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Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of teacher efficacy on academic achievement of secondary level students of Wah Cantt. schools. Teacher efficacy is a simple idea with significant implications. A teacher's efficacy belief is a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated. The main objective of the study was to identify the teacher efficacy at secondary level. The results were found that there is great role of teacher efficacy on academic achievement of students.

Key Words: Teacher Efficacy, Academic Achievement, Low Teacher Efficacy, High Teacher Efficacy

1.1 Introduction

Education is a social function thus it serves the society, which maintains it. Its first and foremost role is to conserve the existing culture, by transmitting it from generation to generation (Siddique, 1986).

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 235

The quality of education is directly related to the quality of teacher. Teaching can be defined, as a set of interrelated component teaching behaviors for the realization of specific instructional objectives. Simpler skills and component teaching behaviors are convenient units for training /preparing the teachers to undertake full-scale teaching with confidence. Teaching is not a fragmentary process but an integrated one and teaching skills are likely to occur in set of certain behaviors, which might be termed 'competencies' (Ashraf *et al.*, 1990).

Motivation to learn is one of the main factors that influence students learning. Learning process can be made effective if student is motivated to learn. It is very essential for teachers to understand motivation and apply the knowledge about the complex phenomenon in teaching to improve quality of student learning (Naz, 2002).

Teacher motivation plays a vital role in student learning. Teaching own motivation means teacher belief in her own ability to teach and belief about student's ability to learn. These two beliefs about ones own teaching ability and student's ability to learn, in combination is known as teacher efficacy. This belief guides the teacher towards efforts and persistence. Teacher efficacy is said to be closely associated with student's achievements. It is significant because it affects class room learning. The teacher beliefs and consequent behavior can create optimal class room learning to improve student learning (Naz, 2002).

In Pakistan, little work on teacher motivation in terms of teacher efficacy has been carried out. The present study was, therefore, designed to investigate the teacher efficacy effect on academic achievement in schools in Pakistan.

1.1.1 Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is a set of personal efficacy beliefs that refer to the specific domain of the teacher's professional behavior. Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher's expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning. Teacher efficacy is of interest to school improvement researchers because teacher efficacy consistently predicts willingness to try out new teaching ideas. High expectations of success motivate classroom experimentation because teachers anticipate they will able to achieve the benefits of innovation and overcome obstacles that might arise. Teachers with high expectations about their ability produce higher student achievement in core academic subjects (Ross, 1992).

William James wrote that "education is for behavior and habits are the stuff of which behavior consists." Self-efficacy beliefs ultimately become habits of thinking that are developed like any habit of conduct and teachers and parents are influential in helping young people to develop the self-belief habits that will serve them throughout their lives. There is a proverb to the effect that "instruction in youth is like engraving in stone." Researchers know that the earlier a belief is incorporated into our belief system, the more

difficult it is to alter it. Newly acquired beliefs are the most vulnerable to change. Once solidly established, our beliefs tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, schooling or experience. People tend to hold beliefs based on incorrect or incomplete knowledge even after correct explanations are presented to them. For these reasons, adults face the critical challenge of making the positive self-beliefs of youngsters automatic and habitual as early as possible. After all, good habits are as hard to break as are bad habits (Pajares, 2005).

Understanding teachers' perceptions and beliefs is important because teachers heavily involved in various teaching and learning processes. They are practitioners of educational principles and theories (Jia, Eslami and Burlbaw, 2006).

Teacher efficacy is defined as a teacher's belief in their effectiveness in increasing students' performance. It is a belief that he or she has the skills necessary to effective positive changes in student learning. These skills include both maintaining a classroom climate conducive to learning and choosing the most appropriate strategies to teach the various subjects (Chase *et al*, 2001).

Effective classroom managers are nearly always good planners. They do not enter a room late, after noise and disruption have had a chance to build. They are waiting at the door when the children come in. Starting from the very first day of school, they teach the rules about appropriate student behavior. They do this actively and directly, sometimes they actually model the procedures for getting assistance, leaving the room, going to the pencil sharpener and the like, the more important rules of classroom behavior are written down as are the penalties for not following them (Sadker and Sadker, 1997).

If we want to judge the efficacy of a teacher, we have to observe her attitude towards low-achieving students because teacher efficacy is directly related with student's achievement. Teachers have high as well as low efficacy.

Low and High Teacher Efficacy

Teachers with a high sense of efficacy acknowledge that teaching low- achieving students is difficult but they also believe that such students are reachable and teachable. Teachers with low self-efficacy are similar to students at risk of learnable, low-achieving students frequently blame their failure on external conditions; similarly, teachers sometimes blame student's poor academic performance on the students rather than on their own teaching efforts.

Teachers who set high goals, who persist, who try another strategy when one approach is found wanting-in other words, teachers who have a high sense of efficacy and act on it, are more likely to have students who learn (Shaughnessy, 2004).

Jerald (2007) highlights some teacher behaviors found to be related to a teacher's sense of efficacy. Teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy:

- i) tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization.
- ii) are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students.
- iii) are more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly.
- iv) are less critical of students when they make errors.
- iv) are less inclined to refer a difficult student to special education.

1.1.2 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is defined as learning outcomes of students in school settings.

Learning is growth through experience; it is an adjustment to the environment; it is a synthesis of old and new expressions; it is purposeful and intelligent; it is both individual and social; it affects conduct of the learner (Jain, 2004).

There are many factors responsible for underachievement like motivation, study habits, attitude towards teacher, attitude towards education, school and home background, concentration, mental conflicts, level of aspiration, self-confidence, examination fear etc. The most significant factor contributing to underachievement is poor study habit which has been indicated by 100% underachievers in their study (Sirohi, 2004).

As especially challenging aspect of teaching is how to help-to-reach, low achieving students because teacher efficacy is directly related with student achievements.

Hard-to-Reach Low Achieving Students

Hard-to-Reach Low Achieving Students have two main types

- i) Discouraged students
 - ii) Uninterested students
- i) Discouraged Students
Discouraged students include
- a) Low-achieving Students with low Expectations for Success
 - b) Students with Failure Syndrome
- a) Low-achieving Students with low Expectations for Success

These students need to be consistently reassured that they can meet the goal and challenges you have set for them the help and support that they need to succeed. However; they need to be reminded that you will accept their progress only as long as they make a real effort. Help them set learning goals provide them support for reaching these goals. Require these students to put forth considerable effort and make progress even through they might not have the ability to perform at the level of the class at the whole.

- b) Students with Failure Syndrome

Failure syndrome refers to having low expectations for success and giving up at the first sign of difficulty. Failure syndrome students are different from low-achieving students, who fail despite putting forth their best effort. Failure syndrome students often have low self efficacy or attributions problems, ascribing their failure to internal, stable and uncontrollable causes, such as low ability. A number of strategies can be used to increase the motivation of the students who display failure syndrome. Especially beneficial are cognitive retraining methods such as efficacy retraining, attribution retraining and strategy training.

ii) Uninterested Students

Here are some ways you might be able to reach students who are uninterested:

1. If the students are uninterested, show patience but be determined to help the students and push for steady progress in spite of setbacks.
2. To make school more intrinsically interesting for this type of students.
3. Teach them strategies for making academic work more enjoyable.
4. Think about enlisting the aid of mentor in the community or an older student whom you believe the uninterested (Santrock, 2006).

Marzano (1998) identifies nine instructional strategies that enhance student achievement.

1. Identifying similarities and differences: The classroom practices associated with the instructional category of identifying similarities and differences include comparison tasks, classifying tasks, the use of metaphors and the use of analogies.
2. Summarizing and note taking: Summarizing and note taking focus on distilling and analyzing information, thus strengthening students' understanding of the content.
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition: By reinforcing effort and providing recognition, teachers underscore that students' efforts make a difference in their levels of achievement.
4. Homework and practice: Homework and practice provide opportunities for students to deepen their understanding and strengthen their skills.
5. Nonlinguistic representations: Nonlinguistic representations can take a variety of forms including graphic representations, physical models, mental pictures, drawings and kinesthetic classroom activities.
6. Cooperative learning: There are five defining elements of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small-group skills and group processing.
7. Setting goals and providing feedback: Goal setting establishes a direction for learning. Involving students in the goal-setting process can increase students' accountability for their own learning.

8. Generating and testing hypotheses: Processes that encourage students to generate and test hypotheses include systems analysis, invention, experimental inquiry, decision making and problem solving.
9. Activating prior knowledge: Cues, questions and advance organizers give students a preview of what they are about to learn or experience and thus help activate students' prior knowledge.

By integrating these strategies into their current classroom practice, teachers can help students deepen their understanding and strengthen their proficiency.

1.1.3 Teacher Efficacy and Academic Achievement

A teacher who is secure in their ability is more likely to invite and support a parent's educational efforts. A teacher's sense of efficacy plays a role in his or her students' learning. Students who have a teacher with a high sense of efficacy will learn more than those who have one that is full of self-doubt. To a teacher with a high self-efficacy difficult students are teachable through additional effort and the appropriate teaching methods. The student's problems are surmountable by being creative and working hard (Bandura, 1997).

The structure of the academic activities in the classroom is in part determined by the teacher efficacy of the teacher. A teacher with a high sense of self-efficacy will devote more time to academic pursuits and provide students who are having difficulties the guidance they need to succeed (Bandura, 1997).

Students' achievement and attitudes towards learning were affected by the level of efficacy beliefs their teacher held. Those students whose teacher had a high level of efficacy felt that they were performing better and the subject was less difficult than those students who had teachers with low levels of efficacy (Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles, 1989).

Teachers must learn how to handle situations where students are not academically successful. Negative reinforcement generally does not motivate students to keep trying. Supportive comments (for example, indicating where mistakes have been made rather than simply telling them that they were wrong) are much more likely to keep students interested in learning. But teachers must be careful that students do not develop a false sense of their own abilities. Nevertheless, by providing appropriate and consistent reinforcement and motivation in the classroom, teachers can help children raise their own academic expectations and develop more confidence in their abilities (Dilworth, 1991).

Effective instructors who are knowledgeable in the subject matter areas that they teach are better able to establish objectives and goals for themselves and for their pupils than are teachers who are less proficient in academic content. Thus, planning alone cannot overcome the knowledge deficit of a teacher in a particular subject area and it is unrealistic to think that such an individual can explain underlying concepts or develop

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 240

reasonable learning goals for students. These objectives or goals must be further transformed into appropriate lesson plans, as well as into flexible (alternative) and instructional strategies that can be used if students do not master the material on the first try (Dilworth, 1991).

1.1.4 The Effect of Teacher Efficacy on Academic Achievement

As the 21st century approaches, professionalism of teaching has become a major crest in the current wave of educational reform. In order to affect a rise in student's achievement, qualifying teachers as educational professionals has become as important part of the discussion. Effective teaching techniques vary for students with different learning styles, at different stages of cognitive and psychological development, for different subject areas and for different instructional goals. If students are to be well taught, it will not be by virtue of bureaucratic mandate, but by virtue of high trained, well supported professionals who can use their knowledge and judgment to make sound decisions appropriate to the unique needs of children (Steinbronn, 2000).

What teachers say and do in classrooms greatly affect student learning. Many researchers have demonstrated that certain teacher behaviors influence student's achievement, self concept, social relationship and thinking abilities (Shahrom, 1994; Dunn, 1998; Smith, 2002; Thibeault, 2004 and Tyler, 2006). Teachers' sense of efficacy can potentially influence both the kind of environment that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are confident that even the most difficult students can be reached if they exert extra effort. Teachers with lower self-efficacy, on the other hand, feel a sense of helplessness when it comes to dealing with difficult and unmotivated students (Gibson and Dembo, 1984).

Good managers also carefully arrange their classrooms to minimize disturbances and make sure that instruction can proceed efficiently, they set up their rooms according to the following principles:

1. Teachers should be able to see all students at all times.
2. Teaching materials and supplies are readily available.
3. High-traffic areas should be free of congestion.
4. Students should be able to see instructional presentations.
5. Procedures and routines should be actively taught in the same way that academic content is taught.

Well-managed classroom did not result from magic, but that carefully established and maintained procedures were at work (Sadker and Sadker, 1997).

1.2 Research Methodology

1.2.1 Sample of the Study

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 241

Sample of the study is shown in table I.

1.2.2 Research Instrument

To measure teacher efficacy, data was collected through 27 items questionnaire which was constructed and discussed with experts in concerned areas. It was improved in the light of their suggestion. Questionnaire was developed only for teachers. Twenty seven items with four-point rating scale was used in order to investigate the effect of teacher efficacy on academic achievements of students. It has consisted of 17-item previously developed and used by Naz (2002) and 10- item previously developed and used by Gibson (1984). Pilot testing was conducted in order to improve the questionnaire and check the effectiveness of the questionnaire.

1.2.3 Data Analysis

One-dimensional chi square was applied for data analysis. One-dimensional chi square can be used to compare frequencies occurring in different categories or the categories may be groups, so that the chi square is comparing groups with respect to the frequency of occurrence of different events (Gay, 2000). The data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

1.3 Result

The results are given below:

1. The teachers are able to successfully teach the relevant subject content to even the most difficult.
2. When teachers try really hard, they are able to teach even the most difficult students.
3. The teachers are convinced that, as time goes by, they will continue to become more and more capable of helping to address their student's needs.
6. If teachers try hard enough, they know that they can exert a positive influence on both the personal and academic development of their students.
7. The teachers believe that every student is reachable and teachable.
8. The teachers are a powerful influence on academic achievement when all factors are considered.
9. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because teacher exerted a little extra effort.
10. The individual differences among the teachers account for the wide variations in student achievement.

1.4 Discussion

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 242

Based on statistical analysis, it is concluded that teacher's sense of efficacy and student achievement are correlated with one another. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy seemed to employ a pattern of strategies that minimized negative affect, promoted an expectation of achievement and provided a definition of the classroom situation characterized by warm interpersonal relationships and academic work. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy appeared to establish a pattern of strategies that heightened negative affect and promoted an expectation of failure for low-achieving students (Ashton and Webb, 1986).

The positive correlation between teacher-efficacy and student achievement may be related to the ability of highly efficacious teachers to foster the efficacy of their students through the greater enthusiasm for teaching they exhibit. The finding of the present study shows that teachers are confident in their ability to be responsive to their student's needs, even they having a bad day (Gusky, 1988).

The students' achievement was higher in classrooms of teachers who had more contact with their coaches and in classrooms of teachers with greater confidence in the effectiveness of education (Ross, 1992).

There is great effect of teacher efficacy on academic achievement. It means that if teachers try hard enough, they know that they can exert a positive influence on both the personal and academic development of their students and if a student in their class becomes disruptive and noisy, teachers feel assured that they know some techniques to redirect him quickly and the influences of student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching (Luyten 2003).

The teachers' personal efficacy beliefs affected their student's academic achievement. The present study depicts that there is great role of teacher efficacy on academic achievement. Teachers account for the wide variations in student achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca and Malone, 2006).

1.5 Conclusions

The role of teacher efficacy on academic achievement was found to be positive. It means that if teachers try hard enough, they know that they can exert a positive influence on both the personal and academic development of their students.

There is great role of teacher efficacy on academic achievement. It means that when a student does better than usual, many times it is because teachers exerted a little extra effort.

The teachers account for the wide variations in student achievement. There is great role of teacher efficacy on academic achievement.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 244

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 245

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Table 1
Sample of the Study

Sr.No.	School Names	Numbers of Teachers	Category
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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

11 : 6 June 2011

Aamna Saleem Khan, Ph.D.

Teacher Efficacy - A Tool to Enhance Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools 246

		(Arts and Science)	
1.	F.G.G.H.S. No. 2, Wah Cantt.	5(4+1)	Girls High Schools Wah Cantt.
2.	F.G.G.H.S. No. 3, Wah Cantt.	4(0+4)	
3.	F.G.G.H.S. No. 5, Wah Cantt.	6(3+3)	
4.	F.G B.H.S. No. 6, Wah Cantt.	5(4+1)	Boys High Schools Wah Cantt.
5.	F.G B.H.S. No. 7, Wah Cantt.	6(3+3)	
6.	F.G B.H.S. No. 11, Wah Cantt.	6(4+2)	
7.	Pics Model School Wah Cantt.	5(0+5)	Private Secondary Schools Wah Cantt.
8.	Gillani Cambridge School Wah Cantt.	4(2+2)	
9.	Farooqi Ideal Public School Wah Cantt.	7(4+3)	
	Total	48	

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