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The Root Cause of Positive Self-efficacy in Student-teachers During Their Teacher Education Program

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Article info	Abstract
<p>Received: 30 November, 2021 Accepted: 26 December, 2021 Published: 26 December, 2021 Available in online: 28 December, 2021</p> <p>*Corresponding author:  shoab352@outlook.com</p>  <p>Link to this article: https://www.ijacr.net/upload/ijacr/2021-14-1028.pdf</p>	<p>Positive self-efficacy is the cause of boosting up the student-teacher beliefs in their teaching during teacher education programs. In this study, the root causes of positive self-efficacy in student-teachers were investigated. In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted to find out the experiences of their positive self-efficacy. Interviews were conducted under the guidance of Banduras' (1986,1997) framework of the theory. The findings revealed that social persuasions and mastery experiences were the most influential root causes of their self-efficacy during their teacher education program respectively. The other two root causes of vicarious experiences and physiological and affective states also contributed their part in constructing the positive self-efficacy in student-teachers. But did not influence more than social persuasions and mastery experiences. According to the findings of this study, the most leading experiences that emerged during the interviews consist of observing the abilities of other teachers, teaching guidance from others, appreciation from others as a teacher, teaching practices, and previous experiences. Including these most leading root causes, other findings of the root causes are also illustrated in this study according to the perceptions of student-teachers.</p> <p>Keywords: Emerging self-efficacy, Self-efficacy, student-teachers, Teacher education.</p>

Introduction

Teacher efficacy has been defined as the belief in someone's capability to overcome difficulties in class or to boost up unmotivated students for their learning and engagements. (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001: p. 783).

Previous researches have well documented the extent of self-efficacy of student-teachers but have not explored a lot especially through qualitative study (Anderson & Betz, 2001; Poulou, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Researchers (Anderson and Betz, 2001) have also claimed that little research was conducted on the root causes of self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007: p. 953) also argued that "it is of both theoretical and practical importance to understand the root causes teachers to tap when making judgments about their capability for instruction".

This study is entirely based on the theoretical concept of Banduras' framework (Bandura, 1997), which consists of four hypothesized root causes proposed by him. These four hypothesized root causes include mastery experience, social persuasion experiences, vicarious experiences, and physiological and affective. Each of

these root causes is introduced in this portion of the study, which will lead to understanding this study in a better way.

Mastery Experiences

This root cause of self-efficacy is considered the most influential experience according to the literature. According to these mastery experiences, successful past experiences provide high self-efficacy in ongoing similar tasks. Whereas repeated failures lead to the low self-efficacy of individuals (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Pajares, 2010). Previous experiences give teachers a chance to develop their strengths to complete their tasks (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The researchers have claimed that the most important root causes of the self-efficacy of teachers are related to mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997; Morris & Usher, 2011; Poulou, 2007).

Vicarious Experiences

This root cause mostly relies on the models which an individual creates for his whole life or certain tasks (Johnson, 2010; Mills, 2011). Thus, the model created is considered as the cause of being efficacious in their tasks. People compare themselves with those models in the same situations in which their models got success.

The failure of their model may cause in lowering of the self-efficacy of individuals (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Furthermore, the amount of ability of the individuals for the observations of others is also related to vicarious experiences. Observations and comparisons by the individuals on their tasks can result in the influence on their self-efficacy.

Social Persuasion Experience

This root cause is related to other people, especially those who are around the person. These comments, appreciations, or other means of a verbal critic can influence the self-efficacy of the person (Bandura, 1997; Milner & Hoy, 2003; Schunk & Pajares, 2010).

Physiological And affective states

Physiological and affective states emerge from the states of happiness or stress from the particular tasks during the teachers' performances. It may influence their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Pajares, 2010). It was generally rated as the lowest power of root cause for self-efficacy. This root cause generally appears as the consequence of other root causes. (Bandura, 1997; Morris & Usher, 2011; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Wyatt, 2013).

Table 1. Participants' Information

Participants	Age	Program	Resident Area
Asma	21	B.Ed.	Punjab
Parveen	22	B.Ed.	Punjab
Sumaira	21	B.Ed.	Punjab
Tara	21	B.Ed.	Punjab

Methodology

Participants

Four Student-teachers who were enrolled in the teacher education program of Bachelors of Education (Bed) were inducted into this study. These four student-teachers were in their final year of this program and were going to graduate soon when they participated in this research. These all four participants were from the small city of Pakistan and they were studying in a government university. Furthermore, they also completed their teaching practice from a government school. The details of the participants are in a table given in Table 1.

Interviews

The in-depth interviews were conducted with these four student-teachers. The purpose of these interviews was to understand their perception regarding the root causes which constructed their self-efficacy. In-depth interviews with follow-up interviews were conducted in which they have mentioned several experiences regarding their self-efficacy root causes. Each interview took almost 45 minutes in which all four hypothesized banduras' root causes of self-efficacy were explored in the context of Pakistani culture and environment. Follow-up questions were also asked when the interviews were conducted. The participant's identities were kept secret in this research work to make sure about the ethical considerations. Student teachers' answers helped in finding out the perceived root causes of their self-efficacy.

Interview Protocols

The interview protocol was followed to conduct the detailed interviews of these four participants. The protocol was designed according to the theoretical framework of this study. After collecting background information from the participants, they were asked to describe their perceptions and views according to the four hypothesized root causes of Bandura. Therefore, they were asked questions related to mastery, vicarious, social, and physiological states. Furthermore, participants were given the liberty to express

their viewpoints with the help of their experiences and incidents that happened in their lives, especially in their program of teacher education. The participants were also given the liberty to express all root causes which influenced their self-efficacy positively. This strategy also helped us to find out any unique root cause that was not explored before.

Research Question

Following is the research question of this study.
Question 1. What are the root causes that construct the boosted self-efficacy of Pakistani female student-teachers?

Results and Discussions

Findings of the interviews suggested that the root causes related to social persuasion experiences were the most prominent for the self-efficacy of student-teachers of Pakistan who were studying in a government university. Student-teachers (PST) have not talked about the physiological and affective too much. But they have mentioned many other experiences related to the other three Banduras' root causes. Table 2 represents the themes and codes that emerged in this study and their affiliation with the banduras' root causes.

Table 2. Themes and Codes

Themes	Definitions	Codes	Bandura's root cause
Observations	The PSTs do of others	Teachers, Students, class follows	Vicarious
Comments	The PSTs receive from others	Society, seniors,	Social Persuasions
Managements	The PSTs do ease their workload	Coursework, teaching practice, previous experiences	Mastery
Responses	The PSTs receive from others	Teachers, students	Social Persuasions

Mastery Experiences

Student-teachers have mentioned many experiences which fall under the umbrella of Mastery experience. The most prominent were teaching practice, university coursework, and previous experiences. For example, when they have talked about their teaching practices. They have shared several aspects from teaching practices that influenced their self-efficacy. They learned how to control students and how to implement their teaching methods which they have applied in their teaching practices. It helped them to improve their self-efficacy as a teacher. Miss Tara shared that

"When I was attending the teaching practice arranged by our university, I was becoming more and more confident as a teacher." Teachers have mentioned that they came to know how to control classes. All the participants have mentioned that they managed to control students by using multiple methods. They developed their interests in study and also engaged them in multiple interesting activities.

Furthermore, other duties which were assigned to them during the teaching practices also helped them to build their capabilities of becoming successful. Managing all duties by dividing and following time slots for each activity also helped their confidence to be a teacher. Student-teachers have pointed out that there should be more learning activities similar to teaching practices and attending workshops.

Moreover, subjects that they have learned during their degree program also helped them to increase their self-efficacy in

teaching. They have theoretically learned multiple skills, philosophies, ways of assessments, class management, planning, and foundations, etc.

Furthermore, PSTs have also gained their teaching self-efficacy from their previous experiences. For example, PSTs have already been taught to the students in their previous times. They taught them through online teachings, home tuition, and private schools. Some PSTs also did extra courses and attended workshops to gain experience in teaching. These kinds of experiences have helped the teachers to construct their self-efficacy. One of the student-teachers mentioned that.

“Every step of our program provided us confidence in teaching. As the program progressed, my teaching self-efficacy increased. For example, our course work provided us with the confidence to make an imaginary structure of teaching in schools. Which we implemented in our teaching practices. Each course work provided us with the theoretical background of certain aspects. For example, we have studied one subject related to the methodologies of teaching in which we had been taught that how we can use multiple methodologies in our class to our students. It helped me to apply them practically when a certain situation came in front of me.”

Vicarious Experiences

As it was explained already that vicarious experiences are those experiences that usually are derived from observations and comparisons. There were many experiences related to vicarious experiences shared by PSTs, which leads to the formation of their self-efficacy beliefs. For example, PSTs have mentioned that when they compare themselves with their class fallows' performances with them during the teaching practices and university classes, it creates a competition which leads to their improvements and helps to construct their self-efficacy.

Moreover, multiple observations also helped them to construct the self-efficacy of the student-teachers. When PSTs observed their colleagues during their presentations, class lectures, and teaching students, it enhances their self-efficacy. Observing university teachers as models make it very obvious for the student-teachers to gain their confidence in teaching.

Three kinds of observations emerged from the interviews of student-teachers. The first one was related to the teachers of their childhood schools and colleges, the second one was from the university teachers and the third was from teaching practice school teachers.

Observations of school teachers were of their attitudes toward PSTs for helping them in teaching as experienced teachers. Observations of university teachers were related to their guidance in course work and thesis. PSTs also took their university teachers as models. PSTs also inspired by their school teachers and try to adopt a lot of qualities from them.

The comparison was also conducted and was divided into two categories. The first one was from colleagues and the second one was from those teachers who are incompetent. Asma shared that “At the time of my teaching practice, I was not sure about my teaching. I was not doing very well in my class. During my class, there were no responses from students. I was afraid of my assessments from the students and school teachers at the end of my teaching practice. Therefore, I asked my colleagues to allow me to attend their lectures so that I can compare my teaching with them. This helped me to overcome my mistakes in teaching and improved my confidence.”

Social Persuasions

These were the most powerful bunch of experiences that constructed the self-efficacy beliefs of student-teachers. PSTs have divided these experiences into two main portions. The first portion was related to society and the second portion was related to university fallows. Multiple comments from society boosted up the self-efficacy of PSTs. For example, supportive parents were the

most important root cause of their self-efficacy. Sumaira shares her views that

“I am very favorite of my father. He always supports me in every matter. He wanted me to study more and more. He always tells me many important points about the improvements in my teachings. He always used to tell me that teaching is a very respectable profession and he always encouraged and appreciated me for my studies.”

Not only parents but the extended family around the participants also gave a lot of respect to PSTs. For example, Parveen shares that

“Whenever I meet my family members like my cousins and aunts, they always give me respect. They always try to discuss with me my teaching abilities. My cousins are younger than me. They used to learn multiple subjects from me and give me a lot of respect. This respect and their appreciation helped me a lot to gain confidence in my teacher and encouraged me to become a good teacher.”

Other than family and parents, people around also gave respect to the PSTs which help them to gain confidence.

The second portion which PSTs have divided is related to their university fallows. Their class fallows and seniors guide and encourages them to become successful in their teaching field. For example, seniors help them to find multiple schools where they can do teaching practice. They also guide and appreciate PSTs at every step. PSTs also mentioned their teachers of the university who guide them at every step. Other than the teachers, PSTs have also mentioned their fallows of the university who used to help them at every step. So, the appreciations and guidance of teachers, seniors, and class fallows are very crucial for their self-efficacy. Parveen further shares that

“My seniors always guide me in teaching and my coursework. Whenever I stuck in my study, they guide me and never gave excuses of non-availability.”

Physiological And affective states

PSTs have also mentioned their physiological and affective states which helped them to construct their self-efficacy. They shared that they feel happy when they get respect as a teacher, which in response helps them to construct their self-efficacy. They feel proud when they teach big boys who are of their height. They feel like a leader when they teach a class. They enjoy authority as a leader and they apply in teaching practice what they have learned in their degree program. They also become satisfied and feel happy when they get positive responses from the students. These all kinds of feelings helped them to construct their self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This study explored several experiences related to mastery, vicarious, social persuasions, and physiological states. It was also concluded that the social persuasion experiences were considered as the most important among all other experiences. Social persuasion may be perceived as most important by the participants because of their strong and emotional connections with society. In this portion, this study will conclude all the experiences perceived by the participants.

Each of the Banduras' hypothesized root causes was explored according to the perception of Pakistani student-teachers. Following are the concluding remarks with discussion.

This root cause is considered as most important among all by bandura. But several researchers also claimed in the context of Asian culture that social persuasion was the most important root cause. Experiences related to course work that they studied during their program helped them to strengthen their theoretical background. Furthermore, implementing this theoretical background in their teaching during teaching practice also positively constructed their self-efficacy. The root causes which were related to previous experiences also helped to boost up their self-efficacy. These experiences were related to the teaching which

they performed previously. For example, during their tuitions, and teachings in private schools.

Student-teachers mentioned that they compare themselves as teachers with their class fellows, seniors, and sometimes with the teachers who are incompetent as their university teachers. The observations were also conducted by the student-teachers. For example, they observed their class fellows to improve their teaching. Similar observations were also conducted of the university and school teachers to improve their teaching. This gave the firm confidence in teaching.

This was the most important root cause that was emerged during the in-depth interview of student-teachers. Social persuasions experiences have emerged from the society and university fellows. Parents, general people, and extended family members were the root causes of their self-efficacy who make comments and appreciations which boosted the self-efficacy of student-teachers. Secondly, the comments, appreciations, and guidance from their class-fellows, seniors, and teachers from the workplace and institutions also helped them in this regard.

Several states like becoming happy, proud, and satisfied were the common states which helped the student-teachers to construct their self-efficacy.

Limitations and Recommendations

Several recommendations were made according to the findings of this study.

1. Institute should add some practical implementation on social interactions between school teachers and student-teachers.
2. More and more teaching practices and workshops should be conducted for experiences.
3. Coursework should also include some subject which can especially improve content knowledge of each subject.
4. The limitation of this research was that it was conducted in a certain environment where the student-teachers belong to similar cultures and of the same university. They went to teaching practice in the same school. So, they faced similar kinds of problems. Therefore, this research can be extended to further contexts.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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