



TEACHER COMPETENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG PUPIL TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Teacher competence and self-efficacy are closely related dimensions of professional functioning in education. Competence concerns the knowledge, instructional skills, assessment practices, classroom management, and professional abilities required for effective teaching, whereas self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs about their capability to organize and perform teaching-related tasks successfully. The present paper examines the empirical study through a newly organized conceptual and analytical framework. The dataset comprised 115 pupil-teachers from Samastipur district, Bihar, and the researcher used the Teacher Competency and Self-Efficacy Scales along with analysis of variance (ANOVA). The researcher classified teachers into high, moderate, and low competency groups and compared self-efficacy across these groups separately for male teachers, female teachers, government college pupil-teachers, and private college pupil-teachers. The analysis shows no statistically significant differences among competency groups for male pupil-teachers, female pupil-teachers, and government college pupil-teachers. The findings suggest that the relationship between competence and self-efficacy varies across institutional contexts. The present paper discusses implications for teacher development, college leadership, and future research.

Keywords: Teacher Competence; Self-Efficacy; Pupil-Teachers.

Introduction

The quality of secondary education depends largely on teachers' professional capacities. At this stage, teachers are expected not only to possess adequate subject knowledge but also to design instruction, manage classrooms, assess learning, respond to learner diversity, and sustain productive relationships with students and other stakeholders. These responsibilities make teacher competence a multidimensional construct rather than a single measure of subject expertise.

Self-efficacy adds a motivational dimension to professional competence. In social cognitive theory, self-efficacy reflects beliefs about one's ability to organize and execute the actions

needed to manage future situations (Bandura, 1977, 1997). In teaching, such beliefs can influence persistence, instructional choices, responses to difficulties, and willingness to engage with demanding classroom situations. Thus, competence and self-efficacy may operate together, although they should not be treated as identical constructs.

Previous studies have generally associated stronger competence, pedagogical skill, classroom management, and related professional capacities with stronger efficacy beliefs. At the same time, the literature also indicates that experience, college context, teaching modality, and other contextual variables can shape this association. Consequently, simply assuming that teachers with higher measured competence will always report higher self-efficacy may obscure meaningful differences between groups and institutions.

Conceptual Background

Teacher competence is the integrated set of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and professional practices that enables an educator to plan, implement, assess, and improve instruction. The study identifies content knowledge, pedagogical understanding, classroom management, assessment skills, and relationship-building as important elements. Competence therefore extends beyond knowing a subject: it concerns the capacity to translate knowledge into effective classroom practice.

Teacher self-efficacy concerns teachers' perceived capability to perform important professional tasks. These may include lesson planning, motivating learners, managing classroom behavior, adapting instruction, collaborating with colleagues and parents, and responding to instructional challenges. Because efficacy is a belief system, it may not correspond perfectly with objectively observed competence. A teacher may possess considerable skill but feel uncertain in a particular context, while another teacher may report strong confidence despite needing further development in specific skills.

Review of Related Research

The literature cited in this study offers several complementary perspectives. Ashton and Webb (1986) and Bandura's work provide an important theoretical basis for understanding efficacy beliefs and their connection with professional action. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) further conceptualized teacher efficacy as a complex construct associated with teachers' judgments about their capability in classroom contexts. Some studies have found positive associations between self-efficacy and teaching competence or effectiveness. Meiyanti, Hardienata, and Hidayat (2022) explore relationships among self-efficacy, pedagogical competence, and teaching effectiveness. Kaur and Kaur (2022) examined pupil teachers and reported a positive relationship between teaching competence and self-efficacy, while also considering gender and college type. Orakci et al. (2023) examined teachers' efficacy beliefs and how they develop during teaching. Yang and Du (2024) examined online pedagogical and content knowledge, self-efficacy, emotion regulation, and digital burnout, showing that efficacy is embedded in a broader professional environment. Some reviews also identify research concerning socio-emotional competence, teaching style, mentoring, and teacher commitment. Marcano et al. (2022) reported positive associations between socio-emotional competence and self-efficacy among prospective secondary teachers, while Phaik et al. (2023) examined self-efficacy as a mediator between emotional competence and commitment. Sharma and Patel (2024) highlighted

mentoring as a potential support for teacher self-efficacy. Taken together, these studies suggest that multiple professional and contextual processes influence teacher efficacy.

Objectives of the Study

The pupil-teacher group is classified as high, moderate, or low competence. The researchers formed teacher competency groups using the mean and standard deviation. The objectives of the present research are as follows:

- To examine whether self-efficacy differs among male pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.
- To examine whether self-efficacy differs among female pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.
- To determine whether government college pupil-teachers differ in self-efficacy when classified into three competency groups.
- To determine whether private college pupil-teachers differ in self-efficacy when classified into three competency groups.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among male pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.
2. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among female pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.
3. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among government college pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.
4. There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among private college pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

Methodology

Research Design: The researcher used a quantitative, comparative survey design. The analysis used numerical data and group comparisons.

Population and Sample: The population consisted of pupil-teachers in Samastipur district, Bihar. The researchers selected a sample of 115 pupil-teachers through random sampling. The sample was classified by gender (male and female) and by college management (government and private).

Tools: Two self-developed, standardized tools were used to measure the Teacher Competency Scale and the Self-Efficacy Scale. The present study describes competence in terms of professional knowledge and skills and treats self-efficacy as teachers' perceived capability to perform their professional responsibilities.

Statistical Analysis

The researcher used one-way ANOVA to compare self-efficacy across the three competency categories within each subgroup. The reported F statistic was compared with the critical table value at the 0.05 significance level.

Results

1. To examine whether self-efficacy differs among male pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

H01: There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among male pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

Table 1: Summary of the F-test of self-efficacy of male pupil-teachers with three competency groups

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Table Value
Between Groups	1245.24	2	622.62	2.88	3.07*
Within Groups	24456.91	113	216.43		

* 0.05 Significance level

The obtained F-ratio value was $F = 2.88$, compared with a table value of 3.07 at the .05 level. Since the obtained value was below the table value, the present data treated the difference as non-significant. Thus, the null hypothesis can be accepted. Thus, the results show no statistically significant differences in self-efficacy among the high-, moderate-, and low-competency male groups.

2. To examine whether self-efficacy differs among female pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

H02: There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among female pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

Table 2: Summary of the F-test of self-efficacy of female pupil-teachers with three competency groups

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Table Value
Between Groups	527.62	2	263.81	1.273	3.07*
Within Groups	23415.26	113	207.23		

* 0.05 Significance level

The obtained F-test value was $F = 1.273$, compared with a table value of 3.07. Since the obtained value was below the table value, the present data treated the difference as non-significant. Thus, the null hypothesis can be accepted. Thus, the result indicated no statistically detectable difference in self-efficacy across the three female competency groups.

3. To determine whether government pupil-teachers differ in self-efficacy when classified into three competency groups.

H03: There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among government pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

Table 3: Summary of the F-test of self-efficacy of government college pupil-teachers with three competency groups.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Table Value
Between Groups	482.14	2	241.07	1.21	3.07*
Within Groups	22524.24	113	199.33		

* 0.05 Significance level

The obtained F-test value was $F = 1.21$, compared with a table value of 3.07. Since the obtained value was below the table value, the present data treated the difference as non-significant. Thus,

the null hypothesis can be accepted. Thus, self-efficacy did not differ significantly among the three competency categories in government colleges.

4. To determine whether private pupil-teachers differ in self-efficacy when classified into three competency groups.

H04: There is no significant difference in self-efficacy among private pupil-teachers classified into three competency groups.

Table 4: Summary of the F-test results of self-efficacy of private college pupil-teachers with three competency groups.

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Table Value
Between Groups	864.83	2	432.42	3.17	3.07
Within Groups	15435.74	113	136.6		

** 0.05 Significance level*

The obtained F-test value was $F = 3.17$, compared with a table value of 3.07. Since the obtained value exceeded the table value, the data indicate a significant difference. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted. Thus, self-efficacy did differ significantly among the three competency categories in private colleges.

Major Findings

The findings suggest that college management may relate to the competence–efficacy pattern. Government colleges did not show statistically significant differences in self-efficacy across competency categories, whereas the private colleges comparison produced a significant omnibus result. This does not establish that college management causes differences in efficacy; it only indicates that the pattern observed in this sample was not identical across the two sectors.

Discussion

The findings include male teachers, female teachers, government teachers, and private teachers. The private-college result deserves separate attention because the omnibus test was significant. Possible explanations may involve institutional expectations, supervision, workload, professional development opportunities, role demands, or other contextual variables. The absence of significant differences in the government-college analysis is also informative. It indicates that self-efficacy scores were sufficiently similar across the competency categories that the observed variation did not meet the study's significance criterion. This finding should not be interpreted as proof that competence and self-efficacy are unrelated in all government-college settings; it reflects this particular sample and statistical comparison. Professional development may therefore need to address both what pupil-teachers can do and how confidently they believe they can apply those capabilities.

Educational Implications

First, professional development should combine skill development with opportunities for teachers to apply those skills successfully. Training that addresses pedagogy, assessment, classroom management, and subject knowledge may be strengthened when pupil-teachers also receive structured feedback and practice opportunities.

Second, college management should avoid assuming that a competency alone provides a complete picture of a teacher's professional confidence.

Third, the private-college result indicates that institutional context merits closer investigation.

Fourth, teacher education programs can integrate reflective practice, mentoring, peer observation, collaborative lesson planning, and evidence-based feedback. These approaches may give teachers repeated opportunities to connect professional knowledge with classroom action and reflect on their capability.

Finally, policymakers and administrators should interpret teacher competence and self-efficacy as related but distinct dimensions. Monitoring both may provide a richer basis for planning teacher development than relying on either construct alone.

Limitations

The analysis concerns 115 pupil-teachers from Samastipur district of Bihar.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Replicate the study across multiple districts and states to test whether the observed pattern is stable across educational contexts.
- Use larger samples and confidence intervals alongside significance tests.
- Investigate possible mediators and moderators such as teaching experience, subject specialization, workload, leadership support, mentoring, and professional development.

Conclusion

The present study examined whether self-efficacy varied across high, moderate, and low teacher-competency groups among pupil teachers. Based on the empirical results, the study found no significant differences for male teachers, female teachers, or government-college teachers. The study found a significant difference among private-college teachers. The results therefore point to a context-dependent pattern rather than a simple, universal relationship between competency classification and self-efficacy.

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