

## “Better to Have Ability to Discover Ability” – The Effect of Teacher Self-efficacy on Job Satisfaction: Implications for Best Practices

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**ABSTRACT** Drawing on social cognitive theory and theory of planned behaviours, the present study investigates the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction. Using a self-reported questionnaire, data were gleaned from randomly chosen 698 teachers working in state schools in Sri Lanka. Strongly based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions, a survey strategy with the hypothetic-deductive approach was adopted. At the outset, fundamental statistical assumptions and common method variance were examined. Results reveal that three components of teacher self-efficacy, that is, adapting education to individual students’ needs, motivating students and keeping discipline, significantly accounted for much variance in teacher job satisfaction, nonetheless, other three components, namely, instruction, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and coping with changes and challenges, were not the significant contributors to teacher job satisfaction. The study has pushed back the frontiers of educational literature and proffered insightful practical implications that are discussed at the end of the paper.

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession is a multifaceted practice and has become more challenging recently (Shaukat et al. 2019). Notably, teaching is an epicentre of economic development and sustainability of a country (Little and Green 2009). The effectiveness of the teaching is entirely depending on emotional attachment of the teachers with students, schools and the society en masse and therefore, studies on teacher job satisfaction have received great attention (Brezicha et al. 2019; Kengatharan 2019b; Torres 2019; Ouellette et al. 2018; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2015). Remarkably, a deficit of qualified teachers is a global phenomenon (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2016). This might be attributed to the stressful working conditions in which teachers become dissatisfied and consequently, leave the teaching profession (Kengatharan 2019a; Hong 2012). Although there are many factors determining teacher job satisfaction such as cultural factors, economic factors, and national factors, the influence of teacher-self efficacy on teacher job satisfaction has been far less focused (Bjorklund et al. 2020; Zakariya 2020; Clark and Newberry 2019; Huang et al. 2019; Kengatharan 2019a; Shakira and Kengatharan 2019; Joo et al. 2018;

Ford et al. 2017). Previous studies highlighted the overarching importance of teacher self-efficacy for both teachers and students (Bjorklund et al. 2020; Zee and Koomen 2016; Van Dinther et al. 2014). On an equal footing, Knoblauch and Hoy (2008) confirmed a profound impact of teacher self-efficacy on the educational process. A large corpus of studies claims that teacher job satisfaction fosters classroom learning, longer stay, organisational citizenship behaviour, teacher commitment, student behaviour, student engagement, teacher motivation, teachers’ relations to students, and performance (see Pervaiz et al. 2019; Fisher et al. 2018; Chesnut and Burley 2015; Van den Berg 2002; Judge et al. 2001). Consequently, job satisfaction is considered as a “decisive element” (Caprara et al. 2003). Surprisingly, the findings on the effect of self-efficacy with its sui generis components on teacher job satisfaction are nebulous and inconclusive (see Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2010). On an equal footing, there are shortage of such studies in the context of developing countries and other similar Asian countries. Consequently, the present study fills a void by establishing the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction. On balance, the current study extends and deepens the existing lit-

erature of teacher job satisfaction and proffers materials for devising better education policy.

### Objectives

A plethora of studies have been undertaken to identify the factors determining teacher job satisfaction. Nonetheless, the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction remains agnostic in Sri Lanka and other similar developing countries. Teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction vary across nations and culture, and therefore, the findings derived from a particular country cannot be applied to a culturally dissimilar country. Consequently, the present study has been designed to investigate the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction in the context of Sri Lanka.

### Literature Review

Self-efficacy is strongly anchored in the theoretical works of social cognitive theory emphasising the ability of the individuals' influence over what they do, and that individuals are self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating (Bandura 2006). Generally, self-efficacy is about what a person can do and how well he or she can do it (Zimmerman and Cleary 2006). Bandura (1997) describes teacher self-efficacy as the perceptions of teachers about what they can do and Bong and Skaalvik (2003) articulate that teacher self-efficacy is about the judgements of what a teacher can do with his or her skills and abilities. For instance, a teacher in a classroom expects that he/she is able to engage all students to solve case studies (real organisational problems) so that every student could understand. Literally, teacher self-efficacy inheres in the verbs of "can" or "be able to" and stimulates one's functioning (Bandura 2006). Teacher self-efficacy is a multi-facet construct (Bandura 2006). By and large, a four primary source of self-efficacy are recognised, viz., mastery experiences (teachers come from success in the classroom), vicarious experiences (successfully modelled by others), verbal persuasion (social support from colleagues and the administration), and psychological and affective states (a teacher listening to heartbeat when facing a chal-

lenge) (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2007; Mulholland and Wallace 2001; Bandura 1997).

Teacher self-efficacy is the overriding variable that determines the teacher's effectiveness, students' achievement, organizational citizenship behaviour, commitment, engagement and motivation (Gnanarajan et al. 2020; Shaukat et al. 2019; Shaukat and Iqbal 2012). Previous studies highlighted that teacher self-efficacy is determined by the perceived difficulty of the teaching task, availability of the resources, perception of obstacles and the time available for the task (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2016), while some other studies claim that teacher self-efficacy encourages teacher conduct in a positive way (Soodak and Podell 1993). Consequently, it can be surmised that teacher-self efficacy may have a greater impact on teacher job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an ambiguous term (Evans 1997) but generally defines as a positive judgement of his/her job (Weiss 2002) and affective reaction on the job (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2010).

Drawing on social cognitive theory, the general belief is that self-efficacy influences both individuals' cognitions and emotions (Pajares 1997). However, as discussed earlier, the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction is not clear and inconclusive. Only a few studies maintain that teacher self-efficacy is a positive indicator of teacher job satisfaction (Shaukat et al. 2019; Avanzi et al. 2013; Federici and Skaalvik 2012; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2007). For instance, Federici and Skaalvik (2012) disclosed that teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction was significantly and positively related ( $r=.46$ ) and similar findings echoed in Avanzi et al.'s study (2013) confirming a significant positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction ( $r=.35$ ). Nonetheless, Demirdag (2015) did not find any significant positive association between teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The theory of planned behaviours explains that the individual's behaviours are the outcomes of the individual's beliefs and therefore, positive or negative beliefs that an individual has, affects his or her subsequent behaviours (Madden et al. 1992). Consequently, the present study assumes that a teacher's positive beliefs on self-efficacy generate a feeling of happiness at the workplace since the behaviours being

studied are volitional (Madden et al. 1992; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Therefore, anchoring in strong theoretical grounds and empirical studies, it is hypothesised:

- $H_1$ : Instruction is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.
- $H_2$ : Adapting education to individual students' needs is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.
- $H_3$ : Motivating students is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.
- $H_4$ : Keeping discipline is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.
- $H_5$ : Cooperating with colleagues and parents is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.
- $H_6$ : Coping with changes and challenges is accounted for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants and Data Collection

Based on the report published by the Ministry of Education (2017), 241,591 teachers are working in 10,194 schools within 95 educational zones. Robustly based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions, the present study adopted the most popular survey research strategy. Data were garnered from randomly selected 698 teachers using a self-administered questionnaire. Three research assistants were hired to facilitate the data collection process. The respondents were predominantly males ( $n=444$ , 63.6%) and the remaining 36.4 percent were females ( $n=254$ ). Of the respondents, 73.3 percent were young teachers and 61.3 percent of teachers possess at least one degree.

### Measures

The most popular scale of Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale consisting of a twenty-four-item, was employed (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007). The scale is widely used showing good internal consistencies across many other studies (Khezerlou 2013; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2010).

The scale consists of six dimensions and each was measured by four questions on a seven-point Likert Scale. The six dimensions are instruction (INS), adapting education to individual students' needs (AEISN), motivating students (MS), keeping discipline (KD), cooperating with colleagues and parents (CCP), and coping with changes and challenges (CCC) (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2016; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007). A sample item includes 'Explain central themes in your subjects so that even the low achieving students understand'. Cronbach's alphas for each dimension were .84, .96, .93, .68, .94, and .73, respectively.

The most widely used job satisfaction questionnaire, called 'Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire', was used in the present study (Cammann et al. 1979). The questionnaire consists of three items and a sample item includes 'All in all I am satisfied with my job'. The scale's Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the present study was .85 indicating strong reliability of the measure.

Since the present study adopted a single-source method, self-reported questionnaire, there might be a portent of common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Initially, procedural remedies such as confidentiality and anonymous returns, pilot study, de-identification, etc. were followed. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and a CFA were performed to confirm the factor structure thereby validating the measures used in the current study (Kengatharan 2019c; Bagozzi and Foxall 1996).

## RESULTS

The current study has a large sample ( $n=698$ ) negating the effects of the violation of the statistical assumptions. However, at the outset, tests for normality, multinormality and common method variance (CMV) were performed. The maximum values for skewness and kurtosis in the current study were 1.37 and 3.11 respectively, which are well below the minimum thresholds. Notably, Mardia's coefficient was 4.88 indicating multinormality of the data set and the Durbin-Watson test of 1.93 confirms independent errors in the regression. To explore the potential effect of CMV, the commonly used Harman one-factor test was carried out. The results disclosed

a clear seven-factor solution and 20.64 percent of variance were accounted for the first factor explaining that a single factor does not constitute a large portion of variance. Further, it was confirmed by integrated confirmatory factor analysis and the results of the single model produced a poor fit, that is,  $\chi^2(275)=2871.960, p=.00; CFI=.276; GFI=.442; RMSEA=.229; SRMR=.209$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that the present study is free from CMV. The results of the principal component analysis (PCA) are presented in Table 1.

As can be seen in Table 1, the seven components had eigenvalues greater than Kaiser's criterion of 1 together with explaining 78.59 percent of the variance. The first factor accounted for 20.64 percent, second factor for 15.07 percent, third factor for 12.13 percent, fourth factor for 10.88 percent, fifth factor for 8.21 percent,

sixth factor for 7.04 percent and the seventh factor for 4.62 percent. The results of the integrated CFA shows a good model fit indices:  $\chi^2(254)=450.35, p=.00; PCMIN/DF=1.77 CFI=.94; GFI=.90; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.04$  (see Table 1). Referring to the same Table 1, the statistics show good reliability and validity of the measure with the current data set, wherein AVE is greater than 50.0 percent, with highly significant factor loadings (greater than .57), and AVE is greater than MSV and ASV ( $MSV < AVE$  and  $ASV < AVE$ ).

Table 2 presents the values of means ( $M$ ), standard deviations ( $SD$ ), scale alphas and correlations.

As can be seen in Table 2, five components of teacher self-efficacy (INS, AEISN, MS, KD and CCC) were significantly positively associated with teacher job satisfaction implying that the five components increase job satisfaction of

**Table 1: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis ( $n = 698$ )**

Items	Components						
	AEISN	MS	INS	CCP	CCC	JS	KD
AEISN1	.968						
AEISN3	.963						
AEISN2	.951						
AEISN4	.909						
MS2		.923					
MS3		.945					
MS4		.929					
MS1		.822					
INS1			.873				
INS2			.871				
INS4			.821				
CCP1				.894			
CCP2				.945			
CCP3				.954			
CCP4				.861			
CCC1					.873		
CCC3					.933		
CCC2					.898		
JS1						.818	
JS2						.801	
JS3						.695	
KD1							.699
KD2							.591
KD4							.581
KD3							.572
Eigenvalues	5.159	3.768	3.032	2.721	2.053	1.759	1.156
Percentage of variance	20.636	15.071	12.126	10.883	8.211	7.036	4.624
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	.872	.760	.646	.799	.759	.744	.574
Maximum Shared Variance (MSV)	.196	.016	.155	.053	.036	.009	.196
Average Shared Variance (ASV)	.040	.006	.037	.026	.008	.005	.075

$\chi^2(254)=450.35, p=.00; PCMIN/DF=1.77 CFI=.94; GFI=.90; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.04$

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Alphas, and Correlations**

	Correlation Matrix										
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Gender (0 Female; 1 Male)	--	-	-								
2 Marital Status (1 Single; 2 Married)	-	-	.11	-							
3 INS	3.35	.702	.10	.11	(.84)						
4 AEISN	4.20	.692	.01	.01	.55**	(.96)					
5 MS	4.63	.849	.10	.14	.53*	.73**	(.93)				
6 KD	4.47	.929	.21*	.02	.43**	.42**	.39**	(.68)			
7 CCP	3.69	.600	.11	.04	.21*	.18*	.15*	.32*	(.94)		
8 CCC	3.57	.561	.06	.05	.12*	.26*	.14	.19	.16*	(.73)	
9 JS	3.95	.521	.05	.03	.19*	.42**	.37**	.48**	.11	.23*	(.85)

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.001$ ;  $n=698$  Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in parenthesis

the teachers with INS ( $r=.19, p<0.05$ ), AEISN ( $r=.42, p<0.01$ ), MS ( $r=.37, p<0.01$ ), KD ( $r=.48, p<0.01$ ) and CCC ( $r=.23, p<0.05$ ). CCP component is not significantly associated with teacher job satisfaction ( $r=.11, p>0.05$ ). The correlations were not high evidencing little chance of multicollinearity. The results of the hypothesised model are summarised in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, two models were generated, that is, model (1) controlled potential influence of gender and marital status on teach-

er job satisfaction, and model (2) with those controls, six components of teacher self-efficacy were inputted. Gender ( $\beta=.215, t=1.109; p>0.05$ ) and marital status ( $\beta=-.054, t=-.267; p>0.05$ ) have not had any significant effect on teacher job satisfaction and the model 1 is not significant ( $F=.691, P>.05; R^2=.005$ ). The model 2 describing the effect of all six components of teacher self-efficacy and controls is significant ( $F=39.797, P<.01$ ). As shown in the same Table, the results disclose that AEISN, MS and KD impacted signifi-

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		<i>t</i>	Sig.
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>			
1 (Constant)	3.031	.372			8.143	.000
Gender	.215	.194		.069	1.109	.268
Marital Status	-.054	.201		-.017	-.267	.790
a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction	Note: $F=.691, P>.05; R^2=.005$					
2 (Constant)	.603	.679			.888	.375
Gender	.118	.134		.038	.874	.383
Marital Status	-.139	.137		-.043	-1.012	.313
INS	.065	.115		.030	.565	.573
AEISN	.505	.143		.229	3.533	.000
MS	.301	.113		.168	2.658	.008
KD	.763	.044		.739	17.286	.000
CCP	.013	.084		.008	.151	.880
CCC	.055	.117		.022	.475	.635

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

Note:  $F=39.797, P<.001; R^2=.554$

cantly on teacher job satisfaction with AEISN ( $\beta=.505, t=3.533; p<0.01$ ), MS ( $\beta=.301, t=2.658; p<0.01$ ), and KD ( $\beta=.763, t=17.286; p<0.01$ ).

Consequently, hypotheses ( $H_1, H_3$ , and  $H_4$ ) surmised that AEISN, MS and KD accounting for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction were supported. The remaining three components of teacher self-efficacy were not significantly related to teacher job satisfaction, that is, INS ( $\beta=.065, t=.565; p>0.05$ ), CCP ( $\beta=.013, t=.151; p>0.05$ ), and CCC ( $\beta=.055, t=.475; p>0.05$ ). Therefore, hypotheses ( $H_1, H_5$ , and  $H_6$ ) predicted that INS, CCP and CCC accounting for significant variance in teacher job satisfaction were not supported.

### DISCUSSION

The current study has focused on the relationship between individual components of teacher self-efficacy and teacher job satisfaction. The results revealed that only three components of the teacher self-efficacy, namely, AEISN, MS and KD were significantly related to teacher job satisfaction. The findings are in concord with previous studies (Shaukat et al. 2019; Avanzi et al. 2013; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2007). The positive relationship between AEISN and teacher job satisfaction implies that AEISN increases teacher job satisfaction. As discussed earlier, many studies that have been investigated previously confirm that teacher job satisfaction has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the education sector such as better classroom learning, longer stay of teachers, organisational citizenship behaviours, teacher commitment, student behaviour and student engagement (see Pervaiz et al. 2019; Fisher et al. 2018; Chesnut and Burley 2015; Van den Berg 2002; Judge et al. 2001). Of these three components, KD has the greatest impact on teacher job satisfaction, followed by AEISN and MS. Surprisingly, the other three components, INS, CCP and CCC were not significant with teacher job satisfaction. The findings of the unexplored relationship between teacher self-efficacy with its components and teacher job satisfaction in the context of developing Asian countries have added to the existing educational literature. In addition, the study has also contributed by confirming the psychometric properties of the measures in the Sri Lankan context. Consequently, research scholars undertaking in a similar cultural con-

text can apply the scale without any caveats. Despite the study's robust theoretical and methodological contributions, certain limitations that the present study has should be acknowledged. The cross-section design of the current study was the major limitation in which making causal relationship is problematic and consequently, the adoption of a time-lagged method is warranted. Even though the study has proved no evidence of CMV, focusing on multisource method is beneficial and robust in the research context. Similar studies should be replicated in other countries to make the firm conclusion so that effective strategies could be developed for promoting teacher self-efficacy. Needless to say, future studies should focus on country-culture factors determining teacher self-efficacy.

### CONCLUSION

With a sample of randomly selected 698 teachers, the study confirmed that the three components of the teacher self-efficacy, namely, adapting education to individual students' needs (AEISN), motivating students (MS) and keeping discipline (KD), have significantly and positively impacted teacher job satisfaction. The current study has greatly contributed to the extant educational literature and proffered many useful practical implications.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study gives glowing recommendations that educational administrators and policymakers should make better policies for promoting AEISN in the educational sector such as creating a learning environment to cater to students with varying abilities. On an equal footing, policies for motivating students and keeping discipline are overarching important to promote teacher job satisfaction. Therefore, it behoves administrators and policymakers to develop new policies and revitalise the existing policies. On balance, well-thought-out policies on teacher self-efficacy are warranted for enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

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