

## An Analytical Examination of Self-Efficacy Among Teachers at The Elementary School Level

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### Abstract

The present research aims for a comparative study of Self Efficacy among Rural and Urban elementary school teachers. In the present study, a sample of 302 rural and urban elementary teachers of Mansa district, Punjab has been collected during the academic year of 2022-23. Data regarding the Self Efficacy of elementary teachers were collected through simple random sampling technique through survey method. The tool used for the present study was Teacher Self Efficacy scale developed by Sushma Talesara and Fazana Irfan (2018). The reliability of the test was determined by test-Retest Method. The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.78. The separate variance model of t-test was used for testing the hypotheses for the significance of mean difference in the Self Efficacy scores of various groups of locality was compared. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference of self-efficacy among Gender belonging to different locality. There is no significant difference of self-efficacy of Male and Female elementary teachers belonging to rural and urban schools.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, Elementary, Teacher capabilities, Perception, Self-assessment

### INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy, a pivotal term in the realm of psychology, is a concept that pertains to an individual's belief in their own competence and capabilities. This profound notion has been defined as the conviction that one possesses the ability to perform in a specific manner in order to achieve a particular set of objectives (Bandura, 1977). This sense of self-efficacy is profoundly intertwined with our interactions within the social sphere, influencing our behavior and actions across various contexts (Pajares F, 1977).

In the pursuit of enhancing positive psychology and fostering personal growth, the cultivation of self-efficacy assumes paramount significance. By nurturing and reinforcing one's belief in their capabilities, individuals can potentially unlock pathways to a more fulfilling and contented life (Maddux, 2009). Recognizing the multifaceted impact of self-efficacy, scholars and practitioners alike are driven to uncover strategies and approaches that facilitate its development.

The conceptual foundation of self-efficacy finds its core in the pioneering work of psychologist Albert Bandura, whose influential social cognitive theory casts light on the intricate interplay between cognition, behavior, and the environment (Bandura, 1986). This theory underscores the pivotal role of observational learning, social experiences, and the concept of reciprocal determinism in the formation and evolution of one's personality. Bandura's comprehensive model posits that an individual's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills collectively constitute what is referred to as the self-system, an internal framework that profoundly shapes our perceptions of diverse situations and governs our subsequent actions (Bandura, 1995).

At the heart of this intricate self-system lies the indispensable construct of self-efficacy. It serves as a linchpin, influencing how we interpret and respond to a myriad of circumstances (Wood, 1989). By

imbuing individuals with the belief that they possess the requisite competence to navigate challenges and achieve their goals, self-efficacy ultimately equips them with the psychological tools necessary to overcome obstacles, persevere through difficulties, and actualize their potential (Luszczynska, 2005).

## **TEACHERS SELF-EFFICACY**

Self-efficacy stands as a cornerstone within the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, a perspective that underscores the development and exercise of human agency—a notion emphasizing the belief that individuals possess the capacity to exert influence over their actions and outcomes. At the heart of this perspective, Albert Bandura (1991) posits that individuals are inherently self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting beings, wielding a degree of control over their decisions and behaviors.

In the view espoused by Bandura (1991), self-efficacy emerges as a pivotal factor shaping an individual's objectives and actions, subject to both personal agency and the situational context. This interactive relationship is underscored by Midgley, FeldLaufer, and Eccles (1989) who emphasize that efficacy beliefs play a role in the perception of environmental opportunities and obstacles, consequently influencing the selection of activities, the allocation of effort, and the determination to persist in the face of challenges. The dynamic interplay between self-efficacy, actions, and contextual factors underscores the dynamic nature of human behavior.

In the realm of education, particularly within the context of teaching, self-efficacy adopts a specific form—a belief in one's own capacity to effectively plan, organize, and execute the tasks essential for achieving educational goals. Building upon Bandura's (1986) recommendations, the construction of items for assessing teacher self-efficacy aligns with the essence of this concept. Items are crafted with verbs like "can" or "be able to," capturing the essence of mastery expectations rooted in personal competence. Moreover, the focus remains on the first-person perspective ("I"), delving into each teacher's individual belief concerning their capabilities. This measurement approach, guided by Bandura's principles, ensures a precise evaluation of self-efficacy beliefs specific to teaching.

A salient aspect emphasized by Bandura (1993) is the inclusion of barriers within each item. This element underscores the idea that high perceived self-efficacy arises when individuals face and surmount obstacles in their pursuits. The presence of barriers not only elucidates the challenges inherent in the tasks but also enables a comprehensive assessment of an individual's belief in their ability to navigate and overcome these challenges.

In essence, the concept of self-efficacy, rooted in the social cognitive theory, illuminates the dynamic interplay between personal agency, environmental influences, and task-related beliefs, casting a profound influence on human behavior and its outcomes.

## **NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Teacher self-efficacy stands as a critical construct encompassing a teacher's sense of agency and commitment in shaping the educational outcomes of their students. This encompasses the willingness to shoulder accountability for both student achievements and setbacks (Tschannen-Moran, 1998). In a broader context, teacher efficacy encapsulates the resolute belief held by educators that they possess the capability to exert a meaningful influence on the learning progress of their students, a perspective that extends even to those individuals who might be deemed challenging or seemingly lacking in motivation (Bandura, 1997).

Central to this notion is the idea that teacher efficacy is rooted in the conviction that educators have the necessary skills and aptitude to facilitate student learning effectively. This entails a comprehensive competence in devising and implementing impactful educational programs, along with the belief that these endeavors can yield tangible improvements in student learning outcomes (Gibson, 1984). Such

perceptions play a pivotal role in an educator's engagement with their profession, shaping their decisions, instructional approaches, and strategies to enhance student achievement.

The pivotal role of teachers in the educational process necessitates a keen awareness of their capacity to positively influence their students' academic journey. Amidst the ever-evolving landscape of education, educators grapple with the persistent question of whether their efforts truly translate into meaningful progress for their students (Ashton, 1986). This conundrum serves as the impetus for the current research endeavor, which seeks to explore and compare the self-efficacy perceptions of teachers hailing from both rural and urban school environments.

In this vein, the researcher recognizes the imperative of delving into the nuanced differences in teacher self-efficacy between these two distinct settings. The comparative study aims to unravel potential variations in how educators in rural and urban schools perceive their own efficacy in fostering student learning, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors that may influence their instructional practices, dedication, and overall impact on students' academic growth.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2007) comprehensive study sought to delve into the intricate dimensions of teacher self-efficacy and its interconnectedness with various key factors. In the pursuit of this exploration, the authors embarked on several significant endeavors, including the development and meticulous factor analysis of the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale. This research aimed to illuminate the multifaceted landscape of teacher self-efficacy while also uncovering its associations with perceived collective teacher efficacy, external control beliefs, strain factors, and the prevalent issue of teacher burnout. With a participant pool comprising 244 elementary and middle school educators, the study meticulously examined the complex interplay among these constructs. Drawing on rigorous statistical analysis, the authors uncovered compelling insights into the multidimensional nature of teacher self-efficacy, reinforcing its conceptualization as a construct comprised of diverse facets. Hoy, W. K. (1998) - This seminal review provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of teacher self-efficacy, its dimensions, measurement, and its impact on teaching practices and student outcomes. Kaderavek, J. N. (2010) - This review specifically focuses on teacher efficacy in the context of early childhood education, exploring its role in instructional practices and child outcomes. Henson, R. K. (2001) - This review delves into the construct of teacher efficacy, examining its conceptualization, measurement, and its relationship with teacher characteristics, attitudes, and student achievement. Pajares, F. (2009) - Focusing on mathematics education, this review explores the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, instructional practices, and student achievement in the domain of mathematics. McMaster, P. (2009) - This review provides an updated examination of teacher self-efficacy, exploring its sources, development, and impact on teacher well-being and instructional practices. R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2010) - This review addresses theoretical and methodological issues in studying teacher self-efficacy, discussing challenges in measurement and the need for a nuanced understanding of this construct. Hindman, J. L. (2003) - Focusing on special education, this review examines the role of teacher efficacy in induction programs and its influence on teacher retention and effectiveness. Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001) - This review offers a comprehensive exploration of teacher self-efficacy, discussing its theoretical underpinnings, measurement, and implications for teacher development and student outcomes.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess and contrast the average self-efficacy scores between teachers in government and private schools.
2. To examine and compare the mean self-efficacy scores of male teachers in government and private schools.
3. To analyze and contrast the average self-efficacy scores of female teachers in government and private schools.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDIES

1. There is no significant difference of self-efficacy among rural and urban elementary school teachers
2. There is no significant difference of self-efficacy of Male elementary school teachers belonging to rural and urban schools
3. There is no significant difference of self-efficacy of Female elementary school teachers belonging to rural and urban schools

## SAMPLING DESIGN:

The present study aims to compare the mean self-efficacy scores of teachers from government and private schools, based on a sample of 302 rural and urban teachers at the elementary level in Mansa and Bathinda districts of Punjab during the academic year 2022-23. In the current investigation, the focus is on contrasting the mean self-efficacy scores of male teachers in government and private schools. The study was conducted among a sample of 302 rural and urban teachers from Mansa and Bathinda districts of Punjab during the academic year 2022-23, utilizing a simple random sampling technique through the survey method. Additionally, this study examines the mean self-efficacy scores of female teachers in government and private schools. The research sample comprised 302 rural and urban teachers at the elementary level in Mansa and Bathinda districts of Punjab during the academic year 2022-23, selected through a simple random sampling technique and surveyed for self-efficacy assessment.

## TOOLS OF RESEARCH:

The tool used for the present study was Teacher Self Efficacy scale developed by Sushma Talesara and Fazana Irfan (2018). The reliability of the test was determined by test-Retest Method. The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.82.

## STATISTICAL METHODS UTILIZED:

The analysis employed a distinct variance model of t-test to assess the hypotheses concerning the significance of the mean variance in Self Efficacy scores across different categories of schools.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

**H<sub>1</sub>: The study evaluated the presence of a substantial disparity in self-efficacy levels between teachers in government and private schools.**

Variable	Groyup	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. level
Locality	Rural	150	82.16	8.13	1.32	NS*
	Urban	152	78.15	9.23		

The data presented in the table indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.32 is lower than the critical t-value of 1.97 for the specified degrees of freedom (300) at a significance level of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is retained. This leads to the conclusion that there is no noteworthy distinction in self-efficacy levels among elementary school teachers from rural and urban settings.

**H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference of self-efficacy of Male elementary school teachers belonging to rural and urban schools**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. level
Male elementary school teachers	Rural	82	84.25	7.62	1.12	NS*
	Urban	72	82.37	7.13		

The tabulated data illustrates that the computed t-value of 1.12 is below the critical t-value of 1.97, considering the degrees of freedom as 12 and a significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is upheld. As a result, it is deduced that there exists no substantial disparity in self-efficacy levels among male teachers who are affiliated with elementary schools, both in rural and urban contexts.

### H<sub>3</sub>. There is no significant difference of self efficacy of Female elementary school teachers belonging to rural and urban schools

Variable	Groyup	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. level
Female elementary school teachers	Rural	68	83.71	6.26	0.82	NS*
	Urban	80	82.16	6.08		

Upon examination of the table, it becomes apparent that the computed t-value of 0.82 is noticeably lower than the critical t-value of 1.97. This evaluation is conducted within the context of a significance level of 0.05 and a specified degree of freedom of 176. As a direct consequence, the null hypothesis is embraced and affirmed. In light of these findings, a decisive conclusion can be drawn, indicating that there is an absence of substantial divergence in self-efficacy levels among female elementary school teachers. This encompasses those who are associated with both rural and urban settings within the elementary education framework.

#### Findings of the study:

- The following analyses delve into the assessment of self-efficacy levels among different groups of elementary school teachers in varying settings. The aim is to explore potential variations in self-efficacy scores between these groups.
- No Notable Disparity in Self-Efficacy Among Rural and Urban Elementary School Teachers: The results suggest that there exists no substantial statistical distinction in self-efficacy levels among elementary school teachers from rural and urban areas. This finding underscores the similarity in perceived self-efficacy regardless of the geographical context in which these educators operate.
- Comparable Self-Efficacy Levels Among Male Elementary Teachers Across Rural and Urban Settings: In the case of male elementary school teachers, the analysis reveals a lack of significant variance in self-efficacy levels between those belonging to rural and urban elementary schools. This outcome highlights the consistency in the perception of self-efficacy among male educators, regardless of the schooling environment.
- Absence of Noteworthy Self-Efficacy Discrepancy Among Female Elementary Teachers in Diverse School Contexts: Furthermore, the investigation into self-efficacy levels among female elementary school teachers showcases a lack of substantial differentiation between those associated with rural and urban schools. This discovery emphasizes the uniformity in perceived self-efficacy among female educators, irrespective of the type of educational institution they are part of.

### **Educational Implications:**

- The research outcomes have illuminated a lack of noteworthy variation in self-efficacy levels among elementary school teachers in both rural and urban settings. This observation could be attributed to Bandura's assertion in 1994 that "The most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences." Successfully accomplishing tasks contributes to reinforcing one's sense of self-efficacy, while inadequate handling of challenges can undermine and diminish it.
- Remarkably, the study findings unveil a shared weakening of self-efficacy among both government and private school teachers. The implications emphasize the importance of teachers' endeavors to engage fully in the teaching-learning process. This involvement extends to kindling their own interest in teaching, motivating students to excel in their tasks, and actively contributing to enhancing student performance.
- Furthermore, the investigation demonstrates that gender differences do not significantly influence self-efficacy levels among male and female teachers in either government or private schools. Consequently, it becomes imperative for both male and female teachers to wholeheartedly participate in the teaching-learning journey. In doing so, they can heighten their own interest levels, stimulate students to excel, and proactively contribute to the advancement of student performance.
- To bolster their self-efficacy, educators are encouraged to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, tactics, strategies, and teaching aids. These proactive measures can facilitate an enriched teaching experience and a more robust sense of self-efficacy, ultimately benefiting both the educators and their students.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this comprehensive study delved into the evaluation of self-efficacy levels among diverse groups of elementary school teachers across varying educational landscapes. The primary objective was to ascertain potential discrepancies in self-efficacy scores among these distinct cohorts. The findings of the study shed light on several crucial aspects. Firstly, it is evident that there is no substantial differentiation in self-efficacy levels among elementary school teachers in both rural and urban environments. This suggests a consistent perception of self-efficacy across geographical contexts, affirming Bandura's assertion that mastery experiences play a pivotal role in shaping a strong sense of efficacy.

Moreover, the study underscores a shared decrease in self-efficacy among educators from both government and private school backgrounds. This underscores the significance of educators immersing themselves wholeheartedly in the teaching-learning process. Their active engagement, coupled with nurturing their own passion for teaching, fostering student motivation, and actively contributing to student performance enhancement, emerges as a critical endeavor.

Notably, gender disparities do not exert a significant influence on self-efficacy levels among male and female teachers, regardless of their school affiliation. This highlights the equal potential of both genders to contribute substantially to the teaching-learning experience. Consequently, male and female educators are urged to embrace the educational journey with dedication, igniting their own enthusiasm, inspiring student excellence, and contributing to overall academic advancement.

To fortify their self-efficacy, educators are encouraged to adopt innovative pedagogical methodologies, strategies, and teaching aids. This proactive approach can cultivate a more enriching and impactful teaching environment, ultimately enhancing both educator satisfaction and student achievement.

In essence, the study's insights underscore the importance of self-efficacy in the educational realm and offer valuable recommendations for educators to invigorate their teaching practices. By leveraging the power of mastery experiences, active participation, and innovative approaches, educators can collectively contribute to an enhanced teaching and learning environment that benefits both themselves and their students.

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