

TEACHERS' EFFICACY BELIEFS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ECONOMICS CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of Senior High School Economics curriculum. This study did not only assess the level of Economics teachers' efficacy, beliefs, but also examined the differences in teacher efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualifications. The study focused on Senior High School Economics teachers in the Western Region of Ghana. Descriptive survey design was used to determine the level of Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs and the differences in teacher efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualification. Simple random sampling was used to select 123 Economics teachers. The long form of Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) was used to collect the data and the data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and T-test. The results showed that teachers have high efficacy beliefs in the implementation of Senior High School Economics curriculum. Again, there were no statistically significant differences in teacher efficacy level across gender and professional qualification. It was recommended that teacher-educators, Ghana Education Service and school authorities should organize self-efficacy enhancement programmes for teachers so as to sustain or improve their efficacy beliefs.

Keywords: Teacher efficacy beliefs, implementation, economics, curriculum, professional qualification.

Introduction

Successful curriculum implementation is a major concern to stakeholders in education. Several attempts have been made by governments, institutions and individuals to improve curriculum implementation through provision of requisite materials, workshops,

seminars, training of teachers, among others (Ministry of Education, 2014; Zainul-Deen, 2011). Existing studies on curriculum implementation have reported that curriculum implementation in Ghana has not been impressive (Owusu, 2014; Kwarteng, 2009, 2013). Teachers resort to their own beliefs or ways of implementing the planned curriculum to achieve results that may not be similar to what it was intended (Owusu, 2014). Ghana as a country adopts the fidelity model of curriculum implementation and therefore the degree of implementation is one of the key areas of determining successful curriculum implementation. In line with up-to-date studies, earlier studies have also revealed that many innovations introduced into educational organizations do not yield their intended outcomes (Hopkins, 1990).

Factors that have been identified to be affecting the successful implementation of the Senior High Schools (SHSs) curriculum in Ghana include, conservatism on the part of teachers, lack of commitment from teachers, lack of clarity about the curriculum programme to be implemented, teachers' incapability to implement the curriculum, and constraints such as large class size, and insufficient resources, limited time to implement the curriculum, among others (Yiboe, 2011 as cited in Owusu, 2014). The analysis of the factors that influence the successful implementation of curriculum shows that, involving and committing classroom teachers to innovative programmes is a prominent challenge. However, in the face of these challenges, the teachers' participatory behaviour needs to be improved (Roth, 2005).

Self-efficacy has been widely used as a powerful theoretical approach for determining and improving a person's participatory behaviour and its successful implementation (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Self-efficacy belief influences how much effort is spent on an activity, how much perseverance and persistence are evident when encountering obstacles, and how much resilience is brought forth in the face of adverse circumstances (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Self-efficacy has remained a very important variable in education over the past 25 years (Cakiroglu, 2008). When applied to teaching, self-efficacy has constantly been found to relate to positive student and teacher behaviours, and has a positive effect on educational system and its improvements (Soodak & Podell, 1993). Thus, self-efficacy serves as a crucial factor in improving teacher education, promoting

education reforms and implementation (Ashton, 1984; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). The valuing, adoption, and successful implementation of curriculum are related to teachers' efficacy beliefs (Stein & Wang, 1988). Specifically, teachers who expressed higher levels of efficacy for teaching also tended to express a valuing for successful educational innovations (Cousins & Walker, 2000). More efficacious teachers also rated new classroom practices of teachers as more aligned with their current routines, more important for students' learning, and less difficult to implement than teachers with less efficacy (Guskey, 1988).

Statement of the problem

Teacher efficacy plays an important role in the achievement of successful curriculum implementation and this has attracted both local and international investigations. Some studies on teacher efficacy beliefs concentrated only on sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Uzuntiryaki, 2008; Kahyaoglu, 2011; Zelenak, 2011), teacher efficacy beliefs (Senemoglu, Demirel, Yagci & Ustandag, 2009; Dibapile, 2012) or relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and other variables (Kay, 2006; Bounds, 2013). It is evident from the literature that most of the studies on teacher efficacy beliefs were conducted outside the African continent. Klaseen, Tze, Betts and Gordon (2011) used Psyc info, Web of science and Eric databases to investigate studies conducted in Africa from 1998 to 2009 on teacher efficacy beliefs. They reported that only 2% of the articles written in English were done in Africa.

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs vary in different contexts, as teachers may exhibit different levels of self-efficacy depending on the subject, student characteristics or school environment (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). It appears the literature has revealed little work on teacher efficacy beliefs especially in the Ghanaian context, in general, and in the area of Economics education in particular. In the Ghanaian context, teacher efficacy studies focused on Kindergarten teachers (Cobbold & Boateng, 2015) and elementary school teachers (Mitchual, Owusu-Banahene & Donkor, 2008 as cited in Cobbold & Boateng, 2015). This has created a gap which this study seeks to fill. Focusing on Senior High School Economics teachers, this study seeks to assess economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of SHS Economics curriculum and further examines

the differences between teacher efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualification.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of Senior High School Economics Curriculum. Specifically, this study finds out Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs level and further examines the differences in teacher efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualification.

Research question

What is the level of economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of senior high school economics curriculum?

Research hypotheses

- H1: There is statistically significant difference in teacher efficacy belief scores between professional and non-professional teachers in the implementation of SHS Economics Curriculum.
- H2: There is statistically significant difference in teacher efficacy belief scores between male and female teachers in the implementation of SHS Economics Curriculum.

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura's (1977) Self-efficacy theory served as the theoretical framework for this study. In Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy as the primary motivational force behind an individual's actions. An individual's action could be best explained by his or her level of efficacy. Self-efficacy is one of the most widely and consistently defined motivational constructs used in teacher efficacy research (Murphy & Alexander, 2001). As an aspect of Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy can be defined as teacher's belief in his or her capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschennen-Moran & Hoy & Hoy, 1998). A person's efficacy determines what he/she can do with a given task. The level of an individual's self-efficacy influences his/her choice of activities and behavioural settings, how much effort they expend, and how long he/she will persist in the face of obstacles and

aversive experiences (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be a strong predictor of both current behaviour and the effect of treatments on behaviour change (Henson, 2001).

The basic principle behind self-efficacy theory is that individuals are more likely to engage in activities for which they have high self-efficacy and less likely to engage in those they do not (Van der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2002). Self-efficacy is what an individual believes he or she can accomplish using his or her skills under certain circumstances. Self-efficacy has been thought to be a task-specific version of self-esteem (Lunenburg, 2011). According to self-efficacy theory, people behave in the way that executes their initial beliefs; thus, self-efficacy functions as a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Level of Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs

Teacher efficacy level research has been examined by different researchers. In the Ghanaian context, Cobbold and Boateng (2015) studied "Exploring the instructional practices efficacy beliefs of Kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis." The authors limited their study to an aspect of implementation (instructional practices) and Kindergarten teachers. Their research findings indicated that kindergarten teachers in the Metropolis have high efficacy beliefs in instructional practices. This signifies that they have a high sense of efficacy in instructional practices and therefore there is a positive relationship between efficacy and instructional practices of Kindergarten teachers. To the authors, high ratings of efficacy beliefs imply that the kindergarten teachers have high confidence in their ability to implement appropriate instructional practices in their attempt to implement the kindergarten curriculum.

In the Turkish context, Senemoglu, Demirel, Yagci and Ustundag (2009) studied elementary school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The study employed quantitative approach with a sample of 97 elementary school teachers. Teacher Self-efficacy Scale composed of 5-point likert type 32 items was used to collect the data. The results indicated that, teachers' average sense of self-efficacy beliefs was at "good level". Sarfo, Amankwah, Sam and Konin (2015) indicated a relatively higher mean score and this indicated that teachers had a better self-efficacy in devising instructional strategies, managing the classroom and engaging students as well. The impression is that,

teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were found to be high suggested that they had strong beliefs that adequate knowledge and skills of effective teaching behaviours with respect to instructional strategies, classroom management and student engagement. Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie and Beatty (2010), found that teachers with higher efficacy levels are more likely to persevere in their attempt to reach learning goals when they encounter obstacles and so are more prone to experiencing effective instructional strategies that represent a challenge and are more willing to run risks in their classrooms.

Differences in Teachers Efficacy Beliefs across Gender and Professional Qualification

Teacher self-efficacy varies in different contexts, as teachers may exhibit different levels of self-efficacy depending on the subject, student characteristics, or school environment and other variables such as gender and professional qualification (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). However, it is unclear to what extent the level of self-efficacy beliefs depends on personal characteristics of teachers, in particular, on teachers' gender and professional qualification. For instance, whilst some studies identified differences in teachers efficacy beliefs across gender (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Tabak, Akyildiz & Yildiz, 2003; Gurbuzturk & Sad, 2009; Hamurcu, 2006), other studies did not (Shaukat & Iqbal, 2012; Karimvand, 2011). Even studies that identified differences between male and female teachers, these studies revealed inconsistent results. While some studies reported higher efficacy beliefs for female teachers (Gurbuzturk & Sad, 2009; Hamurcu, 2006) other studies reported higher efficacy beliefs for male teachers (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). It is important to clearly know the differences between male and female regarding their efficacy beliefs levels, because if male and female differ in their beliefs in implementing the Economics curriculum, male and female teachers will require different efficacy building programmes and respond differently to actions aimed at enhancing teachers' efficacy beliefs.

Similarly, there is lack of clarity in the literature with regard to differences in teachers' efficacy beliefs across professional qualification of teachers. While professional teachers tend to have higher level of efficacy beliefs (Azar, 2010; Wilson & Tan, 2004) than non-professional teachers, these differences can be reversed or cannot

be identified (Fives & Looney, 2009). Thus, in line with empirical evidence that suggests that professional and non-professional teachers respond differently to their level of efficacy beliefs, the value of efficacy programmes may be ineffective to some teachers across professional qualification. Therefore, the goal of this research is to assess the level of Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs as well as identify the differences in Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of the Senior High School economics curriculum across gender and professional qualification.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey design. The design was found most appropriate because it allows researchers to study and gather information from or about groups of people in order to state their answers or responses; the ultimate goal of which is to make a generalization to the entire population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005 as cited in Kwarteng, 2013). By employing descriptive survey design, the researchers gained insight into Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of SHS Economics curriculum.

Population

The target population was all Economics teachers in Ghana. The accessible population was 176 Economics teachers from the 44 Senior High Schools (Ghana Education Service, 2015) in the Western Region. The teachers' population in the region is sparsely distributed.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was 123 Economics teachers. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1976), a population of 176 should have a minimum sample size of 113. Hence, 123 Economics teachers used in the study was a representative sample. The simple random sampling technique specifically the lottery method was used to select 123 teachers from 176 Economics teachers in the region. This technique is considered the least biased method of sampling (Jawale, 2012).

Instrument

The long form of Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) was adopted and used to collect data from the respondents. TSES had 24

items with 3 subscales (Efficacy for Student Engagement, Efficacy for Instructional Strategies and Efficacy for Classroom Management). Each of these subscales had 8 items in total. TSES was originally developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and has been well established in the literature to be valid and reliable for collecting teacher efficacy data. The items on the instruments were measured on a 100 point scale with 10 point intervals starting from 0 which means 'certainly cannot do' through to 100 which means 'certainly can do'. Pre-test was done in the Cape Coast Metropolis and the instrument proved reliable. The reliabilities for the full scale were 0.93 and the subscales were 0.87 for Student Engagement; 0.96 for Instructional Strategies; and 0.96 for Classroom Management.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers sent letters to the heads of school to seek approval to collect the data. The researchers administered the questionnaires themselves to the teachers and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistical tools such as T-test were used to analyse the data. Mean and standard deviation were computed to find out the level of teacher efficacy beliefs. The t-test was used to examine the differences in teacher efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualification. The 0.05 alpha level was used to examine the differences in teachers' efficacy beliefs across gender and professional qualification.

RESULTS

Level of Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

Research Question: What is the level of Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs in the implementation of Senior High School Economics curriculum?

Each of the eight items on the scale that measured students' engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management were transformed to one variable called Efficacy for Students Engagement (ESE), Efficacy for Instructional Strategies (EIS) and Efficacy for Classroom Management (ECM). The level of teacher efficacy beliefs

was based on the overall mean. An overall mean score between 0 and 30 was interpreted as low efficacy beliefs, 40 and 60 as moderate efficacy beliefs and 70 and 100 as high efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2006). Table 1 shows the result of the level of teacher efficacy beliefs in the implementation of the Senior High School Economics curriculum.

Table 1: Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

Item	M	SD
Efficacy for Students Engagement (ESE)	74.91	13.72
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies (EIS)	80.64	9.50
Efficacy for Classroom Management (ECM)	76.48	14.70
Teacher Efficacy Beliefs	77.34	11.95

Source: Field Data, 2016 N=123

The result in Table 1 shows that Senior High School Economics teachers in the Western Region have high efficacy beliefs ($M = 77.34$, $SD = 11.95$) of implementing the Senior High School Economics curriculum. With regard to the subscales, the study reveals high level of efficacy beliefs for all the three subscales with Efficacy for Instructional Strategies reported as the highest ($M = 80.64$, $SD = 9.50$) and student engagement as the lowest ($M = 74.91$, $SD = 13.72$).

Hypotheses Testing

Professional Qualification and Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference in teacher efficacy scores between professional and non-professional teachers

An independent sample t-test was used to find the differences between professional and non-professional teachers' regarding their level of efficacy beliefs. Table 2 presents the result of differences between teacher efficacy beliefs on the basis of professional qualification.

The result in Table 2 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between professional and non-professional teachers in the overall teacher efficacy level and the subscales. Professional teachers reported higher mean scores in teacher efficacy level and the subscales, but the differences were not statistically significant.

Table 2: Professional Qualification and Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

	Professional Qualification	M	SD	T	df	Sig
SE	Professional	75.61	13.59	1.073	121	0.286
	Non-professional	72.41	14.17			
IS	Professional	81.24	9.28	1.317	121	0.190
	Non-professional	78.52	10.14			
CM	Professional	77.64	13.49	1.412	34.590	0.167
	Non-professional	72.36	18.04			
TEB	Professional	78.16	11.42	1.440	121	0.152
	Non-professional	74.43	13.50			

Significant level 0.05(2-tailed) for all groups. SE = Student Engagement, IS = Instructional Strategies, CM = Classroom Management and TEB = Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

Gender and Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference in teacher efficacy beliefs scores between male and female teachers

An independent sample t-test was conducted to find if male and female teachers differ significantly in terms of their level of efficacy beliefs. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender and Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

	Professional Qualification	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig
SE	Male	104	74.25	13.45	-1.239	121	.218
	Female	19	78.49	15.01			
IS	Male	104	80.60	9.54	-.107	121	.915
	Female	19	80.86	9.55			
CM	Male	104	75.76	14.91	-1.266	121	.208
	Female	19	80.39	13.14			
TEB	Male	104	76.87	11.94	-1.019	121	.310
	Female	19	79.91	12.00			

Significant level 0.05(2-tailed) for all groups. SE = Student Engagement, IS = Instructional Strategies, CM = Classroom Management and TEB = Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

Table 3, shows that, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores of teacher efficacy beliefs between male and female teachers in terms of teacher efficacy level, student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management. Female teachers

reported slightly higher mean scores (see Table 3) than male teachers but the result was not statistically significant.

Discussion

This study revealed that Economics teachers have high efficacy beliefs in the implementation of the senior high school Economics curriculum. In other words, the teachers believe they are efficacious in the implementation of the curriculum. This means that teachers are capable of setting themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to these goals. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure (Bandura, 1994). It also implies that teachers quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. The finding of this study confirms the study by Sarfo, Amankwah, Sam and Konin (2015) who found higher self-efficacy belief among teachers in devising instructional strategies, managing the classroom and engaging students as well. Cobbold and Boateng (2015) also found that kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis had high efficacy beliefs in instructional practices. The high level of efficacy beliefs reported by the teachers could be attributed to the opinion that most of the teachers in this study are professional teachers. Hence, teachers participate in professional trainings, workshops and get further professional education to become more competent and knowledgeable to implement the curriculum (Shah, 2006).

This study could not reveal any significant difference between professional and non-professional teachers. The result of this study confirms the null hypothesis and this contradicts the logical assumption that professional teachers have higher teacher efficacy levels than non-professional teachers (Cobanoglu, 2011). This finding supports that of Fives and Looney (2009), who could not reveal any statistically significant difference between the professional level of teachers and their self-efficacy level. However, considering the idea that the field of education has a strong practical dimension, experience might wash out the differences between professional and non-professional teachers on efficacy and may influence the non-professional teachers to teach as professional teachers, equipping them with a broad range of skills, knowledge, and behaviours which formal education alone cannot provide (Cobanoglu, 2011). Also, one major implication from this result is that non-professional teachers believe that they can equally demonstrate professionalism in the

implementation of curriculum. This could be possibly due to the fact that access to various conferences, workshops and in-service training organized to improve teachers' capabilities may also bring both professional and non-professional teachers on equal levels regarding their efficacy beliefs (Shah, 2006).

Furthermore, there was no statistically significant difference between male and female Economics teachers, regarding their level of efficacy beliefs. This suggests that both male and female teachers at the Senior High Schools in the region have similar level of beliefs. Even though female teachers reported slightly higher mean scores of teacher efficacy beliefs than the male teachers, the result was not statistically significant, unlike in the case of Hamurcu (2006) where there was a significant difference in teacher efficacy beliefs in favour of female teachers.

One of the variables that can help explain similar beliefs among male and female teachers is teaching experiences. In this study, most of the participants have more than five years teaching experiences. Relatively longer teaching experience as in the case of participants involved in this study may influence teachers to be more efficacious, especially where previous implementation has been successful and this might render gender differences ineffective in the level of teacher efficacy beliefs. Again, commitment and motivation of teachers in their job could also influence teachers' efficacy beliefs regardless of their gender. The finding supports earlier studies such as Chacon (2005) and Karimvand (2011). For instance, Karimvand reported that gender had no significant effect on the participants' efficacy. On the other hand, this study partly contradicts the study of Shaukat and Iqbal (2012) who revealed a significant difference in classroom management in favour of males.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn. First, Senior High School Economics teachers in the Western Region of Ghana are efficacious, which means that they believe in their capability to implement the Economics curriculum. Second, gender and professional qualification do not have any impact on the level of Economics teachers' efficacy beliefs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. First, Ghana Education Service (GES) and school authorities should continuously organize workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers to enable them sustain or improve their efficacy beliefs.
2. Second, GES and school heads should organise self-efficacy enhancement programmes for the teachers irrespective of their gender and professional qualification to sustain or improve their self-confidence to enable them successfully implement the SHS Economics curriculum.

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