



## High level of teacher self efficacy: Beneficial or problematic

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### Abstract

Teacher self-efficacy is defined as the belief of teachers in their ability to effectively teach and facilitate student learning. It is a crucial aspect of effective teaching and has been linked to positive student outcomes, such as higher achievement, better classroom behavior, and increased student engagement. While a high level of teacher self-efficacy can be beneficial for both teachers and students, it can also lead to some problematic issues. This paper will discuss the concept of teacher self-efficacy and examine both the benefits and potential problems associated with a high level of teacher self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy

### Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of societal progress, shaping individuals and societies by imparting knowledge, skills, and values. At the heart of the educational journey is the teacher, a pivotal figure entrusted with the task of guiding and inspiring learners. Teachers play a multifaceted role, not just as disseminators of information but as facilitators of growth, mentors, and role models. Their influence extends beyond the classroom, shaping the intellectual and emotional development of students. In this dynamic interplay between education and teachers, the foundation for a flourishing and enlightened society is laid. This symbiotic relationship underscores the importance of understanding the challenges and triumphs inherent in education, with teachers at the forefront of this transformative journey.

### Concept of Self efficacy

Bandura (1977) <sup>[11]</sup> introduced the concept of self-efficacy as a part of his social cognitive theory. The theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive, behavioural, personal and environmental factors interaction in determining motivation and behavior. It has four elements namely, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is made up of two words: "self" and "efficacy" where "self" refers to an individual's conscious reflection of oneself and "efficacy" refers to the ability to produce desired results. In this sense, self-efficacy refers to an individual's conscious reflection on his own ability to produce some desired results.

According to Bandura (1994) <sup>[9]</sup>, self-efficacy is "people's beliefs about their abilities to produce specified levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives."

According to Alnoor, Al Abarrow, Abdullah and Abbas (2020) <sup>[30]</sup> defined self-efficacy as an individual's appreciation of his or her ability to perform occupational challenges successfully by mobilizing knowledge resources and pathways to meet professional requirements.

According to Sharma and Rani (2013) <sup>[37]</sup>, "Self-efficacy is a construct that explains personal competency to successfully deal with a variety of circumstances and an individual's ability to effectively manage new situations, create effort, and remain resilient in the face of adversities throughout diverse domains".

According to the definitions above, self-efficacy beliefs comprise nothing more than assessments of one's capability to successfully carry out particular behaviour and activities, or a prediction of one's capacity to deal with any given task.

### Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy

Teacher's self-efficacy is an important construct related to teacher's performance. It first appeared in Ashton's, 1946 research which was expanded in 1984. The concept of efficacy now includes the degree to which teachers believe they are capable of achieving learning outcomes. According to Bandura (1977) <sup>[11]</sup>, having the knowledge and skills required to act does not guarantee that the actor will perform effectively; rather, it is dependent on the actor's personal judgment in properly utilizing such knowledge and skills to perform an act successfully under a variety of circumstances. Bandura (1977) <sup>[11]</sup> referred to this assessment of knowledge and skills as perceived self-efficacy, and when applied to educational settings, it is known as teacher self-efficacy. Bandura defined teacher self-efficacy as the degree to which teachers believe they can influence student's performance. Simply put, it is the perception of teachers' capabilities rather than their actualized capabilities, because beliefs and perceptions have a large influence on how one's potential is realized and utilized. It is the teacher's assessment of a student's ability or competency to complete a task, achieve a goal, or overcome an obstacle. It has an impact on every aspect of teaching. Teachers who have a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to take on difficult tasks and to be intrinsically motivated. Cherry (2020) <sup>[15]</sup> reported that teachers who have a higher efficacy can develop an interest in academic activities, develop a higher sense of commitment to their interest and school activities, do not lose control when faced with difficulties and setbacks, and welcome challenging activities in order to be successful. Teacher self-efficacy is regarded as a future-oriented motivational construct that reflects teachers' beliefs about their ability to perform teaching tasks.

Guo, Justice, Sawyer and Tompkins (2011) <sup>[23]</sup> stated that "teacher efficacy is teachers belief that they can carry about desired change in pupils behaviour and achievement".

According to Himabindu (2012) <sup>[24]</sup>, teacher efficacy is “a result of the interaction between certain teacher characteristics and teaching learning contexts.”

According to Muhangi (2017), “teacher’s self-efficacy is the teachers’ perception of their ability to effectively perform professional tasks such as assisting students in learning.”

In a nutshell, teacher self efficacy refers to teachers’ belief in their ability to perform professional tasks such as assisting students in learning. It influences teacher’s thoughts, feelings, attitude, and effort dedicated to teaching, as well as their behaviour and behavioural changes.

### Characteristics of Efficacious Teacher

The characteristics of efficacious teacher are as follows:

**1. Enthusiastic about Teaching:** Efficacious teachers are enthusiastic about teaching and more committed to it (Allinder, 1994 <sup>[2]</sup>; Coladarci, 1992 <sup>[17]</sup>; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Guskey, 1984; Muhangi, 2017). Such teachers are more eager to try out new teaching methods in order to improve student’s learning (Berman, et. al., 1977; Guskey, 1984; Muhangi, 2017; Stein & Wang, 1988).

**2. Reinforce Intrinsic Motivation:** Efficacious teachers devote more time to academic activities, provide feedback, and guide students who are having difficulty in understanding learning materials Gibson & Dembo (1984) <sup>[21]</sup>. They devote more time to student’s learning, assist students in achieving their goals, and reinforce students’ intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1997).

**3. Emotionally Intelligent:** Efficacious teachers are emotionally intelligent (Amirian & Behshad, 2016; Mohammadi & Saravani, 2015; Penrose, Perry & Ball, 2007).

**4. Hard Working and Dedicated:** Efficacious teachers spend more time with a student who is working hard to achieve high grades (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) <sup>[21]</sup>. They have a higher level of planning, organisation and passion for teaching and spend more time teaching subjects where they are more efficacious (Riggs & Enochs, 1990). They are more open to new ideas and more willing to experiment

### Benefits of High Level of Teacher Self-Efficacy

**1. Increased Teacher Motivation and Engagement**  
Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their teaching. They believe that they have the skills and knowledge to effectively teach their students, leading to a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on their attitudes towards their work, resulting in higher levels of motivation and dedication to their profession.

**2. Improved Teacher Performance:** Research has consistently shown that teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more effective in the classroom. They are better at setting goals, planning lessons, and engaging students in active learning. They are also more likely to persist in the face of challenges and setbacks, leading to improved student learning outcomes.

**3. Positive Teacher-Student Interactions:** Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs tend to have more positive interactions with their students. They are more likely to provide students with positive and constructive feedback,

create a supportive classroom environment, and have a trusting relationship with their students. This can have a significant impact on student motivation, engagement, and achievement.

**4. Improved Student Outcomes:** High levels of teacher self-efficacy have been consistently linked to positive student outcomes. Teachers who have confidence in their abilities as educators are more likely to promote student learning, increase student achievement, and foster positive attitudes towards school and learning. This is especially important in subjects where students may struggle or have low motivation, as teachers with high self-efficacy can positively influence student perceptions and attitudes towards learning.

**5. Teacher Resilience and Well-Being:** Being a teacher can be a challenging and demanding profession, and teachers with a high level of self-efficacy are better equipped to handle these stresses and challenges. They are more likely to have a positive outlook and be resilient in the face of difficulties, leading to better overall well-being and job satisfaction.

### Problems Associated with High Level of Teacher Self-Efficacy

In spite of the large body of literature describing positive outcomes associated with high self efficacy several research have questioned whether higher is always better. Wheatley (2005, p.18) <sup>[39]</sup> hypothesized that a number of teacher’s self-efficacy constructs may be problematic. Teacher’s overconfidence in their abilities, makes it difficult for them to assess their own performance. (Weinstein, 1988) discovered a high sense of “unrealistic optimism”—the propensity to think that troubles faced by others would not affect them. It is interesting to note that activities involving student control had the highest level of false optimism (e.g., maintaining discipline, and establishing and enforcing class rules). The teachers who overestimate their ability fail to take the necessary efforts to advance their abilities until they are faced with major issues. Overconfident efficacy may quickly be followed by giving up if the task proves to be more difficult than previously thought. Higher efficacy also has the negative consequences of resistance to learning new knowledge and skills and a tendency to stick with ways of teaching that have provided the sense of mastery in the past. As self efficacy is beneficial for believing in one’s own ability, it is desirable for teachers to have a desired level of self efficacy. There are certain problems associated with high level of self efficacy among teachers.

**1. Overconfidence and Risk-taking:** One potential problem with a high level of teacher self-efficacy is the risk of overconfidence. Teachers who are overly confident in their abilities may be more likely to take risks and make decisions that are not supported by evidence or best practices. This can lead to ineffective teaching practices and negatively impact student learning outcomes.

**2. Resistance to Change and Feedback:** Another issue that can arise from a high level of teacher self-efficacy is resistance to change and feedback. Teachers who have a strong belief in their abilities may be less open to trying new approaches or receiving feedback on their teaching. This can hinder their professional growth and limit their effectiveness as educators.

**3. Pressure to Perform:** A high level of self-efficacy can also lead to pressure to perform at a consistently high level. Teachers may feel the need to always be successful in their teaching and may experience feelings of failure or inadequacy when faced with challenges or setbacks. This can lead to burnout and stress, potentially negatively impacting their well-being.

**4. Negative Effect on Colleagues:** A teacher's high self-efficacy can have a negative impact on their colleagues, especially those with lower levels of self-efficacy. Teachers who believe they are more competent than their peers may find it challenging to collaborate and work effectively with others, leading to tension and conflict within the school environment.

### **Finding the Balance: Nurturing Teacher Self-Efficacy While Addressing Potential Pitfalls**

Balancing teacher self-efficacy involves creating a culture of support and ongoing professional growth. Acknowledging potential pitfalls, such as burnout and stress, is crucial in developing strategies for resilience. Encouraging collaborative environments and mentorship programs helps teachers navigate challenges, fostering a sense of competence. Regular feedback and recognition contribute to a positive atmosphere, reinforcing teachers' confidence in their abilities. Striking this balance is essential for sustaining teacher motivation and effectiveness in the dynamic field of education.

- 1. Professional Development Opportunities:** Provide ongoing training and workshops to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge, fostering a sense of competence and mastery.
- 2. Peer Collaboration and Mentorship:** Encourage collaboration among teachers and establish mentorship programs to facilitate the exchange of ideas, support, and guidance.
- 3. Constructive Feedback:** Offer regular, specific, and constructive feedback to help teachers reflect on their practices and recognize their strengths, promoting a positive sense of self-efficacy.
- 4. Recognition and Appreciation:** Acknowledge and celebrate teachers' achievements, both big and small, to reinforce their belief in their ability to make a positive impact on students.
- 5. Autonomy in Decision-Making:** Empower teachers to make decisions in their classrooms, allowing them autonomy and a sense of control over their teaching methods and strategies.
- 6. Wellness Programs:** Implement initiatives that prioritize teachers' well-being, addressing potential burnout and stress through wellness programs, counseling services, and work-life balance support.
- 7. Clear Communication:** Foster open and transparent communication channels, ensuring that teachers feel heard and understood, which contributes to their confidence and efficacy.

**8. Goal Setting:** Encourage teachers to set achievable goals for professional growth, providing a roadmap for continuous improvement and reinforcing a belief in their ability to succeed.

**9. Reflective Practices:** Promote regular self-reflection among teachers, enabling them to assess their successes and challenges, and develop strategies for improvement.

**10. Inclusive School Culture:** Create an inclusive and supportive school culture where differences are valued, and educators feel a sense of belonging, contributing to a positive self-image and efficacy.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, a high level of teacher self-efficacy can bring numerous benefits, such as increased motivation, improved performance, and positive interactions with students. However, it is also essential to recognize the potential problems that can arise from a high level of self-efficacy and take steps to address them. Teachers should continuously reflect on their beliefs, seek feedback and support from colleagues, and be open to change and professional growth. By maintaining a balance between high self-efficacy and humility, teachers can effectively use their beliefs to benefit themselves and their students.

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