

Influence of Gender, Professional Qualification and Job Experience on Secondary School Teachers' Self-Efficacy

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The present descriptive study aimed to explore influence of gender, professional education and experience on self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school teachers. Teachers' Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale was adapted and distributed among 2400 randomly selected secondary school teachers in province Punjab. Response rate was 53%. Selected demographic groups were compared for significant differences by t-test, ANOVA and Post hoc Games Howell tests. It was concluded that gender had not significantly influenced teachers' self-efficacy while experienced and teachers having bachelor degree were more self-efficacious than those having less experience and having higher professional qualification. The findings of the study suggest that future research should look more into the reasons behind poor performance of teachers rather than gender and experience. Further, it should be probed why higher professional qualification does not increase self-efficacy.

Keywords: teachers' self-efficacy, general teacher efficacy, personal teacher efficacy, secondary education

Quality education system of Pakistan has been investigated and discussed for fostering its economy and growth. Since last two decades, almost fifty percent research in universities and other research institutes has been conducted to explore and analyze the factors and causes of low standard education in the country. Lack of infra-structure, resources, funds, curriculum, lack of teachers and poor performance of existing teachers along with political, social and economic situation and terrorism have been reported as influential factors. Memon (2007) reported a declining trend in quality of secondary and primary education and opined that without teachers' transformation we cannot transform the education system for improving the quality of education. Teachers are feasibly the dire element of any system of education.

Teachers' self-perception plays a pivotal role in their effective teaching. Henson (2001) explained that students outcomes and effective learning were consistently related to teachers efficacy and positive teaching behavior. Being extensively involved in teaching experiences and practicing principals of educational theories, teachers' beliefs and perceptions are important to be elicited and recorded (Jia, Eslami & Burlbaw, 2006).

Being human, teachers' perceptions are strongly influenced by environment and other demographical variables. Many research studies have been conducted to explore the impact of gender, age, academic qualification, professional training, experience, competencies etc. on self-efficacy (Wang'eri & Otanga, 2014; Khurshid, Qasmi & Ashraf 2012). The present study was designed

to investigate the differences of gender, professional qualification and experiences in self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school teachers.

The construct of self-efficacy has emerged from Bandura's social cognitive theory. It observes the human aptitude to keep control over the nature and quality of one's life (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (1997) enlisted four sources which influence people's self-efficacy beliefs. He called them; (1) mastery experience (2) vicarious experience (3) verbal or social persuasion and (4) physiological arousal or emotional state. Mastery experiences are most important as they enhance one's self-efficacy, while their absence may hinder its development. The second most influential source identified by Bandura (1997) was vicarious experience. Hoy (2000) considered vicarious experiences at number one in developing and strengthening self-efficacy beliefs. He opined that social persuasion is the second most influential source.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2006) said that "Teachers' self-efficacy is a little idea with a big impact" (p. 337). Teachers with strong efficacy judgements, make harder efforts, work for longer periods and steer their students in the direction of valuable and advantageous horizons of learning. On the other hand, teachers possessing weak efficacy perceptions about their capabilities are unable to perform their instructive and scholastic work efficiently and are likely to lose heart while dealing with slow learners and in the face of the difficulties (Lewandowski, 2005; Wertheim & Leyser, 2002). Self-efficacy is an important aspect of a teacher's beliefs that inspires him to work harder, persevere longer and influence students' learning and success, which accelerate and increase the usefulness of their work performance (Muji & Reynolds, 2001).

Efficacious teachers are more patient towards students' incorrect answers and less critical for struggling students showing consistent and patronizing behavior (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers having high efficacy are determined to use different methodologies, take risks for certain initiatives and strive for improvements during teaching learning experience (Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). Coladarci (1992) found stronger professional dedication among inservice efficacious teachers. However, Evans and Tribble (1986) observed the same characteristics in preservice teachers also. Teachers having high self-efficacy lead students towards effective and advantageous learning, while teachers having low self-efficacy are likely to leave students in trouble (Lewandowski, 2005; Wertheim & Leyser, 2002). In the recent past, several studies like Muji and Reynolds (2010), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) and Ross (2001) established a positive relationship among teachers' sense of efficacy, their instructional success and student achievement.

Demographic variables had a significant impact on employees' performance. It is supported by Popoola and Oluwole (2007) who reported a significant correlation between biographical variables and career commitment. Some of the researches (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Egger, 2006; Gur, Cakiroglu & Aydin, 2012) observed no significant predictability of teachers' efficacy on the basis of gender, teaching experience and faculty support. Several researches have ignored the demographic information when analyzing differences of self-efficacy among teachers. For example, Ross, Cousins and Gadalla (1996) have not included their data about teachers' years of experiences, gender or subject area during process of analysis. However, Kurz (2001) cited in Capa (2005) observed personal efficacy differences on the basis of gender.

This makes it difficult to identify the role of such variables in personal teacher efficacy. The present study presents self-efficacy and demographic variables gender, experience and qualification as a way of understanding the behavior of teachers. On the basis of above mentioned background,

there is a need for empirical research to investigate the impact of gender, qualification and experience on self-efficacy.

Secondary school education is a terminal point for a majority of the students in Pakistan, but the hard reality cannot be ignored that the performance level of the high school students is not satisfactory and in line with the societal needs. Therefore, it is very important to provide the learners awareness, skill and self-confidence that may prepare them for a prosperous life. It is appropriate for the education system to accommodate social desires and produce successful, enthusiastic and motivated folks. It cannot be imagined without efficient, determined, enthusiastic and professionally competent teachers who are conveying and transferring knowledge.

Teachers' activities in the school and classroom depend on their efficacy judgements. Teachers with high self-efficacy feel that they can instill knowledge in the apathetic and lazy students by providing them additional support and by using a variety of effective teaching strategies such as group discussions. They not only depend on their own competencies but they have the ability to involve parents for handling the bad influences by the society through their influential and effective instruction. Contrary to them, the teachers with low self-efficacy are not confident about their abilities and assume that they cannot perform well if the students are not self-motivated and in condition when the inspiration by teachers on students' achievement and performance is badly affected by adverse impact of societal atmosphere (Bandura, 1997).

There are two types of teachers' efficacy. General teacher efficacy and Personal teacher efficacy. General teacher efficacy is referred to the belief of a teacher regarding environmental elements of home and family which influence students' learning along with the teachers for developing the desired changes in students' achievements, while personal teacher's efficacy is the teacher's perception about his/her own competence to bring about the desired change in students' behavior, achievement and learning.

Caprara (2006) and earlier Judge, Thoresen, Bono and Patton (2001) reported Self-efficacy as a workplace attitude like job satisfaction, motivation, and stress etc. which are directly linked with performance. Further, it contributes to students' achievement and teachers' professional commitment. Unfortunately, there is little research about how gender, professional education and experience do influence it. In Pakistan, quality education at every level has become a burning issue. All stakeholders, the policy makers, educationists, parents and others are showing deep anxieties about the current state of education. There are many factors that lie behind it. Teachers' poor performance is one of them. Student performance is the direct output of the teacher's performance. The highest level of success is only possible when teachers are highly motivated, determined, capable and self-efficacious. Gender, professional education and experience are variables which have been investigated for their powerful influence on workplace attitudes.

Research objectives

There is a dire need to give due consideration and importance to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs if we want to uplift our education. Little consideration and few resources are declining teachers' motivation and efficacy level which in turn leads to their poor performance. Therefore, the present study was planned to explore secondary school teachers' self-efficacy level and effects of demographic characteristics: gender, professional qualification and experience on it.

Following were the objectives of the study.

- To determine the self-efficacy level of secondary school teachers in Punjab.
- To investigate self-efficacy differences of secondary school teachers based on gender, professional education and experience.

Hypotheses

- Secondary school teachers are self-efficacious at a significant level
- Male teachers have higher Personal self-efficacy than female teachers
- Male teachers have higher general self-efficacy than female teachers
- Male teachers are more self-efficacious than female teachers
- Experienced teachers are more self-efficacious than teachers with less job experience
- Teachers with high professional qualification (MEd) are more self-efficacious than those having low professional qualification (BEd).

Method

For conducting this quantitative study, survey technique was used. Population of the study consisted of all the secondary school teachers employed in public schools of Punjab. Random sampling technique was used for the sample selection at three stages. At first stage, eight districts were randomly selected from 36 districts of Punjab. Then five high schools of boys and five girls' high schools from each district were selected. On the third stage, 30 teachers from each school were selected at random. The sample consisted of 2400 teachers. Questionnaires were distributed among 150 males and 150 female secondary school teachers of each district. The response rate was 53%. Among them 675 were male and 608 were female, 361 had the Master degree in education (MEd) and 921 had the Bachelor degree. Regarding experience, 175 participants had experience between 5-10 years, 188 had experience between 11-20 years, 460 had experience between 21-30 years while 34 participants had experience of more than 30 years.

Measures

For conducting research, Teachers' Perceived Self- Efficacy Scale (TPSES) was adapted and modified. Originally, it was developed by Woolfolk and Hoy (1993) for their own research purpose. Their Efficacy scale had two subscales as General Teaching Efficacy Subscale (GTE) and Personal Teaching Efficacy Subscale (PTE). Keeping in mind the local context, three statements were reduced and the modified instrument was administered to 50 prospective teachers at the Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab and the Institute of Education, Lahore College for Women University for pilot testing. Among them 50% were male and 50% were females. The coefficient alpha reliabilities for personal, teaching efficacy was .76 and general teaching efficacy was .69 which was closely related to the reliabilities calculated by Hoy and Woolfolk in 1993. The experts in the area of test and measurement verified face and content validity. On the basis of data analysis, the instrument was modified a little in terms of language use making it more comprehensible for teachers.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to all teachers by mail. At certain places the researcher went herself to collect data. Few people were requested to help in data collection from their respective areas also. To increase the response rate reminders were sent. Furthermore, teachers in sample were contacted through telephone too. The response rate was about 53%.

Data analysis

Simple descriptive statistics were used to calculate mean and standard deviation of variables. The t-test was applied to measure the difference between self-efficacy beliefs of male and female teachers and the difference between self-efficacy beliefs of teachers having masters degree and those who have bachelor degree in education. In exploratory research, all possible combinations of groups would be tested to determine where the significant differences are located. For this purpose, Post-hoc Testing is used. In present exploratory study, unequal variance was found due to unequal size of groups. ANOVA and Games Howell post hoc test at $p < .05$ were applied to locate significant differences for experience variable.

Table No. 2 presents a comparison of Personal teacher efficacy, General teachers efficacy and overall teachers' efficacy of male and female teachers. Table No. 3 and 4 report self-efficacy differences of teachers in terms of professional education and experience. (Annexed)

Results

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of sample (N=1283)

No	Variables	N	
1	Gender	Male	675
		Female	608
2	Professional Qualification	Med	361
		Bed	921
3	Experience	5-10	175
		11-20	188
		21-30	460
		More than 30 Years	

Gender

Variances were assumed heterogeneous for comparing the efficacy scores for male and female teachers for the variables (i.e. GTE, PTE & TE) on the basis of significant "Levene's Test for Equality of Variances". Assumption of homogeneity of variances were verified and then appropriate approach was used to calculate the significance through t-test.

Secondary school teachers reported an insignificant difference in overall self-efficacy, personal self-efficacy and general self-efficacy scores as

- The 674 males ($M = 4.560$, $SD = .8430$) received higher scores on TE scale than 606 females ($M = 4.517$, $SD = 26.92$) but the difference was insignificant in total score on TE scale ($t [1157] = .791$, $p \geq .05$).
- Male teachers received comparatively higher scores in general teacher efficacy (GTE) & personal teacher efficacy (PTE) scores but these differences were also insignificant.

Thus, all of the hypotheses were rejected except the first one because all the teachers had a significant level of self-efficacy.

Table 2*Comparisons of Secondary School Teachers Self- Efficacy by Gender*

Efficacy	Male			Female			Independent sample t-test		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	df	t	P
GTE	675	4.475	.9947	608	4.402	1.1849	1190	1.188	.235
PTE	674	4.642	.9586	606	4.630	1.1626	1176	.197	.844
TE	674	4.560	.8430	606	4.517	1.0549	1157	.791	.429

* Significant at $p < .05$

Professional education

Nine hundred and twenty secondary school teachers having bachelor degree in education (BEd) and three hundred and sixty-three master's in education demonstrated a significant difference in total efficacy (TE) sores ($t [540] = 2.419, p < .05$); as teachers with BEd as professional education received higher efficacy scores. A significant difference ($p < .05$) in general teacher efficacy (GTE) and, personal teacher efficacy (PTE) scores for professional education of teachers were also reported, as BEd teachers received higher scores. All the significant variables i.e. GTE, PTE & TE Scores had small effect size (i.e. $d < 0.3$). However, none of the variables was significantly different for professional education with medium effect size (i.e. $d = 0.3-0.6$) or large effect size (i.e. $d \geq 0.6$). The hypothesis was rejected which stated that high qualified teachers are more self-efficacious than less qualified.

Table 3*Comparison of Secondary School Teachers on TPSES by Professional Education*

Efficacy	BEd			MEd			Independent sample t-test				
	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	df	T	p	d ^a	Difference
GTE	92	4.48	1.031	36	4.32	1.221	57	2.24	.025	0.1	
	0	9	6	3	2	5	1	5	*	4	B > M
PTE	91	4.68		36	4.52	1.242	54	2.11	.034	0.1	
	7	0	.9771	2	1	9	0	9	*	4	B > M
TE	91	4.58		36	4.42	1.117	54	2.41	.016	0.1	
	7	0	.8719	2	2	9	0	9	*	6	B > M

* significant at $p < .05$

^a Cohen's d is calculated by using means & standard deviations of two groups

Experience

One hundred and seventy five (175) SSTs having experience less than 5 years had an average total efficacy (EF) score of 4.259 ($SD = 1.199$); 188 teachers have experience 5-10 years and had an average total efficacy (EF) score of 4.009 ($SD = 1.315$); 460 teachers have experience 11-20 years and had an average total efficacy (EF) score of 4.659 ($SD = 0.769$); 420 teachers have experience in service 21-30 years and had an average total efficacy (EF) score of 4.719 ($SD = 0.659$), and 34 teachers have experience >30 years and had an average total efficacy (EF) score of 4.952 ($SD = 0.614$). The effect of experience, therefore, was significant, $F (4, 1272) = 28.749, p > .05$. There

was also a significant difference in general teacher efficacy (GTE) and personal teacher efficacy (PTE) scores for experience in service at $p < .05$ as shown in table 4.

Post hoc Games Howell test shows that teachers who have least experience had significantly least scores in GTE, PTE & TE as compared to most experienced teachers. Where, all the significant variables i.e. GTE (0.072), PTE (0.060) & TE (0.079) had medium effect size (i.e. $\eta^2 \approx 0.058$), while none of the variables had small effect size (i.e. $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$) or large effect size (i.e. $\eta^2 \approx 0.138$) for experience as guided by Cohen (1988). The hypothesis "Experienced teachers are more self-efficacious than teachers with less job experience" is accepted.

Table 4

Comparison of Secondary School Teachers on TPSES by Experience

Efficacy	Service	Descriptive				ANOVA			
		<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	df	F	p	η^a	Difference
GTE	< 5yrs	175	4.121	1.294					< 5yrs
	5 - 10 yrs	188	3.863	1.420					5 - 10 yrs
	11- 20 yrs	460	4.590	0.930	4.1272	25.118	.000*	0.072	11 - 20 yrs
	21 - 30 yrs	420	4.623	0.855					21 - 30 yrs
	> 30 yrs	34	4.843	0.777					> 30 yrs
PTE	< 5yrs	175	4.400	1.323					< 5yrs
	5 - 10 yrs	188	4.131	1.389					5 - 10 yrs
	11- 20 yrs	460	4.725	0.903	4.1271	19.860	.000*	0.060	11 - 20 yrs
	21 - 30 yrs	420	4.810	0.819					21 - 30 yrs
	> 30 yrs	34	5.065	0.719					> 30 yrs
TE	< 5yrs	175	4.259	1.199					< 5 yrs
	5 - 10 yrs	188	4.009	1.315					5 - 10 yrs
	11- 20 yrs	460	4.659	0.769	4.1272	28.749	.000*	0.079	11 - 20 yrs
	21 - 30 yrs	420	4.719	0.659					21 - 30 yrs
	> 30 yrs	34	4.952	0.614					> 30 yrs

* significant at $p < .05$

† Games Howell post hoc test at $p < .05$

Discussion

No significant influence of gender was reported on self-efficacy of secondary school teachers, although insignificant difference was found between them. There are less researches in the area and further, these studies reported contrasting results.

Contrary to the previous researches like Khurshid, Qasmi & Ashraf (2012) and Andersen (2011) who observed that female secondary teachers were more self-efficacious than their male colleagues, the present research declares insignificant difference in the male and female secondary school teachers' personal efficacy. The existing research also contradicted with Anderson, Greene & Lowen (1988), Ross (1996), Evans & Tribble (1986) and Raudenbuh et al. (1992) who found that female teachers had stronger self-efficacy than male teachers. They presented the logic that teaching is regarded a female profession. However, there are studies like Lee (1991) which found no gender differences in self-efficacy of male and female teachers. The present study also shows dissimilar results with Klassen and Chiu (2010) who found male teachers more efficacious in classroom management but similar with their findings about no differences in using instructional methodology and student engagement.

In a research study conducted by Karimvand (2011) higher self-efficacy of female teachers was reported which is not in line with the results of the present study. Imants and De Brabander (1996) reported that male elementary teachers seemed to have higher self-efficacy for pupil-oriented and school-oriented tasks than female teachers, while Cheung (2006) found that female teachers have significantly more general efficacy than male teachers. There are a few other studies like those conducted by Ghaith and Shaaban (1999), Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2002) and Wilson (2004) which showed that teachers self-efficacy does not depend on gender. One reason may be that their research contexts, level of conducting research, education systems and social status of teachers were different. Pakistani society is generally considered gender biased as compared to theirs. Teachers' self-efficacy as reported by Raudenbush, Rowan, and Cheong (1992) is contextually situated and it varies from lower to higher grade.

The present study reported that more experienced teachers were more self-efficacious. These results are supported by Khurshid, Qasmi, and Ashraf (2012). Soodak and Poodell's (1997) conclusions were also in line, but at elementary level. They found that teaching experience gradually enhances the personal efficacy of elementary school teachers, but it had not influenced the secondary school teachers. Lin and Tsai (1999)'s findings were also in agreement that self-efficacy level of expert and experienced teachers were high as compared to novice teachers. A positive correlation between both variables, years of experience and personal teaching efficacy was reported by Liu too in 2007. In another study Wolters and Daugherty (2007) found the same results. Contrary to them, there are studies which have presented contradicting results. Like Woolfolk (1990) and Weinstein (1988) reported higher self-efficacy level of novice teachers than experienced teachers. Similarly, Soodak and Podell (1997) reconnoitered that experienced secondary school teachers had not been influenced by years of experience. Before them Gorrell and Dharmadasa (1994) also reported mixed results, while Guskey (1987) and Whittington, McConnell, and Knobloch (2006) found no significant correlation between both variables. Whittington, McConnell, and Knobloch (2006) found no differences in teacher self-efficacy based on the participants' years of teaching experience. Professional qualification wise analysis shows that B.Ed teachers rate themselves higher on self-efficacy scale as compared to M.Ed teachers which is supported by Wolf (2008) who reported slightly higher self-efficacy level of teachers with BS degree than teachers with MS degree. The present

finding conflicts with already conducted research by Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie, (1987) who observed that higher education levels increased teacher self-efficacy. Similarly, Khurshid, Qasmi, and Ashraf (2012) opined that higher education enhances self-efficacy of teachers. The researchers speculated that teachers with a higher education degree may be less idealistic about their professional competencies or their self-efficacy may be negatively influenced by higher academic qualification. They may have been overburdened which led to decline in their self-efficacy beliefs. However, the conditions under which they got their higher education and other demographic characteristics were not investigated; these results should be authenticated by future research studies.

Challenges /Limitations of the Study

The teachers' self-efficacy and its relationship with demographic characteristics have been richly studied throughout the world, but in Pakistani context the variables have not been investigated so far. The findings of the present study could only be compared with the researches conducted in other contexts. The research was limited to teachers' self- perceptions regarding their self-efficacy beliefs.

Teachers' self-efficacy directly influences the teachers' performance and students' learning and the whole education system. Many internal and external elements of the educational system influence the teacher's efficacy beliefs. Gender difference has been considered as an important research variable, but the present study reported that gender difference does not significantly contribute to teachers self-efficacy. The policy makers, educationists, school administration and researchers should concentrate on other biometrics like qualification, experience, age, marital family background, status, motivation level and competencies instead of the gender difference. There is a great hue and cry for declining standards of education in Pakistan but little consideration is given to uplift the teachers' self-efficacy level. In fact, there is no effort to enhance teacher's self- efficacy which may become a reason for continuously declining teachers' motivation and efficacy.

Implications

The study will give the stakeholders i.e., principals, administrators, educational policy makers, teacher educators, teachers themselves and other practitioners, an awareness about the importance of teachers' efficacy beliefs and its link to gender, professional qualification and experience. The study will provide knowledge about the levels of the self-efficacy beliefs of the secondary school teachers in public high schools of the Punjab. The study will prove helpful for teachers in assessing the level of their efficacy beliefs and will propose ways for improving the level of their efficacy. The study will be beneficial in designing the strategies to increase the self-efficacy level of the school teachers, particularly, secondary school teachers. The principal advantage of the study will be to make high school students' learning and achievement through reinforcing the efficacy beliefs and the professional growth of the teachers. The benefits of the study may include greater teacher motivation and high morale through enhancing the efficacy level of the teachers, which in turn will improve students' achievement, and then effectiveness of the whole education system.

Conclusion

Teachers' self-efficacy cast a big impact on teachers' performance and students' achievements, but there is no clear picture related to the influence of their gender, professional education and experience on it. The present study reports that there is no significant difference between self-efficacy of male and female secondary school teachers, but professional qualification and experience are reported to have significant influence on it.

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