



**ASSESSING TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY:
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
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ABSTRACT

Teacher self-efficacy is one of the critical factors determining teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. It refers to teachers' belief in their ability to plan, organise, and deliver instruction. This study aims to investigate the level of teacher self-efficacy and examine the relationship between gender and teacher self-efficacy among 233 primary school teachers in the Gombak district. The results of the study showed that teachers exhibit high self-efficacy, and significant differences were found between male and female teachers, while female teachers showed higher self-efficacy. The implication of the findings, therefore, is that teacher education programs should enhance teacher self-efficacy, particularly among male teachers. School leaders should organise up-to-date professional development courses to support teachers' development for overall school effectiveness.

Introduction

Education is the foundation determining the survival of every sector in a country. It shapes the future of individuals and communities. Thus, educational development should be the top priority of every nation. Different factors have been highlighted as driving factors of educational success. However, teacher self-efficacy stands out due to its effect on school

effectiveness, students' academic achievements, and instructional practices (Lazarides & Richardson, 2020).

Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their ability to successfully cope with tasks, obligations, and challenges related to their professional role (e.g., didactical tasks, managing discipline problems in the class, etc.) This belief is determined by several factors, including personality characteristics such as openness to experience and conscientiousness, openness to change values (i.e., self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism), and self-enhancement values (i.e., power and achievement) (Ulas & Senel, 2020).

Research has also shown a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and demographic factors such as gender and academic qualifications (Papa, 2015). Poulou et al (2018) found that female teachers exhibit greater efficacy than their male counterparts. Additionally, teachers with higher academic qualifications tend to exhibit greater self-efficacy and leadership potential (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017).

Ulas and Senel's (2020) study showed that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy experience higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of burnout, and excel in dealing with students' misbehaviours. Therefore, understanding the main antecedents of self-efficacy is crucial for improving teachers' well-being and enhancing school effectiveness.

Teacher self-efficacy has also been found to be positively correlated with student achievement, teacher motivation, and job satisfaction (Papa, 2015). Similarly, teachers with high self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence and resilience in the teaching-learning process (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Ulas & Senel, 2020; Papa, 2015; Shahzad & Naureen, 2017; Lazarides & Richardson, 2020).

Teacher self-efficacy is, therefore, a critical factor that can hinder or improve educational outcomes in both primary and secondary level public education. Despite its importance, there is a paucity of research on teacher self-efficacy at the primary school level. The reason may be due to the little concern for the primary level of education. However, it is the basis of all levels of education, and teachers' effectiveness therein determines students' later academic achievements.

This study examines the level of self-efficacy exhibited by teachers in selected primary schools, with a particular focus on the influence of gender on this construct. By investigating the complex interplay between teacher self-efficacy and gender, this research will showcase the factors that shape teacher self-efficacy in primary education.

This study will provide insights into the factors that promote or hinder teacher self-efficacy in primary education and provide recommendations on strategies to support teacher development and improve student outcomes at the primary level of education.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of teacher self-efficacy exhibited in the school as perceived by the teachers.
2. To investigate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership and gender.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of teacher self-efficacy exhibited in the school as perceived by the teachers?
2. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and gender?

Statement of Problem

Recently, in January 2025, a disturbing incident sparked widespread outrage after a video emerged showing a teacher physically assaulting a three-year-old pupil for failing to write as instructed. The teacher continuously slapped the innocent three-year-old pupil for failing to write as instructed. The child was later hospitalised as a result of the physical assault. The child was dehumanised in totality through several slaps on the right ear, which may damage the child's eardrum and potentially lead to deafness. This unprofessional act was committed by the teacher, who was expected to care for the innocent children (Salami & Oyewo, 2025).

This incident highlights the alarming reality that some teachers in primary education suffer from self-efficacy issues, which can lead them to unleash burnout on their students whenever they have the opportunity. Many such ugly incidents have occurred across the globe, underscoring the need for a comprehensive investigation into the concept of teacher self-efficacy. Therefore, there is a need to examine the concept of teacher self-efficacy, which determines teachers' self-knowledge and professionalism. It is the factor that influences teachers' ability to handle the challenges of teaching healthily and prevent work-related stress and burnout.

Teacher self-efficacy significantly influences teacher performance and student outcomes, and despite its significance, it remains understudied and poorly explored at the primary school level. This gap affects academic progress not only at the primary level but also at the higher levels. Therefore, investigating the factors that influence teacher self-efficacy, particularly in primary education, is crucial.

This study aims to explore this area, with a special focus on the influence of demographic factors such as gender on teacher self-efficacy. By examining the relationship between these

factors, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the development of effective strategies for enhancing teacher self-efficacy and improving student outcomes.

Conceptual Review

Understanding Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy emanates from Bandura's social-cognitive theory of behavioural change (Bandura, 1977). It is defined as teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully cope with tasks, duties and obligations in the school. According to Bandura's theory, there are four sources of self-efficacy: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

Enactive mastery experiences refer to experiences that a person has regarding success or failure. Successful performances or experiences will enhance efficacy beliefs, while repeated failures will lead to loss of confidence in one's ability.

Vicarious Experiences

Individuals develop vicarious experiences when they observe someone succeeding through sustained effort. This observation can boost their confidence and motivation to engage in similar endeavours.

Verbal Persuasion

Self-efficacy improves with encouragement and positive feedback. Verbal persuasion enhances an individual's self-efficacy, boosting their belief in their abilities and helping them overcome self-doubt.

Physiological and Affective States

Self-efficacy is shaped by physiological and affective states of an individual. This includes stress levels and emotional well-being. Improving both physical and emotional states can enhance self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Factors Influencing Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is influenced by various factors, including personality traits and personal values. Research has shown that teachers who are open to new experiences and

conscientious tend to have stronger self-efficacy beliefs (Djigie et al., 2014). Additionally, personal values, such as those identified by Shahzad and Naureen (2017), play a significant role in shaping teacher self-efficacy. Poulou et al (2018) found that personal values are significant predictors of workers' self-efficacy.

Impact of teacher self-efficacy on teachers' performance

Teacher self-efficacy is a vital component of effective teaching and school development. It has a direct impact on teaching effectiveness, instructional practices, and student academic achievement (Lei et al, 2018). Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy experience greater job satisfaction, reduced job-related stress, and fewer problems in dealing with student misbehaviours (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Consequently, teacher self-efficacy significantly influences teachers' well-being and overall school effectiveness.

The Impact of Teacher Self-Efficacy on Student Performance

Research indicates that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs significantly impact student learning outcomes, motivation, and academic achievement (Ulas & Senel, 2020). According to Papa (2015), teachers with high self-efficacy are more effective in promoting student learning, engaging students, and fostering a positive classroom environment.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Student Motivation

Teacher self-efficacy is linked to student motivation and satisfaction (Lazarides & Richardson, 2020). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to create a supportive learning environment, provide individualised attention, and promote student autonomy.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research methodology and design, which involves a systematic plan for collecting, analysing, and interpreting numerical data (Creswell, 2012). This approach was chosen to gather statistical evidence and numerical facts necessary to address the research questions, allowing for objective measurement, statistical analysis, and generalizability of findings.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population for this study comprised 700 teachers from primary schools in Gombak. Due to the large size of the population, a sample of 233 teachers was randomly selected to participate in the study. This sample included both male and female teachers, representing a subset of the larger population (Creswell, 2007).

Instrument of the Study

A questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect data, specifically the Teacher Belief Scale-short form (TBS) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (1998). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A gathered demographic data, while Section B measured teacher efficacy through 12 items assessing three factors: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices, and Efficacy in Classroom Management. The items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Nothing) to 5 (A Great Deal).

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the consistency of multiple measurements (Hair et al., 2013). The results showed a Cronbach's Alpha range of .65 to .95, indicating sufficient reliability (Chua, 2013). This suggests that the instrument yielded consistent results over repeated measurements, supporting its reliability.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, employing descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to describe the level of teacher efficacy in three factors, and an independent t-test to examine significant differences in teacher self-efficacy between male and female teachers.

Results

Research question 1: What is the level of teacher self-efficacy exhibited among teachers of the selected schools?

Table 1

No	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Student Engagement	4.13	.722	High
2	Efficacy in Instructional Practices	4.21	.660	High
3	Efficacy in Classroom Management	4.21	.692	High
Average, Mean and St.D		4.18	.691	High

Source: Research survey

Table 1 shows the overall analysis based on the means and standard deviations of the three factors of teacher self-efficacy. The mean score for Student Engagement is 4.13, and the Standard Deviation is .722. For the Efficacy in Instructional Practices, the mean is $M = 4.21$ ($SD = .660$), while in Efficacy in Classroom Management, the factor has a mean $M = 4.21$ ($SD = .692$). Based on this descriptive analysis, both Efficacy in Instructional Practices and Efficacy in Classroom Management have the same mean, though with different SD, $M = 4.21$ ($SD = .660$), $M = 4.21$ ($SD = .692$), respectively. The lowest score was attained by Student Engagement with $M = 4.13$ ($SD = .722$).

The extent of teacher self-efficacy exhibited by teachers in the primary schools was analysed through the interpretation of the mean of each factor, as well as the overall mean of the mean score in each factor. The level of teacher self-efficacy was categorised into three categories, namely high, moderate and low. For ease of interpretation, the following scales were used to indicate the levels. 1.00 - 2.33 = Low level of teacher leadership, 2.34 - 3.66 = Moderate level of teacher leadership, 3.67 - 5.00 = High level of teacher leadership. So the decision is that all three factors of teacher self-efficacy exhibited by the teachers are high.

Table of individual items of teacher self-efficacy

Student Engagement

One of the dimensions of self-efficacy is student engagement. Table 2 below shows how the respondents answered the items under this factor. 51.5% ($n = 120$) of the respondents answered “quite a bit” can motivate students who show low interest in school work, while 27.9% ($n = 65$)

of the respondents answered “a great deal” in motivating students who show low interest in school work. 18.9% (n = 44) of respondents can motivate students who show a low interest in school work to “some degree”, and 1.3% (n = 3) of respondents “very little”, and only 0.4% (n = 1) of respondents cannot motivate students who show low interest in school work.

Furthermore, 48.5% (n = 113) of the respondents answer “quite a bit” and 41.2% (n = 96) of respondents answer “a great deal” in giving help to students value learning, where as 9.4% (n = 22) of the respondents answered “some degree” and only 0.9% (n = 2) of respondents has “very little” ability to help their student value learning. Overall, all teachers can help students value their learning. Meanwhile, 50.6% (n = 118) of respondents marked “quite a bit”, and 18.9% (n = 44) of respondents marked “a great deal” in assisting families in helping their children do well in school. There were 26.2% (n = 61) of respondents who answered “some degree,” and only 4.3% (n = 10) of respondents answered “very little” in assisting families in helping their children do well in school.

Regarding the results of the work, most respondents have positive results regarding the students’ engagement. Overall result shows that all respondents have high student engagement in enhancing students’ learning.

In conclusion, after conducting descriptive analysis based on the mean and standard deviation, it was found that the overall mean in student engagement factor, as shown in Table 2, is high (Mean = 4.13, SD = .722).

Table 2: Student Engagement Factor of Self-Efficacy

No	Item	Mean	St. D	Frequency				
				N n (%)	L n (%)	S n (%)	Q n (%)	G n (%)
2	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?	4.05	.747	1 0.4	3 1.3	44 18.9	120 51.5	65 27.9
4	How much can you do to help your student value learning?	4.30	.673	0 0.0	2 0.9	22 9.4	113 48.5	96 41.2
7	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	4.31	.694	1 0.4	1 0.4	25 10.7	110 47.2	96 41.2
11	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in	3.84	.774	0 0.0	10 4.3	61 26.2	118 50.6	44 18.9

school?

Average, St.D	Mean	and	4.13	.722
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N = None at all, L = Very Little, S = Some Degree, Q = Quite a Bit, G = A Great Deal, St. D =

Standard Deviation

Instructional practices factor

Table 3 indicates the instructional practices factor of self-efficacy by teachers in Gombak Primary School. The table shows that 35.6% (n = 83) of respondents have “a great deal” and 51.9% (n = 121) of respondents have a “quite a bit” in crafting a good question for students (item 5). There was 11.6% (n = 27) of the respondents had “some degree” and 0.9% (n = 2) of respondents had a “very little” ability in crafting good questions for their students. This shows that most of the teachers in this school can create good questions to enhance students' learning.

Moreover, 60.1% (n = 140) of respondents answered “quite a deal” and 24% (n = 56) of respondents said “a great deal” when they were asked about the extent of using a variety of assessment strategies. There were 15.9% (n = 37) of respondents who answered “some degree” when they were asked about the extent of using a variety of assessment strategies. All teachers can use a variety of assessment strategies since there is no “very little” answered by teachers for item 9.

For item 10, “To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?”, 50.6% (n = 118) of respondents have a “quite a bit” and 40.8% (n = 95) marked “a great deal” in providing an alternative explanation or example when students are confused. 7.3% (n = 17) and 1.3% (n = 3) of respondents marked “some degree” and “very little” in providing an alternative explanation or example when students are confused. All teachers have qualities in providing alternative explanations or examples when students are confused.

There was 56.7% (n = 132) of respondents answered “quite a bit” about the implementation of alternative teaching strategies in their classroom, while 31.8% (n = 74) of respondents marked “a great deal” on the implementation of alternative teaching strategies in their classroom. There were 9.4% (n = 22) of the respondents who marked “some degree” and 1.7% (n = 4) marked “very little” when they were asked about “how well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?”.

In summary, after conducting descriptive analysis based on the mean and standard deviation, it was found that the overall mean efficacy in instructional practices factor, as shown in Table 2, is high (Mean = 4.21, SD = .66).

Table 3: Efficacy in Instructional Practices Factor of Self-Efficacy

No	Item	Mean	St. D	Frequency				
				N	L	S	Q	G
5	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	4.22	.677	0 0.0	2 0.9	27 11.6	121 51.9	83 35.6
9	To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	4.08	.628	0 0.0	0 0.0	37 15.9	140 60.1	56 24.0
10	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	4.31	.662	0 0.0	3 1.3	17 7.3	118 50.6	95 40.8
12	How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?	4.21	.714	1 0.4	4 1.7	22 9.4	132 56.7	74 31.8
Average, Mean and St.D		4.21	.660					

N = None at all, L = Very Little, S = Some Degree, Q = Quite a Bit, G = A Great Deal, St. D = Standard Deviation

Classroom Management

Table 4 shows that more than half of the respondents indicated that they can do quite a bit to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom?”. About 51.5% (n = 120) of the teachers marked "quite good", 32.6% (n = 76) of the teachers has great ability in controlling disruptive behaviour in the classroom, while 14.6% (n = 34) of them replied they have “some degree” and only 1.3% (n = 3) of them has a “very little” ability in controlling disruptive behaviour.

Accordingly, it can be deduced that, based on teachers’ perception, most of the teachers in the sampled Islamic Primary Schools are mostly good at classroom management. Furthermore, 48.5% (n = 113) of the respondents marked “quite a bit” on item 3 “, How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?”, 41.2% (n = 96) of 233 teachers replied to this item by marking “a great deal”, and 9.4% (n = 22) of teachers marked “some degree” option. Based on these two items (items 1 and 3), it can be interpreted that teachers in this school have high capability in handling classroom management and assisting students' behaviour in the class.

For item 6, 48.1% (n = 112) and 40.3% (n = 94) of teachers marked a “quite a bit” and “a great deal” to answer question, “How much can you do to get children to follow classroom

rules?”, while 10.3% (n = 24) and only 1.3% (n = 3) of teachers marked “some degree” and “very little” in assisting the children to follow the classroom rules. There are also more than half of the respondents who can establish a classroom management system with each group of students. 55.8% (n = 130) of the teachers and 30% (n = 70) marked “quite a bit” and “a great deal” to item 8, when they were asked about “How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?”. By indication, all teachers can manage their classroom well during a learning session.

In summary, data analysis shows that the overall mean of 4.21 (SD = .692) indicates a high level of self-efficacy among teachers teaching at Islamic primary school in Gombak.

Table 4: Efficacy in Classroom Management Factor of Self-Efficacy

No	Item	Mean	St. D	Frequency				
				N	L	S	Q	G
1	How much can you do to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom?	4.15	.708	0 0.0	3 1.3	34 14.6	120 51.5	76 32.6
3	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	4.26	.709	0 0.0	2 0.9	22 9.4	113 48.5	96 41.2
6	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	4.27	.696	0 0.0	3 1.3	24 10.3	112 48.1	94 40.3
8	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	4.15	.658	0 0.0	1 0.4	32 13.7	130 55.8	70 30.0
Average, Mean and St.D		4.21	.692					

Research Question 2

Is there any significant gender difference in the teacher leadership practices among teachers?

Table 5:

Group Statistics

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	DF	Sig	F
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	Male	39	49.6410	6.23862	.99898	231	0.630	0.233
Self-efficacy	Female	194	50.2680	5.87348	42169			

Females have a higher mean score on the teacher leadership (Mean = 50.2680, SD = 5.87348) compared to males (Mean = 49.6410, SD = 6.23862). Based on the result of the independent sample t-test conducted, the difference between males and females regarding teachers' efficacy exhibited is significant, $t(233) = 0.630$, $p < 0.05$.

Discussion of findings

1. Teachers' self-efficacy and student engagement

Discussion on Student Engagement as a Factor of Teachers' Self-Efficacy

The finding that student engagement is high as a factor of teachers' self-efficacy is consistent with existing literature. Teachers' self-efficacy is a critical factor in promoting student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017).

Teachers' Self-Efficacy is significantly related to Student Engagement. Ulas (2020) asserted that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their ability to engage students and promote learning. Lei (2018) opined that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to use innovative and effective instructional strategies that promote student engagement. Bandura (1997) found that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that fosters student engagement and motivation (Bandura, 1997).

High Student Engagement often leads to improved academic achievement (Zee, 2016), increased motivation, and positive teacher-student relationships (Poulou et al, 2018). The implication, therefore, is that schools should prioritise strategies that enhance teachers' self-efficacy, such as professional development opportunities, feedback, and support, so that teachers too can use different strategies to improve student engagement.

2. Instructional Practice as a Factor of Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Instructional practice refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to plan, deliver, and assess instruction effectively. The findings of this study indicate that instructional practice is high. The items of the factor showed that teachers use more effective teaching strategies, such as providing alternative explanations or examples when students are confused, implementing alternative teaching strategies and usage of different strategies to assess students' achievements.

This is in line with the study of Shahzad & Naureen (2017) stated that teachers with high self-efficacy use innovative and effective teaching strategies, create a supportive learning environment and maintain an inclusive learning environment. The resultant effect of this on students' learning is that it improves student motivation and promotes a love of learning (Lazarides & Richardson, 2020).

Different studies also showed that teachers' self-efficacy in instructional practices is linked to teachers' job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). They tend to be more resilient in the face of challenges and setbacks (Poulou et al, 2018). They therefore teach students thoroughly. The finding highlights the importance of teachers' self-efficacy in instructional practices to both teachers and students.

3. Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to the strategies and techniques teachers use to create and maintain a well-organised, respectful, and productive learning environment. Teacher self-efficacy in classroom management showed teachers' confidence in their ability to establish clear rules and expectations. Teachers set clear rules and expectations for student behaviour and academic engagement, manage student behaviour, use effective strategies to manage student behaviour, minimise disruptions, promote positive behaviour, and create a positive learning environment. This dimension of teacher self-efficacy was found to be high.

Hepburn et al (2020) asserted that if teachers' efficacy is high, especially in terms of classroom management, they will create a supportive, inclusive, and engaging learning environment that promotes student motivation and achievement. They will be willing to do tasks that are not part of their formal role, especially in class. It will be manifested in their actions like getting to school early, helping students beyond the school hour, feeling concern about school progress and development, engaging in extracurricular activities or encouraging all students to perform their tasks expectedly.

Discussion on Teacher Leadership Practices by Gender

The study's findings indicate that female teachers have a higher mean score on teacher self-efficacy exhibited compared to male teachers. The difference between males and females is statistically significant, suggesting that gender plays a role in the teacher self-efficacy exhibited. The finding is in line with different research studies. Klassen and Chiu (2010) opined that female teachers tend to exhibit stronger leadership skills in the classroom, especially when teaching little kids. Bandura (1997) asserted that female teachers tend to exhibit strong self-efficacy beliefs

because female teachers often have stronger social support networks, which can enhance their self-efficacy. Mojavezi and Tamiz (2012) believed that female teachers may possess higher emotional intelligence, enabling them to better manage their emotions and develop stronger self-efficacy. Li (2023) stressed that female teachers tend to adopt more student-centred and collaborative teaching approaches, which can foster a sense of self-efficacy.

Conclusion

The study's findings indicate that teacher self-efficacy is high across three key factors: instructional practices, student engagement, and classroom management. This suggests that teachers feel confident in their ability to deliver effective instruction. They are confident in their ability to plan, deliver, and assess instruction effectively. They also engage students to promote a love of learning. A conducive and inclusive classroom environment is maintained by the teachers for effective teaching and learning. However, classroom management scored below other factors, which means more efforts should be made in this regard.

Recommendations

1. The school should provide ongoing professional development opportunities to support teachers' continued growth and development.
2. The school should foster a collaborative school culture where teachers share best practices and learn from each other.
3. Teachers should use different strategies to engage students, such as the adoption of personalised learning, the usage of technology tools, tailoring instruction to meet individual students' needs, and incorporating activities that promote active learning and participation.
4. A special training program needs to be provided for male teachers teaching little kids to improve their efficiency.
5. Schools can support teacher professional development by providing access to contemporary resources, enabling internet access, and inviting experts to retrain teachers.
6. Additionally, schools should foster a collaborative community where teachers can reflect, share knowledge, and challenge each other's practices. This collaborative environment will enhance teachers' professional growth, boost their confidence, and promote continuous improvement in teaching practices.

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