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TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' AGE AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Jonida Lesha[i]
University of Shkodra,
Albania

Abstract:
Recently self-efficacy studies focus on the educational context, with a particular focus on teacher profession. The main purpose of this study was to explore teachers' self-efficacy beliefs with respect to age. All data were collected through Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Participants in this study were located in three cities in Albania. The analysis of data was based on the response of 850 teachers. In terms of the three subdimensions of the self- efficacy scale, the results indicated that with age increases even self-efficacy in student engagement, in instruction strategies and in classroom management.

Keywords: teachers, self–efficacy beliefs, age, instructional strategies, classroom management, student engagement

1. Introduction

There are a number of factors that could affect the success of a school system, but the researchers suggest that teachers themselves are a very important contributor (Hattie, 2009). Therefore, such issues with regard to teacher self-efficacy beliefs have not only the goal to explore the relationship of these beliefs with different variables, but also suggest how to improve teachers' performance in a way that it can impact on further success of the schools and in the educational system in general.

[i] Correspondence: email jlesha@unishk.edu.al

The social cognitive theory of Bandura highlight the trend of triadic reciprocity between behaviour, the environment, and personal factors (including the emotional state, cognitive state and the physiological state of an individual), rejecting determinative concepts that emphasize that human behavior is influenced by particular factors. According to Bandura (1986), each of the three above mentioned factors can affect one another in two ways directions. Self-efficacy beliefs construct is suggested to influence the purpose of an individual, choices for different activities, and the determination to achieve something (Bandura, 1997). Bandura suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are formed through four main sources:

1. Mastery experiences that refers to experiences of performance;
2. Vicarious experiences that refers in to observing other models, and comparing with other people;
3. Verbal persuasion it refers to feedback about performance;
4. Physiological states which refers to emotional and biological states.

In the field of education, the efficacy of a teacher can be conceived as an individual's ability to plan, organize and carry out activities that aim at achieving educational goals (Slaavik & Slaavik, 2009). Other studies have defined the self-efficacy beliefs as the belief that the learners have in their own abilities, which subsequently results in the improvement of the results of the students (Tschannen-Moran &Hoy, 2002). According to Bandura (1997), teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are linked not only with the ability to achieve successful teaching but also their effectiveness is in some cases determined by the efficacy in classroom management where learning can occur, where the resources are ranked as it is needed, and where there is parental involvement in the academic activities. Various studies have concluded that teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs have a very positive impact both in the classroom setting and in pupils. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs affect not only the teacher's strategies (Allinder, 1994), teacher's goals (Mujis & Reynolds, 2002) but also teachers' attitudes towards change.

From the literature review on the age –related effect of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, there are many studies that have come to conclusions that are different from each other. Bandura (1995) suggested that age may not be related to self-efficacy because people differ from how they manage their lives. However, other research has found that age influences the levels of self-efficacy that a teacher experiences. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2009) found that the older the teachers are, the higher is their confidence in self-efficacy, and this study investigated the relationship between self-efficacy scores and pedagogical success. Another research found that teachers who are young have stronger self-efficacy beliefs and more expectations (Edward& Robinson, 2012; Smit & Bosscher, 1998). Bandura (1994) acknowledged that age does not play a

role in self-efficacy, but his research indicates that there are differences in self-efficacy beliefs during the life of an individual by the period in which they are in their lives and how they manage the situations which they face during these periods. Each period of life brings with it a number of challenges. Success and failure during these periods shape the self-efficacy of people and cause such beliefs to grow or decrease at the same time. However, many researchers such as Hicks (2012), Jenks (2004) and Tschannen-Moran (2007) etc., have concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between age and self-efficacy. However, it should be noted that empirical researches that study the relationship of teachers age and self-efficacy beliefs are not numerous. Also, there are a few studies in Albania that investigated the construct of self-efficacy beliefs.

2. Objectives of the Study

To find out the relationship between teachers' age and self-efficacy beliefs levels (in three subdimensions efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management).

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

This study used a crossed sectional design as a main tool of quantitative methodology, where data are collected on the whole study population at a single point in time.

3.2 The sample

850 teachers working in state primary schools in Albania were the participant of the study (where 666 female and 184 male).

3.3. Assessment Tools

The scale TSES developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). The long form of the scale that was used in the study consists in 24 articles. It measure three aspects of teacher self-efficacy: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management and efficacy in student engagement. Also a demographic questionnaire was used to collect information regarding teachers' age, gender and teaching experience.

3.4 Data analysis

The data was analyzed quantitatively using statistical procedure. Data was analysed with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel.

3.5 Research Findings

An ANOVA analysis was performed, knowing that the age variable is divided into several groups. The dimension of efficacy in student engagement, where the value of Sig=0.000<0.05 indicates that it is meaningful to say that there are statistically significant changes to this dimension in relation to teacher age. The same is noted in relation to the two other dimensions efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management, where in both cases the respective values of Sig. are 0.00, which means that there is a statistically significant differences in age.

But where are these differences seen? To answer to this question a Post Hoc Test analysis was performed for each of the dimensions. So referring to the first dimension efficacy in student engagement data from Table 1, show that there are statistically significant differences between all age groups starting from the first age group (up to 25 years) and up to the last age group (over 50 years old), after the values of Sig. for all the comparisons are .000, smaller than 0.05. But which of these age groups has the highest rating compared to the others? The data show that the average assessment of the dimension efficacy in student engagement is (35-49 years old) with M=4.10 (Table 2). So when we look at the data, we say that with the increasing age we also have an increase in the average efficacy in student engagement.

Table 1: Anova results regarding the level of self-efficacy beliefs of teachers in relation to age

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-efficacy in student engagement	Between Groups	3	34,038	198,135	,000
	Within Groups	996	,172		
	Total	999			
Self-efficacy in instructional strategies	Between Groups	3	44,839	200,176	,000
	Within Groups	996	,224		
	Total	999			
Self-efficacy in classroom management	Between Groups	3	37,263	136,189	,000
	Within Groups	996	,274		
	Total	999			

Even for the dimension of efficacy in instructional strategies, it is noted that there are statistically significant differences between the age groups, as in this case all the values

of Sig. are 0,000, again lower than 0.05 according to the Post Hoc Tukey Test. How is the assessment of this dimension according to each age group? In this case, the data show that the assessment of the dimension of efficacy in instructional strategies increases with the age increase to the 34 years limit as M (26-34 years old)= 3.96 while M (up to 25 years old)=2.92. As for the comparison of this assessment between the last two age groups it is noticed that M (35-49 years)=4.36 while M (over 50 years)=4.24 is a little lower, which means that beyond the age of 34 efficacy in teaching strategies comes down.

Table 2: Post hoc test related to age

Dependent Variable	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Self- efficacy in student engagement	Up to 25 years old	26-34 years old	-1.051*	,055	,000	-1,19	-,91
		35-49 years old	-1.183*	,053	,000	-1,32	-1,05
		Over 50 years old	-1.300*	,054	,000	-1,44	-1,16
	26-34 years old	Up to 25 years old	1.051*	,055	,000	,91	1,19
		35-49 years old	-.133*	,033	,000	-,22	-,05
		Over 50 years old	-.249*	,035	,000	-,34	-,16
	35-49 years old	Up to 25 years old	1.183*	,053	,000	1,05	1,32
		26-34 years old	.133*	,033	,000	,05	,22
		Over 50 years old	-.117*	,032	,002	-,20	-,03
	Over 50 years old	Up to 25 years old	1.300*	,054	,000	1,16	1,44
		26-34 years old	.249*	,035	,000	,16	,34
		35-49 years old	.117*	,032	,002	,03	,20
Self-efficacy in instructional strategies	Up to 25 years old	26-34 years old	-1.051*	,063	,000	-1,21	-,89
		35-49 years old	-1.435*	,061	,000	-1,59	-1,28
		Over 50 years old	-1.324*	,062	,000	-1,48	-1,16
	26-34 years	Up to 25	1.051*	,063	,000	,89	1,21

	old	years old					
		35-49 years old	-.385*	,038	,000	-,48	-,29
		Over 50 years old	-.273*	,040	,000	-,38	-,17
	35-49 years old	Up to 25 years old	1.435*	,061	,000	1,28	1,59
		26-34 years old	.385*	,038	,000	,29	,48
		Over 50 years old	.112*	,037	,014	,02	,21
	Over 50 years old	Up to 25 years old	1.324*	,062	,000	1,16	1,48
		26-34 years old	.273*	,040	,000	,17	,38
		35-49 years old	-.112*	,037	,014	-,21	-,02
Self-efficacy in classroom management	Up to 25 years old	26-34 years old	-,122	,070	**,293**	-,30	,06
		35-49 years old	-.755*	,067	,000	-,93	-,58
		Over 50 years old	-.849*	,069	,000	-1,03	-,67
	26-34 years old	Up to 25 years old	,122	,070	**,293**	-,06	,30
		35-49 years old	-.633*	,042	,000	-,74	-,52
		Over 50 years old	-.726*	,044	,000	-,84	-,61
	35-49 years old	Up to 25 years old	.755*	,067	,000	,58	,93
		26-34 years old	.633*	,042	,000	,52	,74
		Over 50 years old	-,093	,041	**,103**	-,20	,01
	Over 50 years old	Up to 25 years old	.849*	,069	,000	,67	1,03
		26-34 years old	.726*	,044	,000	,61	,84
		35-49 years old	,093	,041	,103	-,01	,20

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Statistically significant differences are also noted in relation to the efficacy in classroom management and age and mainly in age groups (up to 25 years) with the age groups (35-49 years) and over 50 years old from where M (over 25 years old)=2.80, M (26-34 years)=2.94, M (35-49 years)=3.55 and M(over 50 years old)=3.66 where we can notice

that with age increases the efficacy in classroom management. While between the ages (up to 25 years)and (26-34 years) there are no statistically significant differences regarding the efficacy in classroom management , as the value of Sig=0.293> 0.05. Also, between (35-49 years) and those (over 50 years) there are no statistically differences as well the value of Sig. = 0.103>0.05.

Table 3: Average Assessment of efficacy in student engagement

Age group	**Mean**
Up to 25 years old	2.91
26-34 years old	3.97
35-49 years old	4.10
Over 50 years old	4.22

Table 4: Average assessment of efficacy in instructional strategies

Age group	**Mean**
Up to 25 years old	2,92
26-34 years old	3,96
35-49 years old	4,36
Over 50 years old	4,24

Table 5: Average assessment of efficacy in classroom management

Age group	**Mean**
Up to 25 years old	2,80
26-34 years old	2,94
35-49 years old	3,55
Over 50 years old	3,66

4. Discussions & Conclusions

The study was conducted to find out the relationship between teachers' age and self-efficacy beliefs levels (in three subdimensions efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management).

From the results presented above it is noted that the dimension of efficacy in student engagement, where the value of Sig=0.000<0.05 indicates that it is meaningful to say that there are statistically significant changes to this dimension in relation to teacher

age. The same is noted in relation to the two other dimensions efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management, where in both cases the respective values of Sig. are 0.00, which means that there is a statistically significant differences in age. In terms of the three subdimensions of the self- efficacy scale, the results indicated that with age increases even self-efficacy in student engagement, in instruction strategies and in classroom management. The finding is supported by previous studies Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2009) found that the older the teachers are, the higher is their confidence in self-efficacy, and this study investigated the relationship between self-efficacy scores and pedagogical success. Bandura (1994) acknowledged that age does not play a role in self-efficacy, but his research indicates that there are differences in self-efficacy beliefs during the life of an individual by the period in which they are in their lives and how they manage the situations which they face during these periods.

However, several limitations of the study should be noted, to provide direction for future research. First, the participants reported through self-report questionnaires. One of the weaknesses of the self-reporting studies may be that the participants overestimate or underestimate the sources of self-efficacy. To investigate further the sources of self-efficacy beliefs, a qualitative study it is needed.

Second, the study is further limited by the disproportionate representation of male and female teachers. Female teachers in the primary schools in Albania are greater in number than male teachers. A more gender balanced sample could more accurately reflect teacher's perceptions of efficiency.

Third, the economic conditions of the education system in Albania can be a limitation of this study. The participants' responses in the questionnaire could have been downward due to the country's economic level, the high level of job stress and the lack of funds needed for school materials.

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