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RESEARCH PAPER

Effect of Perceived Social Support on Self-Efficacy of Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The significance of teachers cannot be overstated. The aim of this research was to examine the effect of teachers' perceived social support on their self-efficacy. The pivotal role of teachers in molding students is of utmost importance. They require support and skills to fulfill the demands of schools, students, principals, and the community. A survey study was conducted to find the effect of perceived social support of teachers on their self-efficacy about their teaching abilities. Participants were 475 male and 460 female secondary school teachers of public schools in Punjab, Pakistan. Reliability and validity were ensured through the pilot study and experts' views. Results showed that perceived social support has a positive and significant relationship with teachers' self-efficacy. Social support significantly increased the self-efficacy of teachers. Perceived social support explained 22.8% of teachers' self-efficacy change. Moreover, non-school sources explained 11.3% of the variance in self-efficacy, and school sources explained 8.7% of the variance in self-efficacy. It is recommended that support from family and school may be increased to enhance the teaching abilities of teachers.

Introduction

Teachers have a vital role in school organizations. They are considered more than other factors in school for students' outcomes and performance. Public secondary school teachers are confronted with many challenges due to high demands from the government, society, schools, students, and parents. Due to staff shortages, teachers are overworked and teach more classes. They also face a lack of teaching and learning resources, have fewer opportunities for professional development, work in a servant-master environment, and are subject to leg-pulling and flattery. For these reasons, it is very important for teachers to know and believe their abilities. Increasing social support will increase the performance of teachers. High performance indicates that teachers are highly self-efficacious about their performance (Amjad et al., 2022). Indonesian researchers found that social factors are predictors of teachers' performance. Further, they concluded that supervisor support, peer support, and family support significantly affect teachers' work performance (Amjad et al., 2022a; Novitasari et al., 2021). Social support is one of the characteristics that can help teachers perform better. According to experts (Blanch & Aluja, 2012; Pluut et al., 2018), social support is a feeling of comfort, gratitude, attention, or assistance that a person receives from another person or group. Social bonds, which reflect the general level of interpersonal relationship quality, are a function of social support. According to Novitasari et al. (2021), the emotional high points of a person's life are their relationships with other people, particularly their friendships and bonds. Mostly, research on social support has

been conducted in medical fields and adolescents but there is a lack of research in the education field, especially the social support of teachers has not fully been explored. In this, the perceived social support of teachers has been measured from two sources (i.e. non-school sources and school sources). This article examines the levels of self-efficacy of teachers to find out the relationship between teachers' perceived social support and self-efficacy and to see the effect of teachers' perceived social support on teachers' self-efficacy.

Literature Review

Effective teachers take more risks and set higher expectations in their classes, which leads to increased student achievement. In a broader sense, teacher self-efficacy has been linked to other factors such as job satisfaction (Moe et al., 2010), perfectionism (Comerchero, 2008), and emotional intelligence (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009). Teachers' self-efficacy has been explored in literature as a predictor and as the outcome variable. In this study self-efficacy of teachers was measured as their teaching abilities (i.e. instructional strategies, classroom management & student engagement). A survey study conducted in China on teachers found that Social Support has a significantly positive relationship with teachers' mental health literacy, coping tendencies, and life satisfaction (Li et al., 2022). Support from social factors increases the self-efficacy of teachers. The social support that is available as informational, instrumental, and emotional from an individual's network. Many studies suggested that social support is an indispensable factor in predicting teachers' self-efficacy and that also leads to teachers' psychological state (Shen, 2009; Wallace et al., 2001).

Self-Efficacy

Within the Social-Cognitive Theory, Bandura (1977) defined perceived self-efficacy as a generalized concept of behavior expectations based mostly on mastery experience. Within the self-determination theory, a higher level of perceived self-efficacy is seen to be beneficial for creating and completing objectives (Bandura, 2012). Hence apparently relevant for satisfying basic needs, particularly autonomy and competence. Teacher efficacy is defined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) as a teacher's beliefs or perceptions about his or her ability to instruct students with a variety of needs and to make desired changes in students' accomplishment. One of the most common aspects that may separate teachers who teach effectively from those who struggle in the classroom, according to studies, is "teacher efficacy" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Alibakhshi et al. (2020) explored in their qualitative study on English language teachers they found that self-efficacy has three major consequences: pedagogical, learner-related, and psychological. Self–efficacy of employees from two Belgian organizations was measured and it mediated the path between perceived organizational support and work engagement of employees (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014). Self-efficacy beliefs of teachers mediated the relationship between teaching strategies and job satisfaction (Moe et al., 2010). Self-efficacy of teachers not only mediates the relationship between independent and dependent variables it also has many valuable consequences in teaching. Perfectionism (Comerchero, 2008). Teacher self-efficacy has been linked to career commitment and retention, teacher quality, student achievement, and job satisfaction (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Sorenson & McKim, 2014; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). The effectiveness of instructors' teaching skills, their resiliency in the face of frustration, their instructional behaviors, and students' performance are all influenced by teacher efficacy (Amjad et al., 2023; Dixon et al., 2014; Scherer et al., 2016).

Social Support

Social support has been the subject of interest since the 1970s. This construct has been used in many ways and contexts. It is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in a variety of ways, but it essentially refers to formal or informal interpersonal relationships that involve help, affection, or affirmation (Kahn, 1980). Furthermore, received social support (the receipt of supportive behaviors) is an important sub-construct of social support (Haber et al., 2007). However, there is a difference between perceived and received social support, from the viewpoint of stress and coping with social support (Cohen et al., 2000).

Chan (2002) reported that perceived social support in Chinese teachers moderated the effect of stress on distress. Although distinctions can be made across a variety of sub-dimensions of social support, such as source (e.g., family, friends, organization, colleagues, community, and pupils), type (e.g., physical and emotional), and dimension (e.g., perceived adequacy vs. actual), the focus in this study is on the levels of support from school sources (administration, colleagues, students, and parents of students) and non-school sources (family & friends out of school). A research conducted in Indonesia by Novitasari, et al. (2021) they established through data analysis that all social support variables have a positive and significant relationship with performance. A positive and significant relationship was found between social support from school principals and colleagues with perceived trust levels of primary school teachers (Taşdan & Yalçin, 2010). So, in five private elementary schools, support from supervisors, peers, and families has a favorable and significant impact on teacher performance.

Social Support and Self-Efficacy

Minghui et al. (2018) discovered that social support had an indirect influence on special education teachers' self-efficacy through work engagement. Teachers' efficacy and psychological condition have been proven to be influenced by social support (Shen, 2009; Wallace et al., 2001), and investing in teachers' social context can increase their psychological well-being (Field & Buitendach, 2012). Chen, et al. (2020) reported that special education teachers perceived a high level of social support, perceived a high level of professional identity, and academic self-efficacy. In a research of 1,027 special education teachers in China, Minghui et al. (2018) found that while social support has a direct impact on self-efficacy, it also has an indirect impact through work engagement.

School supportive environment affects teachers' instructional behaviors. When teachers are not satisfied with their needs in the school environment, then a high level of self-efficacy negatively affects the student-teacher relationship (Holzberger et al., 2014). Employees who feel encouraged at work have higher levels of self-efficacy and are more dedicated to their tasks. Employees who work in high-stress, low-support workplaces, on the other hand, are more likely to have low self-efficacy and quit their jobs (Chan, 2002). Social support factors are very important variables in predicting teacher self-efficacy (Wallace et al., 2001). This study answers the two research questions: What are the levels of perceived social support of secondary school teachers? And what are the levels of self-efficacy of teachers? Further two Research hypotheses were formulated:

Ho1: Teachers' perceived social support has no relationship with self-efficacy.

Ho2: Teachers' perceived social support does not affect teachers' self-efficacy.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed from literature on support from social factors (Cohen & Wills, 1985) and teachers' self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).
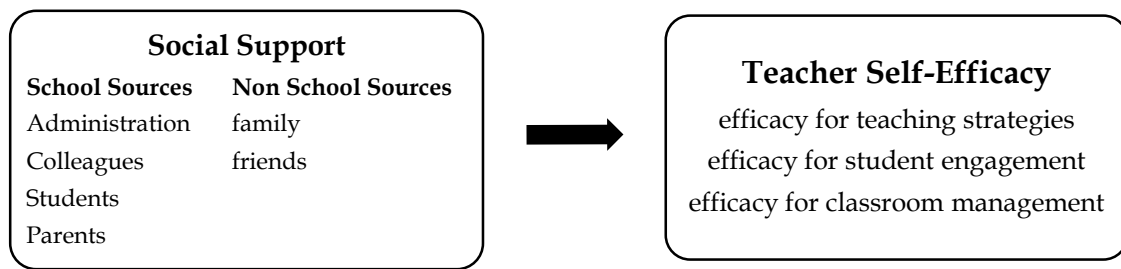
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┌─────────────────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Social Support          │          │        Teacher Self-Efficacy          │
│                                 │          │                                        │
│ School Sources   Non School     │   ───▶   │   efficacy for teaching strategies     │
│                  Sources        │          │   efficacy for student engagement      │
│ Administration   family         │          │   efficacy for classroom management    │
│ Colleagues       friends        │          │                                        │
│ Students                        │          │                                        │
│ Parents                         │          │                                        │
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Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Material and Methods

The nature of the study was quantitative. A survey research method was used.

Participants

Participants of this study were 935 secondary school teachers (475 males & 460 females) working in public secondary schools in Punjab, Pakistan.

Research Instrument

Social Support Scale was established by researchers to find the levels of available sources. Non-school sources of support were included: family and friends with 8 items. School sources included administration, colleagues, students, and parents with 14 items. Response rate was assessed at 5 point Likert scale 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always. Reliability of the perceived Social Support scale was α=.88. "*My principal helps to manage my duties at school how busy I am anyway*".

Self-Efficacy Scale Teachers' Self-Efficacy was established by researchers to find the teacher's abilities regarding their teaching. Three sub-factors were measured under teachers' self-efficacy: efficacy for teaching strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. A teacher with a high level of self-efficacy shows success in engaging students in their work, using instructional strategies, and managing the classroom. Overall 16 items were included in the teachers' self-efficacy scale. The reliability of the teachers' self-efficacy scale was α=.83. "*I give tasks to students to engage them in learning*".

Data Collection

A quantitative research method was used for this study. Data were collected through a close ended survey. Researchers personally collected the data from secondary school teachers after obtaining permission from relevant principals of schools. Teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and they were also explained about the questionnaires. Around 989 questionnaires were returned out of 1200 and 935 were included in the study. Some questionnaires were omitted because they were not filled correctly.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. To answer the research questions mean and standard deviations were reported. To answer the research hypotheses Pearson Product Moment Coefficient and multiple linear regression analysis were applied to data.

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

		N	%
Gender	Male	475	50%
	Female	460	49%
Age	21-30 y	237	25%
	31-40 y	357	38%
	Above 40	341	36%
Teaching Experience	5-10 y	380	40%
	10-20 y	172	19%
	More than 20 y	383	40%
Income	Low	335	35%
	Average	321	34%
	Above average	279	30%

Table 1 represents the demographic information of participants. Male participants were 475 (50%) and females 460 (49%). Age-wise 25% of the participants were between 21-30 years, 38% between 31-40 years, and 36% were above 40 years. Teaching experience-wise 40% of the participants have 5-10 years of teaching experience, 19% have 10-20 years and 40% have more than 20 years of teaching experience. Regarding income 35% of the participants were from low-income backgrounds, 34% from average, and 30% from above-average income.

Results and Discussion

Table 2
Participants' Perceived levels in Social Support

Sources of Social Support		N	M	SD
School		935	4.21	1.78
•	Administration	935	4.56	1.88
•	Colleagues	935	4.34	1.76
•	Students	935	4.11	2.01
•	Parents	935	3.84	1.89
Non-school		935	4.47	1.55
•	Family	935	4.67	1.34
•	Friends out of school	935	4.27	1.99
Overall		935	4.34	1.65

Table 2 shows the results of descriptive statistics, The response range of support from parents of students was (M=3.84, SD=1.89) between 3 to 4 which is sometimes too often. Whereas, other sources of support ranged between 4 to 5 which is often to always. The most available source of support from the school is the administration (M=4.56, SD=1.88), and from non-school source is the family (M=4.67, SD=1.34). Teachers perceived support from administration (school sources) and family (non-school source) is present at higher levels and support from parents of students (school source) and friends out of

school (non-school source) is present at lower levels. Overall level of social support is high (M=4.34, SD=1.65).

Table 3
Levels of Self-Efficacy among Teachers

Teachers' Self-Efficacy	N	M	SD
Efficacy for instructional strategies	935	4.11	1.21
Efficacy for students' engagement	935	4.21	1.27
Efficacy for classroom management	935	4.01	1.65
Overall	935	4.11	1.05

Table 3 expresses the levels of self-efficacy perceived by teachers regarding their teaching abilities. Participants indicated the presence of a higher level of efficacy for students' engagement (M=4.21, SD=1.43) but a lower level of efficacy for classroom management (M=4.01, SD=1.65). Teachers are more efficacious about their student engagement abilities and less efficacious about classroom management.

Table 4
Inter-correlations coefficient between perceived social support and self-efficacy of teachers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Support from administration								
Support from colleagues	.34**							
Support from students	.25**	.21**						
Support from parents	.31**	.16**	.41**					
Support from family	.30**	.28**	.32**	.21**				
Support from friends (outside school)	.42**	.34**	.22**	.15**	.19**			
Efficacy for instructional strategies	.53**	.38**	.44**	.29**	.46**	.32**		
Efficacy for students' engagement	.49**	.50**	.54**	.61**	.52**	.14**	.28**	
Efficacy for classroom management	.33**	.43**	.51**	.49**	.43**	.31**	.34**	.42**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 depicts Pearson product-moment correlation among all sub-factors of perceived social support and self-efficacy of teachers. All relationships are significant p<.001. The correlation coefficients of all sub-factors reveal that is positive relationship exists among them.

Table 5
Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Perceived Social Support on Self-Efficacy of Teachers

Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R-Square	F	t-value	p-value
PSS ➤ SE	.478	.228	163.390	15.363	0.000
Nonschool sources ➤ SE	.337	.113	219.018	14.048	0.000
School sources ➤ SE	.296	.087	187.889	10.321	0.001

Table 5 depicts simple linear regression results as a whole perceived social support has a positive and statistically significant effect (β=.478, t= 15.363, p<.001) on teachers' self-efficacy. Results show that the higher the social support, the higher the self-efficacy of the teachers. F statistics is 163.390, with an observed significant level of less than 0.001. Thus, the hypothesis that teachers' perceived social support does not affect the self-efficacy of teachers is rejected. R-square is 0.228 thus, for this result the predictor variable PSS has explained 22.8% of the change in the self-efficacy of teachers. School sources of support have a positive effect (β=.296) on the level of self-efficacy of teachers and accounted for 8.7% of the change in self-efficacy of teachers. Non-school sources of support have a positive effect (β=.337) on the levels of self-efficacy of teachers and accounted for 11.3% of the variance in self-efficacy of teachers. Results show that non-school sources predict the self-efficacy of teachers more than school sources of support.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of available social support and the self-efficacy of teachers working in public secondary schools. Results show a positive and significant relationship between perceived social support and the self-efficacy of teachers. Tirtayani and Asril (2021) also found a positive relationship between social support and the self-efficacy of teachers. Based on the results of this study perceived social support has a positive effect on the self-efficacy of teachers. Moreover, teachers perceived more support from non-school sources (i.e. family & friends) than sources of support from the school. This finding is in line with previous research, which shows that the concept of support is frequently manifested in personal connections, including feelings of affection, worth, love, and belonging (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). From school sources of support, administration scored a higher level (M=4.56, SD=1.88) whereas, support from parents of students scored a lower level (M=3.84, SD=1.89). The finding regarding school source of support (i.e. parents of students) is in line with the results given in a study conducted by Korte and Simonsen (2018) they reported that novice agriculture education teachers perceived a lower degree of support from parents of students among six school sources of support. Overall level of social support is high (M=4.34, SD=1.65). Chen, et al., (2020) also reported a high level of social support among teachers from special education.

Overall, the level of self-efficacy is high whereas, participants indicated the presence of a higher level of efficacy for students' engagement (M=4.21, SD=1.43) but a lower level of efficacy for classroom management (M=4.01, SD=1.65). Teachers are more efficacious about their student engagement abilities and less efficacious about classroom management. The result of a higher level of students' engagement is in line with the results of Korte and Simonsen (2018) who also reported that teachers showed a higher level of efficacy in student engagement. The result of the present about the lower level of classroom engagement is opposite to the results reported by Korte and Simonsen (2018) who reported a higher level of efficacy in classroom management. Regardless matter how difficult or unmotivated the student was, inexperienced teachers believed they had a lot of power to influence the desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, according to research (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Perceived social support is a significant predictor of self-efficacy and 22.8% of the variance was explained by PSS in SE of teachers. Moreover, non-school sources were affected more than school sources and explained 11.3% and 8.7% of the variance in self-efficacy of teachers.

Results show that non-school sources predict the self-efficacy of teachers more than school sources of support. Korte and Simonsen (2018) reported cumulatively 27.1% of the

variance was explained by students (school sources) and community (non-school source) in the self-efficacy of teachers.

The overall level of social support is higher than the self-efficacy of teachers. All factors of social support have a positive and significant relationship with the self-efficacy of secondary school teachers. Non-school sources predicted more change in self-efficacy than then school sources of support.

Recommendations

This study found a correlation between perceived social support and self-efficacy of teachers. Moreover, the effect of perceived social support on the self-efficacy of teachers has been reported. Due to the contextual limitations, this may be generalized in Pakistan. Authors from other countries may use this study for the purpose of knowing the relationship between variables. In this study self-efficacy was measured as an outcome variable of perceived social support, future authors may include consequences of self-efficacy (i.e. job satisfaction, student achievement & work performance of teachers) in this methodology.

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