

Head Teachers' Self Efficacy: A Perspective from Public Sector Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Leaders play a key role in their organizations rather organizations are reflection of their leaders. The present study was designed to study head teachers' self-efficacy in public sector secondary schools in district Faisalabad. The data were collected from head teachers of both gender through a five point Likert scale Head Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale (HTSES). The sample comprised of 220 (114 male and 106 female) secondary school heads working in district Faisalabad. Head teachers' self-efficacy was measured on few aspects of school leadership such as school management, instructional leadership, positive environment, classroom evaluation practices and monitor learning, abidance to the demands of policy and community, professional development of self and team and school development and evaluation. It was found that male head teachers were more self-efficacious than female head teachers in aspects of school management, positive & conducive environment, instructional leadership, classroom evaluation practices & monitor of learning, professional development of self & team self-efficacy and quality assurance self-efficacy of head teachers.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, school management, instructional leadership, professional development,

INTRODUCTION

School head teachers play a very important role in evolving the conducive environment for teaching/learning, which is crucial for teachers and students respectively. Leadership is not an easy job in the school arena, where they have to face many issues, problems and challenges. It was once believed that only management tasks and bureaucratic responsibilities were the traditional role of head teachers (Hallinger et al. 2018). With the passage of time, things have changed a lot. The roles of head teachers have increased dramatically around the world and almost all the things happening in school are linked with head teachers directly or indirectly. Now the head teacher is the center of all activities from management, teaching of the teachers, learning of students, vision making to goal development, execution and monitoring of evaluations etc. (Pointet al. 2008).

The sudden eruption of pandemic of COVID 19 also changed the horizon of educational canvas of the world where head teachers faced added responsibilities in the hard times of different waves of COVID-19. In a country like Pakistan, which is hard trodden by

post 9/11 scenario, and where war on terror has ruthlessly destroyed the social fabric of society, head teachers are responsible for taking effective security measures in their schools (Farid et al., 2022). So, the working conditions of head teachers in Pakistan are not like sailing a smooth ship, rather they are working in a war like situation. To work in these hard times, one has to be self-efficacious.

According to Fisher et al., (2020), in the arena of research in education, the construct of self efficacy has been mostly studied in four diverse contexts i.e. student (Bandura, 1994; Schunk & Meece, 2005); teacher (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007); teachers collective self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) and principal/head teacher (Brama, 2004; Sierman Smith, 2007; Smith & Guarino, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, 2005).

In 1986, Bandura defined self-efficacy as, “judgement of the people about their capabilities in organizing and executing actions to achieve success” (p. 391). According to Zimmerman and Cleary (2006) self-efficacy is one’s beliefs about future oriented tasks that what one is able to do in various areas of life. It helps individuals to answer such questions “Can I do it?” And “how well?” (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

As per social cognitive theory, self-efficacy has deep impact on at least three aspects of a person namely one’s reasoning, behavior and emotions. One finds research study regarding teachers showing positive relationship of self-efficacy with job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Those people who show higher level of self-efficacy set exciting and thought provoking goals for themselves while low self-efficacious people lean towards living with their deficiencies and shun circumstances of actions (Bandura 1997).

Being a multidimensional construct, it is a domain specific with a variation with task at hand. Social cognitive theory describes that human emotions, behavior and cognition is affected by self-efficacy. For Bandura (1997), highly self-efficacious people always try to establish demanding goals for them. On the other hand, low self-efficacy people avoid difficult situations and try to refrain from indulging any such activity. They remain abide with their weaknesses.

The construct of self-efficacy has supported in appreciating, clarifying and understanding behavior of humans in diverse contexts of work and social relations. Additionally, it confirms noteworthy associations for diverse goal attainment levels.

Self-efficacy is the same personal feel that every individual has when he/she plans to do any work, particularly any new assignment. Before the start of any task, every one assesses personal abilities to fruitfully establish and accomplish a mindset that may result into an anticipated outcome. These beliefs affect one’s pattern of thinking and feelings which let him to successfully accomplish the task at hand. There is variation in abilities of people in performing diverse tasks in diverse conditions and situations.

There has been a lot of research on the construct of self-efficacy in the field of education associated to teachers and students (Pajares, 1996; Parker et al., 2003; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Many factors related to teachers’ efficacy are studied with different combinations such as motivation, professionalism, teaching methods, effectiveness, pedagogy, burnout etc. many other studied efficacy beliefs as predictors of performance and achievements (Klasse and Chiu, 2010; Schwarzer and Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2010).

Self-efficacy of school heads is also studied to understand leadership self-efficacy. But it is limited in its scope and breadth. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) indicated that

research on self-efficacy for school leaders is quite small rather it is in its infancy (p. 498).

There has been lot of research on teachers' self-efficacy as teachers are considered pivotal on which the educational system revolves but school head teacher's self-efficacy has remained out of the sight of researchers. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) communicated principal self-efficacy as a judgment of person's own capabilities to organize a specific action plan to achieve those results who he/she wished for the school he or she is leading (p. 573).

Professional self-efficacy has two aspects: one deals with potential of a person to excel in occupation and personal sense of successfully accomplishing tasks in professional settings. The other aspect is belief of a person to bring change or affect surrounding persons to bring change in them in occupational settings (Cherniss, 1993). The occupational self-efficacy deals with the complex nature of any profession (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), so it is very important to operationally define self-efficacy precisely according to particular professions (Gist, 1987).

Being a developing country, school head teachers in Pakistan face a lot of problems, issues and challenges in performing their duties. The list of these problems, issues and challenges is quite long and is of varied nature. The country has suffered a lot due to US led war on terror and recent pandemic of COVID-19. The present study is intended to study head teacher's self-efficacy in public sector secondary schools in district Faisalabad.

Present Study

The present study was designed to study head teacher's self-efficacy in public sector secondary schools in district Faisalabad. The district Faisalabad is the second largest population district of Punjab with six tehsils. The sample was drawn from all tehsil namely Faisalabad City, Faisalabad Sadar, Chak Jhumra, Samundri, Tandianwala and Jaranwala. The sample comprised of 220 secondary school head teachers working in district Faisalabad. There were 114 male head teachers and 106 female head teachers in the sample of study. All the head teachers had a working experience of being a teacher and presently working as head teachers in their respective schools. The data were collected from head teachers who had varied experience of their current post. The experience of head teachers varied from having experience of couple of years to the experience of over a decade. The schools were located in both urban and rural locale.

The researchers developed a scale Head Teachers 'Self-Efficacy Scale (*HTSES*) in the local context and inculcated few leadership aspects. Head teacher's self-efficacy was measured on few aspects of school leadership such as school management, instructional leadership, positive environment, classroom evaluation practices and monitor of learning, abidance to the demands of policy and community, professional development of self and team and school development and evaluation. This scale was finalized after taking opinions from five experts in the field of educational research having varied research experience. The *HTSES* comprised of 55 statements dealing with various aspects as already quoted. The overall reliability of the scale was 0.85. The reliability of sub-scales is described in table 1.

Table 1

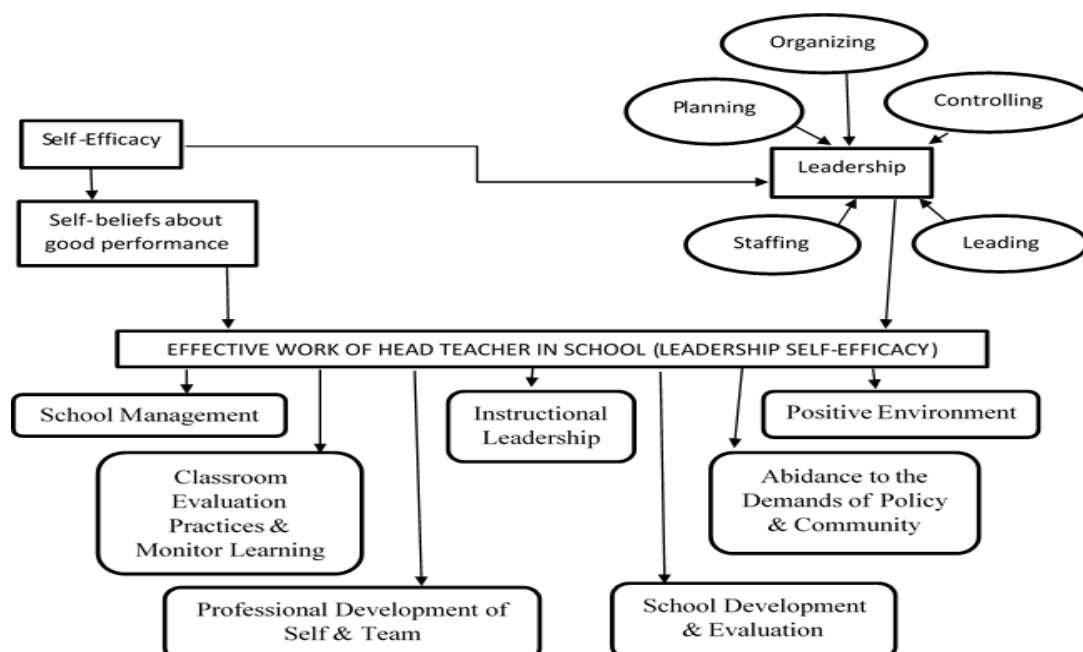
Reliability of Sub Scale of Head Teachers' Self Efficacy Scale (HTSES)

Sub Scales	Items on the scale	Reliability Coefficient
Head Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale		
School Management	1 - 9	.82
Positive & Conducive Environment	10- 15	.65
Instructional Leadership	16- 25	.70
Classroom Evaluation Practices & Monitor of Learning	26- 32	.60
Abidance to the Demands of Policy & Community	33- 39	.81
Professional Development of Self & Team	40- 46	.76
Quality Assurance	47-55	.84
Complete <i>HTSE</i> Scale	1-55	.85

The head teacher's efficacy applied in school environment can alter the fate of students. The head teacher can guide teaching staff in a more professional way. The head teacher becomes true leader where he/she can leads from the front and can manage school in an excellent manner. This can result in creating positive and conducive environment for learning. The instructional leadership practices of school heads result in better communication skills, trustworthiness, effective planning and competence among faculty members. The school head can help rather guide in classroom evaluation practices employed by teachers and guide monitor learning. Usually the management tasks played by school head teacher are planning, organizing, controlling, leading and staffing. Along with these tasks the school head teacher is involved in few other tasks such as taking care of the wishes of local community and abidance to the policy issued by the authorities of educational department. The head teacher is responsible for the professional development of the self as well as team members. One important aspect is the assurance of quality in the systems of school. All these roles and functions keep school head active throughout the academic session. Keeping in mind all different aspects of leadership self-efficacy of school head teacher, the conceptual framework used in the study is represented in figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of Leadership Self-Efficacy of School Head Teacher



Results

The collected data were analyzed and results were tabulated accordingly.

Independent samples t-test was applied to find out self-efficacy of head teachers on the basis of gender.

Table 2

Gender Wise Self-Efficacy of Head Teachers

Gender	M	Sd	Df	T	P
Male	219.96	13.52	218	5.28	0.000*
Female	209.96	14.56			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 2 describes significant mean difference in self-efficacy between male head teachers ($M=219.96$, $SD=13.52$) and female head teachers ($M=201.96$, $SD= 14.56$); $t(218) = 5.28$, $p=0.00*$. It was also observed that male head teachers ($M=201.96$) were more self-efficacious than female head teacher ($M=209.96$).

A series of independent samples t-test was applied to find out self-efficacy of head teachers on the basis of gender on the various subscale of *HTSES* such as school management, positive & conducive environment, instructional leadership, classroom evaluation practices & monitor of learning, abidance to the demands of policy & community, professional development of self & team self-efficacy and quality assurance self-efficacy of head teachers.

Table 3 describes that there was significant mean difference in school management between male head teachers ($M=40.58$, $SD=3.91$) and female head teachers ($M=38.37$, $SD= 3.51$); $t(218) = 4.58$, $p=0.000*$. The analysis also describes that male head teachers ($M=40.58$) were more self-efficacious regarding school management than female head teachers ($M=38.37$) in their schools.

Table 3

Sub Scale	Gender	M	Sd	df	t	p
School Management	Male	40.58	3.91	218	4.58	0.000*
	Female	38.27	3.51			
Positive & Conducive Environment	Male	20.91	3.62	218	1.97	0.049*
	Female	20.00	3.22			
Instructional Leadership	Male	36.21	3.92	218	3.43	0.001*
	Female	34.48	3.52			
Classroom Evaluation Practices & Monitor of Learning	Male	27.35	3.41	218	4.51	0.000*

	Female	25.2	3.6			
	Male	23.6	2.6	21	0.6	0.497
Abidance to the Demands of Policy & Community		6	5	8	8	
	Female	23.3	3.0			
	Male	30.1	3.7	21	2.4	.013*
Professional Development of Self & Team Self-Efficacy		0	2	8	9	
	Female	28.9	3.1			
	Male	41.1	3.3	21	3.2	0.002
Quality Assurance Self-Efficacy		5	9	8	1	*
	Female	39.6	3.5			
	Male	5	2			

Gender Wise Self-Efficacy of Head Teachers on Different Subscales of the HTSES

*p<0.05

Table 3 refers that there was significant mean difference in positive and conducive environment between male head teachers (M=20.91, SD=3.62) and female head teachers (M=20.00, SD= 3.22); $t(218) = 1.97, p = 0.049^*$. The analysis also describes that male head teachers (M=20.91) were more self-efficacious regarding creating positive and conducive environment than female head teachers (M=20.00) in their schools.

Similarly there was significant mean difference in instructional leadership between male head teachers (M=36.21, SD=3.92) and female head teachers (M=34.48, SD= 3.52); $t(218) = 3.43, p = 0.001^*$. The analysis also describes that male head teachers (M=36.21) were more self-efficacious regarding instructional leadership than female head teachers (M=34.48) in their schools.

There was significant mean difference in classroom evaluation practices and monitoring of learning between male head teachers (M=27.35, SD=3.41) and female head teachers (M=25.22, SD= 3.61); $t(218) = 4.51, p = 0.000^*$. The analysis also describes that male head teachers (M=27.35) were more self-efficacious regarding classroom evaluation practices and monitoring of learning than female head teachers (M=25.22) in their schools.

There was no significant mean difference in abidance to the demands of policy and community between male head teachers (M=23.66, SD=2.65) and female head teachers (M=23.39, SD=3.06); $t(218) = 0.68, p = 0.497$. Almost similar mean score was found in male head teachers (M=23.66) and female head teachers (M=23.39).

Similarly there was significant mean difference in professional development of self and team self-efficacy between male head teachers (M=30.10, SD=3.72) and female head teachers (M=28.94, SD= 3.14); $t(218) = 2.49, p = 0.013^*$. The analysis also describes that male head teachers (M=30.10) were more self-efficacious regarding professional development of self and team self-efficacy than female head teachers (M=28.94) in their schools.

Table 3 refers that there was significant mean difference in quality assurance self-efficacy between male head teachers (M=41.15, SD=3.39) and female head teachers (M=39.65, SD=3.52); $t(218) = 3.21, p = 0.002^*$. The analysis also describes that male

head teachers ($M=41.15$) were more self-efficacious regarding quality assurance self-efficacy than female head teachers ($M=39.65$) in their schools.

Discussion & Conclusion

The research was conducted to study head teachers' self-efficacy in public sector secondary schools. The data were collected from public sector secondary school head teachers working in district Faisalabad. The sample was drawn from all the six tehsils of district Faisalabad. Both urban and rural school head teachers of both the gender were part of the sample of the study. A self-reporting five point Likert scale Head Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale (*HTSES*) was used for collection of data from 220 head teachers (114 males & 106 female head teachers). The scale had 55 statements measuring different aspects of head teachers' self-efficacy such as school management, instructional leadership, positive environment, classroom evaluation practices and monitor learning, abidance to the demands of policy and community, professional development of self and team and school development and evaluation. Keeping the local context in mind, this scale was developed. There are many different tasks being performed by head teachers in public sector secondary schools. Few aspects, as mentioned afore cited, were taken into consideration for measuring head teachers' self-efficacy.

It was found that male head teachers were more self-efficacious than female head teachers in aspects of school management, positive & conducive environment, instructional leadership, classroom evaluation practices & monitor of learning, professional development of self & team self-efficacy and quality assurance self-efficacy of head teachers. Odanga et al (2015) studied self-efficacy of teachers and found that male teachers were more efficacious than female teachers in Kenya. Similar results were found in the study of Akram & Ghazanfar (2014) that gender influence self-efficacy.

The self-efficacy of a person working in one profession changes with change in profession. If profession changes, so is the professional self-efficacy. One can safely say that as the work of head teacher is different from that of a teacher in a school, so, their professional self-efficacy will likely be different from each other. Traditional self-efficacy of school head teacher is changed a lot as compared to previous decade. The cause is changing roles and functions of school head teacher. The term principal or head teacher is synonymous as it represents the same thing. When someone talks about self-efficacy of head teacher, it means assured levels of self-confidence in knowledge, ability and skill of a person related with leading the school (Fisher et al., 2020). Here it is a multidimensional construct dealing with various aspects of running a school. Few aspects are measured in this study such as school management, instructional leadership, positive environment, classroom evaluation practices and monitor learning, abidance to the demands of policy and community, professional development of self and team and school development and evaluation.

The study of Kythreotis et al., (2010) found that students' academic achievement was direct consequence of the instructional leadership used by school heads in Cyprus.

There has been paucity of literature regarding research on self-efficacy of head teachers. It is very important to understand head teachers' self-efficacy as it could support policymakers in making decision regarding training programs of in service head teachers as well as prospective head teachers. The speedy and abrupt changes taking place in the educational settings demands modifications in the role of head teachers. A

good leader can only inculcate a sense of self-efficacy into his followers successfully if the leader himself owns a strong sense of self-efficacy.

Like all other research studies, the current study is limited in its scope as the collected data belongs to only public sector schools and from only one district. A comparative study of public-private can give a broader perspective of head teachers' self-efficacy. More districts can be added for a better comparison rather it can be done on larger scale for taking high level policy decisions regarding training of head teachers in post COVID era.

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