The Dynamic Change of Self-Efficacy in Information Searching on the Internet: Influence of Valence of Experience and Prior Self-Efficacy

ABSTRACT.

The authors investigated the dynamic change of specific self-efficacy in information searching on the Internet. In Study 1, the valence of experience was manipulated by task difficulty to obtain the developmental curve of self-efficacy change in consecutive information-searching trials. The results indicated that positive task experiences in information searching elicited a linear increase in self-efficacy. In contrast, negative task experiences elicited a more rapid decrease in self-efficacy. Self-efficacy of participants decreased to a lower level after the first negative experience and displayed a quadratic trend toward a floor effect. In Study 2, the authors examined the moderating effect of initial self-efficacy on the valence of experience. The enhancement effect of positive task experience on self-efficacy was more pronounced for individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy, whereas the deteriorating effect of negative experience was more prominent for individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy.

Keywords: information searching, Internet, self-efficacy, valence of experience