Exploring Gender Differences in Sense of Efficacy of Secondary School Teachers: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's own confidence in their ability to perform the tasks required to achieve specific performance in the institution. The purpose of the present study is, to explore the gender differences in Sense of Efficacy between the male and female teachers of secondary schools in the Purulia district. The present study was carried out through the Descriptive Survey Method by administering Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) on a random sample of 602 school teachers (male – 406 and female – 196) of Purulia district. The results of the study revealed that gender differences exist in teachers' Self-efficacy and observed that the female teachers expressed their (statistically) significantly higher Sense of Efficacy in the subscales of Student Engagement and Classroom Management and also in Sense of Efficacy (in Totality) than their male counterparts. It is concluded that, female teachers may have more confident in their ability to effectively manage their classrooms, more engage to the students and better instructional strategies than their male counterparts.

Keywords: Sense of Efficacy, Gender Differences, Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management

INTRODUCTION

As we come into the 21st century, the present education system in developing countries is swiftly changing and adapting to new trends due to globalisation, digitalisation and technological developments in the education process. Today, all qualified teachers are constantly engaged in all academic activities with school administrative work to ensure effective change in the workplace. Here, the researcher has chosen Purulia district as the study area due to a lack of natural resources, low literacy rate, poor socio-economic status; also, this area is far from the big city of Kolkata. In such social settings, female teachers, like male teachers, devote themselves to teaching with enthusiasm and a positive attitude in the workplace. Many schools already have experienced and qualified teachers, but the learning environment lacks teachers who excel in areas such as student engagement, leadership and management, who are respected in the classroom. So, it is a great challenge for every qualified teacher to exhibit their performance, teaching skills, instructional strategies and classroom management efficiently in their professional job with proper satisfaction in the workplace. In that sense, Sense of Efficacy of the teachers is associated with positive outcomes of any institution for qualitative aspects of education, such as promoting student learning, motivation, and achievement. Therefore, this study aimed to explore gender differences in the **"Sense of Efficacy"** of the secondary school teachers of Purulia district, in West Bengal.

Significance of the Research

Through the scientific investigation of psychological constructs, related to the present study of the prospective qualified school teachers, the researcher actually intended to explore the comparative study on **Sense of Efficacy** between male and female school teachers of Purulia district. This present study was significant in that it will help to compare the efficacy level between male and female school teachers of Purulia district. It will also help

to determine the enhanced status of the professional improvement of the qualified teachers. It will also help psychologists and psychological as well as educational counsellors to prescribe the efficacy level of school teachers.

Objective of the Study

The specific objective of the present study was to compare the **Sense of Efficacy** between the male and female school teachers of Purulia district.

Construct of the Study

Brief descriptions of the construct of the study is presented hereunder –

Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura first introduced the concept Self-Efficacy in 1977 through his seminal paper *"Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioural Change."* Within Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy is viewed as a key determinant of how people think, feel, behave, and motivate themselves. The theory posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour.

Self-Efficacy is, according to psychologist **Albert Bandura** who originally proposed the concept, a personal judgment of "how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations". Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments **(Bandura, 1986, 1997).** Unlike **Rotter's social learning theory**, which is based on reinforcements as the main influence that leads to certain situations, **Bandura's social cognitive theory** emphasizes the ways human behaviour is influenced by cognitive processes.

Self-Efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behaviour and social environment. The concept of teacher sense of efficacy and its impacts on teachers, and on students as well, has been examined by several studies.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, (2001) state that "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" (p. 783).

Review of Allied Literature

A short review on **Sense of Efficacy** of the Teachers is placed herewith.

Short Review on Sense of Efficacy of the Teachers

Several studies of teachers' efficacy had examined the meaning of the concept, its sources, and its measure. In the broadest sense, "Teacher Efficacy", which is sometimes called "Teaching Efficacy", refers to teachers' beliefs about their ability to influence student outcomes. Teacher self-efficacy is related to and linked with job satisfaction. Teachers with high levels of efficacy reported higher levels of job satisfaction **(Klassen & Chiu 2010)**. **Al-Alwan and Mahasneh (2014)** reported a significant relationship between the level of teachers' efficacy and students' attitudes toward school.

Several aspects influence teachers' sense of efficacy. These influential factors could have direct influences, like school climate and students' achievement or indirect influences, such as home and community **(Ashton & Webb, 1986). Dembo and Gibson (1984)** suggest that, in order to get a better understanding of teachers' efficacy and to improve teachers' efficacy beliefs, researchers ought to consider variables such as teacher education and socialization, personal teacher variables, school organization, and parent-teacher relations. Teachers with high senses of efficacy are more likely to focus on teaching activities rather than non-academic activities **(Gibson & Dembo, 1984)**.

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The researchers found that self-efficacy is an important contributor of job satisfaction**.** Teachers with low levels of self-efficacy tend to be dissatisfied with their jobs, thus leaving their teaching profession **(Evans, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001).**

However, several studies found that Self-efficacy beliefs of teachers are one of the most important factors effecting teachers' job satisfaction **(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).** Researchers revealed that the relationship between overall job satisfaction and overall self-efficacy beliefs was negative and non-significant. In addition, some researchers indicated that job stress aside from self-efficacy beliefs may be one of the main factors contributing to teachers' job dissatisfaction **(Betoret, 2006).**

METHOD

The present study was carried out through **Descriptive Survey Method** within **ex-post facto research design.** A short description of the nature of the study, method of research design, sample, research instruments, procedure of data collection and statistical technique are reported herewith.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the present study was **Gender-wise comparative analysis (**ex-post facto research**).** Here, Gender was the **independent Variable** and its two levels **(Male** and **Female)** were considered; whereas, only the **Dependent Variable "Sense of Efficacy"** was considered.

Research Design

The research design of the present study is presented hereunder.

Gender-wise comparative Analysis (ex-post-facto research)

This phase involved a comparative analysis between male and female secondary school teachers.

Sample

The source of sample, sampling procedure and sample size are reported hereunder.

Source of Sample

Government, Government Sponsored, Government-aided Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools of Purulia district in West Bengal, India were considered as the source of sample.

Sampling Procedure

In the present study **"Stratified Random Sampling Technique"** was adopted.

Sample Size

In total 705 secondary school teachers were approached, but finally, 602 respondents completed the research tool.

Table 4.3.3: Gender-Wise Distribution of Sample

Gender		Total
Male	Female	
406	196	602

Tools of Research

The following research tool was used in the present study for data collection. The tool was selected by applying

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yardsticks of relevance, appropriateness, reliability, validity and suitability. A concise description of the tool is given herewith.

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)

The **Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale** (also known as the **Ohio State Teacher Efficacy scale**) was developed by **Moran** and **Hoy (2001)**. This scale consists total of 24 items in the **long form** and 12 items in the **short form**. Here, Sense of Efficacy of the teachers was measured with the TSES 24-item in long form, and the survey has the reader answer. These items are grouped into three subscales: (I) Efficacy for Student Engagement (SE; 8 items), (II) Efficacy for Instructional Strategies (IS; 8 items), and (III) Efficacy for Classroom Management (CM; 8 items). The instrument was a 9-point Likert scale providing 9 possible responses ranging from 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal) i.e. (1 and 2 = nothing, 3 and 4 = very little, 5 and 6 = some influence, 7 and 8 = quite a bit, and 9 = a great deal).

Table 4.4.1: Subscale-wise Item Distribution

Sl. No.	Subscales	Items
1.	Efficacy for Student Engagement	8
2.	Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	8
3.	Efficacy for Classroom Management	8
Total		24

There are three subscales of the **Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES),** and each subscale comprises of equal number of items (i.e., 8). The mean score of each dimension was normalised. The normalisation procedure is as follows:

Normalised mean = Mean of the item responses in a subscale or (total scale)/Total number of items in the subscale or (total scale). Then, the normalised mean fell within the range extending from 1 to 9 with 5 as the mid-point (moderate efficacy).

Here, the Normalised mean score of **"Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)"** may be interpreted as –

1 to 2.99	**:**	**Very low**
3.0 to 4.99	**:**	**low**
5.01 to 7.0	**:**	**high**
7.1 to 9	**:**	**Very high**

Procedure for Data Collection

The head of the institute was contacted for his/her permission to allow collecting the data. The relevant data on different constructs was collected by administering the above-mentioned tool to the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

Statistical Techniques

To ascertain the specific objective (i.e., to compare the **Sense of Efficacy** between the male and female school teachers of Purulia district.) the **Descriptive Statistics** such as Mean, Standard Deviation and **Inferential Statistics** such as 'F' test, and independent sample t-test were calculated by computing appropriate statistics with the help of **SPSS-20** software.

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RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore any gender differences (between male and female) in the **Sense of Efficacy** of the teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools in Purulia district. The results of the **Gender based Comparative Analysis** between males and females in **Sense of Efficacy** of the teachers are presented in the tabular form herewith.

Table 5.1: Group Statistics of Scores on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale of Male and Female Teachers

Subscales of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
Student Engagement	Male	406	6.84	1.24	The **female** teachers expressed their higher sense of efficacy.
	Female	196	7.06	0.95	
Instructional Strategies	Male	406	6.81	1.33	No significant difference was observed.
	Female	196	7.02	1.17	
Classroom Management	Male	406	6.79	1.35	The **female** teachers expressed their higher sense of efficacy.
	Female	196	7.16	1.10	
Sense of Efficacy (in Totality)	Male	406	6.81	1.22	The **female** teachers expressed their higher sense of efficacy.
	Female	196	7.08	0.95	

The results of the table-5.1 exhibited the group statistics of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) scores of male and female teachers. In case of Student Engagement, the means of male and female teachers were 6.84 and 7.06 respectively; Next, in case of Instructional Strategies the means of male and female teachers were 6.81 and 7.02 respectively; Then in Classroom Management the means of male and female teachers were 6.79 and 7.16 respectively; Finally, in Sense of Efficacy (in totality) the means of male and female teachers were 6.81 and 7.08 respectively.

Figure 5.1 (a) shows the bar diagram of means of different subscales of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) scores of female and male teachers.

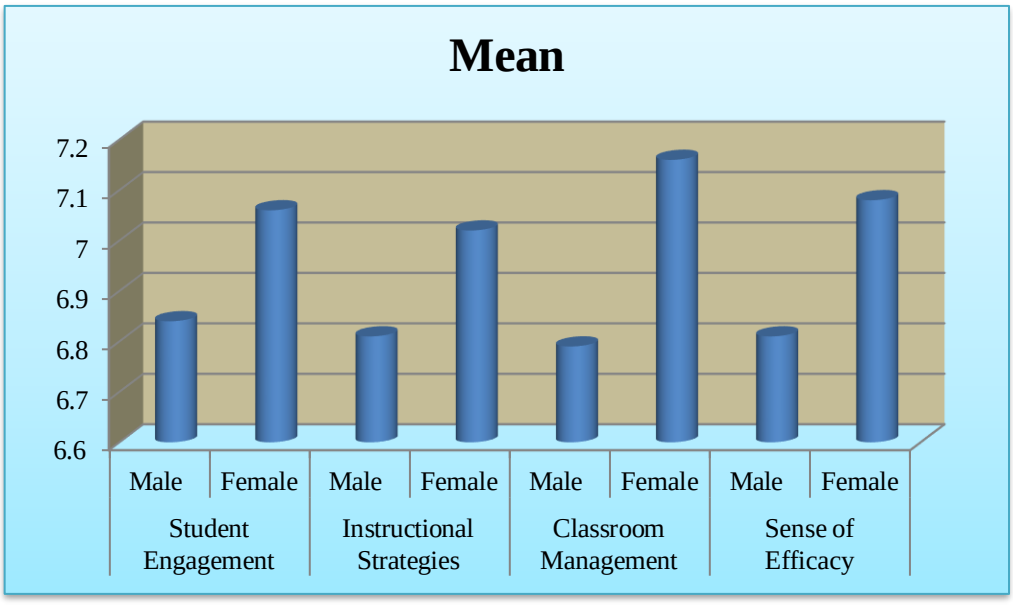

Figure 5.1 (a): Bar Diagram of Mean Scores on Different Subscales of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) of Male and Female Teachers Separately

Table 5.1 (b): Results of Independent Samples Test of Gender Wise Comparison of Means of Subscales of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale Scores of Teachers

Dimensions of Sense of Efficacy		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student Engagement	Equal variances assumed	11.12	0.00	-2.25	600.00	0.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.46	489.67	0.01
Instructional Strategies	Equal variances assumed	1.93	0.17	-1.81	600.00	0.07
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.89	431.59	0.06
Classroom Management	Equal variances assumed	12.80	0.00	-3.38	600.00	0.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.63	463.20	0.00
Sense of Efficacy (in Totality)	Equal variances assumed	10.92	0.00	-2.70	600.00	0.01
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.94	482.80	0.00

From table 5.1 (b), it is transparent that the two groups (female and male) differed (statistically) significantly in the subscales of ***Student Engagement*** and ***Classroom Management*** and also in ***Sense of Efficacy*** **(in Totality)** of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy scale. But it was observed that the two groups (male and female) did not differ (statistically) significantly in the subscale of ***Instructional Strategies*** of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. Also, it was observed that the female teachers expressed their (statistically) significantly higher **Sense of Efficacy** in the subscales of ***Student Engagement*** and ***Classroom Management*** and also in ***Sense of Efficacy*** **(in Totality)**.

DISCUSSION

From the results of Table 5.1, we have the group statistics of **Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)** scores of male and female teachers. In case of ***Student Engagement,*** the means of male and female teachers were 6.84 and 7.06 respectively; Next, in case of ***Instructional Strategies*** the means of male and female teachers were 6.81 and 7.02 respectively; Then in ***Classroom Management*** the means of male and female teachers were 6.79 and 7.16 respectively; Finally, in ***Sense of Efficacy*** **(in totality)** the means of male and female teachers were 6.81 and 7.08 respectively.

Also, from the results of the table-5.1(b) it is transparent that the two groups (female and male) differed (statistically) significantly (as $p < 0.05$) in the subscales of ***Student Engagement*** and ***Classroom Management*** and also in ***Sense of Efficacy (in Totality)*** of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy. But it was observed that the two groups (male and female) did not differ (statistically) significantly (as $p \geq 0.05$) in the subscale of ***Instructional Strategies*** of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy. So, the female teachers expressed their (statistically) significantly higher Sense of Efficacy in the subscales of ***Student Engagement*** and ***Classroom Management*** and also in ***Sense of Efficacy*** **(in Totality)** than their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION

From the result and subsequent discussion, it might be concluded that, in Purulia district, female teachers of secondary and higher secondary schools may have greater confidence in their ability to effectively manage their classrooms, be more engaged with the students and potentially lead to better instructional strategies than their male counterparts. On the contrary, male teachers might be facing challenges that hinder their confidence in these areas, perhaps due to factors like perceived gender bias or lack of support.

However, it's important to acknowledge that these differences among the male and female teachers are not universal and may vary depending on the specific context and the type of teaching. Future studies might explore the underlying factors driving these differences and examine whether they hold across diverse educational

contexts.

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