with autism.
 - Participants consisted of 32 women and 4 men from 12 different behavioral agencies . Mean age was 26.97 years (SD= 5.75). Only 23 participants completed both scales (13 of which were supervisors).
 - All participants were volunteers who agreed to partake in this anonymous study.

Measures

- ◆ The Adherence to Philosophy scale was developed by our research team specifically for this study. The measure was based on myths of ABA and behaviorism, non-evidence based therapies, and the canons of science.

Examples:

“Although some behaviors appear to happen out of nowhere, every behavior happens for a reason.”

“While behavioral principles are very effective in changing maladaptive behaviors and teaching new skills, to deal with thoughts and emotions we need more eclectic approaches.”

- ◆ A 22-item Teacher Efficacy Scale (Hoy & Woolfolk, 2001). (Scale was reworded to apply specifically to behavior therapists)

Examples:

“When I really try, I can get through to most difficult clients.”

“If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.”

- ◆ All responses were rated on a six-point Likert-type scale: 1 = “Strongly Agree” to 6 = “Strongly Disagree”

Procedure

- ◆ Employees working at behavioral agencies were contacted via e-mail or phone to inform them about this study and invite them to take part via our IRB approved flier.

- ◆ Participants received one of three versions of the survey on SurveyMonkey.com which were counterbalanced to control for carry over effects.

- ◆ All versions of the survey began with an information cover page.

- ◆ This study was part of a larger research project.

RESULTS

- ◆ Results indicated that the higher an individual adheres to the philosophical tenets of ABA the higher their level of job self efficacy.

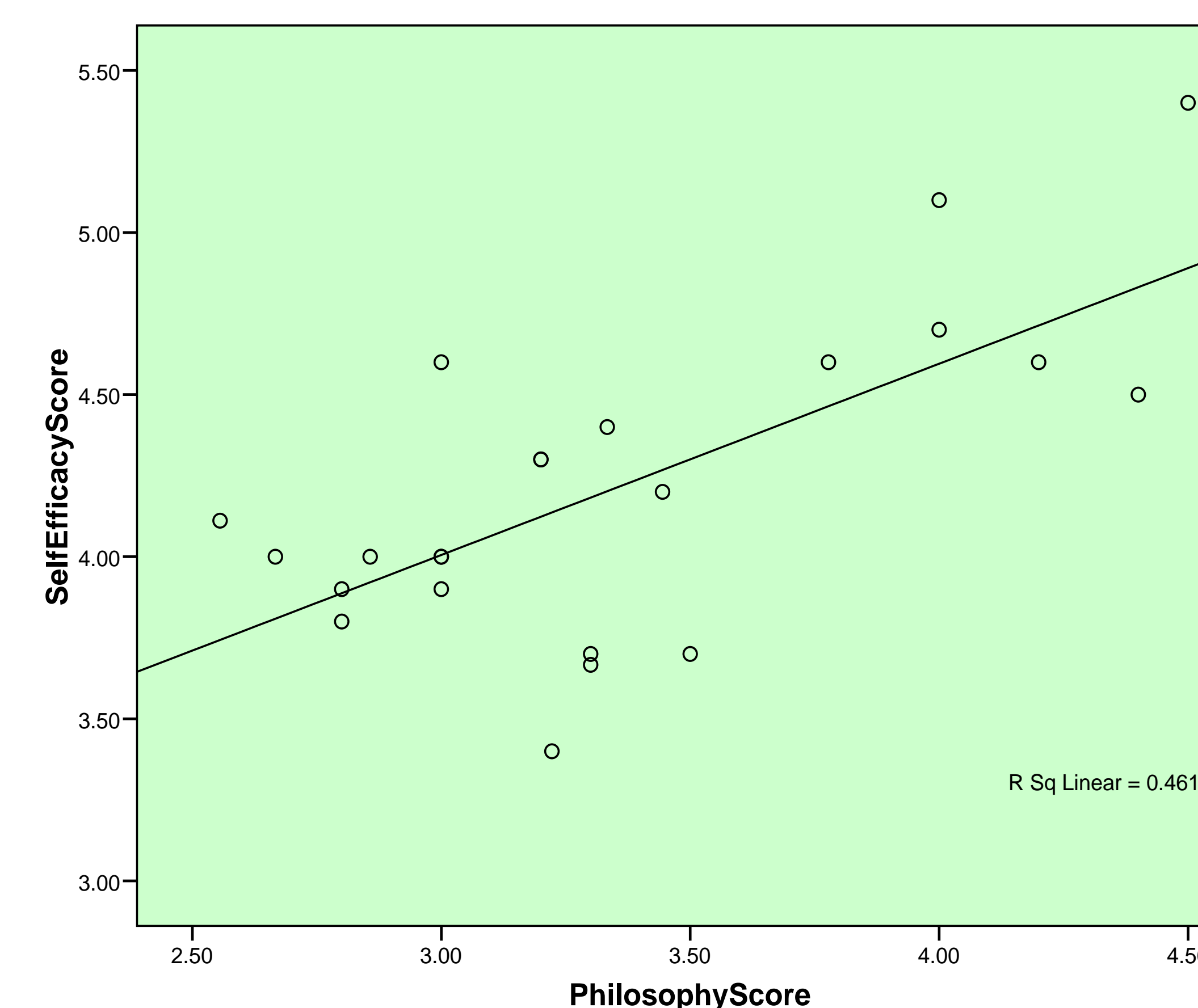
- ◆ Overall mean score for job self-efficacy, (M = 4.21, SD = .47)

- ◆ Overall mean score for adherence to philosophy, (M = 3.35, SD = .55).

Correlations

		SelfEfficacy Score	Philosophy Score
SelfEfficacyScore	Pearson Correlation	1	.679**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	24	23
PhilosophyScore	Pearson Correlation	.679**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	23	23

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



Have you ever worked for a behavioral agency offering therapy for children with autism?



We need to know about Your experiences!

Dr. Kazemi from the Psychology Department at California State University, Northridge is conducting research to better understand the needs of individuals employed in the field of behavior therapy

To participate online and **anonymously**, go to:
www.csun.edu/~klab/btsstudy.html

This IRB approved research study should only take you about 45 minutes to complete.

Contact Diane if you have questions at btsstudy@gmail.com

DISCUSSIONS

- ◆ Our results show that therapists with greater adherence to the philosophies and techniques underlying ABA have a greater sense of job self-efficacy.
- ◆ Results imply that understanding and adhering to a philosophical orientation correlates with greater feelings of efficacy as a therapist.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- ◆ All of the limitations inherent of self-report.
- ◆ Future research should include direct observation.
- ◆ Future studies should offer greater incentives for survey completion.
- ◆ There was a long length of time required to complete the survey.
- ◆ There were strengths and weaknesses due to the anonymous nature of the study.
- ◆ Due to IRB guidelines, respondents were given the choice not to answer individual questions. As a result, many people did not fully complete all parts of the survey.
- ◆ Future research should establish the validity and reliability of our Adherence to Philosophy Scale.

REFERENCES

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- Jennett, H., Harris, S. & Mesibov, G. (2003). Commitment to Philosophy, Teacher Efficacy, and Burnout Among Teachers of Children with Autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 33(6). 583-593.

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