Positive outcome expectations. Another key personal factor identified in social cognitive

theory is people’s expectation of consequences from their own behaviour

Personal factors: self-efficacy and outcome expectations

In social cognitive theory personal factors can refer to cognitive, affective or biological

properties that can affect an individual’s perceptions and actions (Bandura, 2001).

In particular researchers utilising social cognitive theory have focused on cognitive

functioning in the knowledge sharing literature. Among personal factors, two key

concepts have received prominent attention in social cognitive theory: self-efficacy and

expected outcome.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to

organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of

performances. It is not concerned with the skills one has, but with judgments of what

one can do with whatever skills one possesses” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Bandura (1997)

postulated that perceived self-efficacy influences individuals’ decisions about what

behaviours to undertake, the degree of effort they will exert in pursuit of adopted goals,

and the level of behavioural goals they set for themselves. The stronger the perceived

self-efficacy, the greater and the more persistent are individual efforts to perform the

activity. Two types of self-efficacy have been commonly tested in the knowledge