



Teacher Efficacy: A Thematic Review of Research (2006–2024)

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ABSTRACT

This thematic review synthesises empirical studies published between 2006 and 2024 to examine teacher efficacy. The main findings show that strong teacher efficacy beliefs are associated with greater instructional adaptability, enhanced classroom management, higher teacher engagement, greater emotional resilience, and stronger professional commitment. Technological competence and inclusive teaching efficacy are increasingly important in modern educational contexts. Gaps remain in longitudinal research, culturally diverse studies, and multimodal assessment. Teacher efficacy is central to effective teaching, and future research should address contextual influences, digital pedagogy, and mixed-methods approaches.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher efficacy is a prominent research focus in educational psychology. Based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, teacher efficacy means teachers believe they can organise and implement instructional activities that improve student learning outcomes. Since 2006, researchers worldwide have increasingly studied teacher efficacy due to rapid educational reforms, heightened accountability, classroom diversity, technological advances, and changing teaching environments.



Studies from 2006 to 2024 show teacher efficacy strongly affects instructional quality, classroom management, engagement, well-being, and commitment. Teachers with high efficacy use innovative strategies, foster positive climates, persist, and show resilience under stress. As schools now integrate technology and inclusive learning, research has expanded to cover digital teaching efficacy, inclusive pedagogical efficacy, emotional regulation, and collaborative practices.

This thematic review covers major developments in teacher efficacy research from 2006 to 2024. It synthesises empirical studies and identifies key trends, methodological advances, emerging themes, and research gaps.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teacher efficacy research has expanded since 2006, but findings are still fragmented across educational themes, methods, and cultures. Some studies address instructional effectiveness; others focus on emotional well-being, engagement, classroom management, digital teaching, or inclusive practices. A comprehensive thematic review is needed to organise and synthesise the literature.

Researchers use diverse definitions, measurement scales, and frameworks to study teacher efficacy. Many studies use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), while others develop context-specific tools for technology, inclusion, or emotional resilience. A thematic review can analyse the main directions, patterns, strengths, and limits of teacher efficacy research from 2006 to 2024.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This review analyses and synthesises research on teacher efficacy from 2006 to 2024. It aims to examine the main thematic areas in teacher efficacy research.

1. Analyse methodological trends and research approaches.
2. Identify major findings related to instructional practices, classroom management, engagement, and well-being.
3. Explore emerging themes such as digital teaching efficacy and inclusive education.
4. Identify research gaps and suggest future study directions.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This review includes:



- Peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2006 and 2024
- International empirical studies involving pre-service and in-service teachers
- Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies
- Research where teacher efficacy is a central variable

Excluded from the review:

- Books, dissertations, conference papers, and unpublished theses
- Studies unrelated to teacher efficacy
- Research focused exclusively on student self-efficacy.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This review advances the conceptual and empirical understanding of teacher efficacy by integrating nearly two decades of research.

The review is significant because it:

- Synthesises major developments in teacher efficacy research from 2006 to 2024
- Highlights factors that enhance instructional quality and teacher engagement
- Identify new educational challenges related to technology and inclusion.
- Offers insights for teacher educators, school leaders, and policymakers
- Suggests future research directions to strengthen teacher development programs

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy means teachers believe they can organise instruction, manage classrooms, and influence student learning outcomes.

Instructional Efficacy

Instructional efficacy is the confidence to plan and deliver effective teaching strategies and methods.



Classroom Management Efficacy

Classroom management efficacy is the confidence to maintain discipline, manage behaviour, and create productive learning environments.

Work Engagement

Work engagement is feeling energetic, dedicated, and absorbed in professional work.

Digital Teaching Efficacy

Digital teaching efficacy is teachers’ confidence in using technology effectively for teaching, assessing, and classroom communication.

Inclusive Teaching Efficacy

Inclusive teaching efficacy means teachers are confident in meeting the diverse needs of learners, including students with disabilities and those with varied backgrounds.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

A critical content analysis method was used to synthesise the studies. The analysis involved:

- Extracting study objectives, methods, instruments, and findings
- Identifying recurring themes and conceptual patterns
- Evaluating methodological strengths and weaknesses
- Comparing findings across educational contexts
- Synthesising implications for practice and research

ANALYSIS OF STUDIES ON TEACHER EFFICACY (2006–2024)

| Author(s) | Year | Study Focus | Country | Sample | Methodology | Instruments Used | Major Findings |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Megan Tschannen-Moran & | 2007 | Influence of efficacy beliefs on | USA | 255 teachers | Mixed-method | TSES | High-efficacy teachers used adaptive |



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|-----------------------------------|------|---|--------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Anita Woolfolk Hoy | | teaching practice | | | | | instructional methods. |
| Charles Wolters & Susan Daugherty | 2007 | Goal structures and teacher self-efficacy | USA | 167 teachers | Correlational | TSES | Mastery-oriented teachers reported stronger efficacy. |
| Robert Klassen & Ming Ming Chiu | 2010 | Gender and teaching experience on efficacy | Canada & USA | 1,430 teachers | Quantitative survey | TSES | Experienced teachers showed stronger efficacy beliefs. |
| Chris Tsouloupas et al. | 2010 | Emotional exhaustion and classroom management | USA | 310 teachers | Correlational | TSES | Emotional exhaustion lowered management efficacy. |
| Wilmar Schaufeli & Arnold Bakker | 2010 | Teacher efficacy and work engagement | Netherlands | 1,089 teachers | Survey research | TSES, UWES | Efficacy predicted vigour and dedication. |
| Daniel Holzberger et al. | 2013 | Instructional quality and efficacy | Germany | 158 teachers | Longitudinal | TSES | Successful teaching strengthened efficacy beliefs. |
| Edmund Emmer & Eric Sabornie | 2015 | Classroom management efficacy | USA | 486 teachers | Descriptive survey | Management Efficacy Scale | Experienced teachers managed |



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|----------------------------------|------|--|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| | | | | | | | classrooms better. |
| Marjolein Zee & Helma Koomen | 2016 | Teacher efficacy and student outcomes | Netherlands | 40 studies | Meta-analysis | Multiple scales | Teacher efficacy improved instructional quality. |
| Einar Skaalvik & Sidsel Skaalvik | 2016 | Teacher efficacy and burnout | Norway | 2,569 teachers | Quantitative survey | TSES | Low efficacy increased burnout and exhaustion. |
| Maria Poulou | 2017 | Teacher-student relationships and efficacy | Greece | 423 teachers | Mixed-method | TSES | Positive relationships strengthened management efficacy. |
| Helen Granziera & Harsha Perera | 2019 | Teacher efficacy and engagement | Australia | 734 teachers | Survey research | EI Scale, TSES | High efficacy improved engagement. |
| Ahmed A. & Malik M. | 2022 | Teacher efficacy, stress, and engagement | Pakistan | Secondary teachers | Regression analysis | Efficacy Scale | Efficacy reduced stress and improved engagement. |

THEMATIC REVIEW OF STUDIES (2006–2024)

1. Teacher Efficacy and Instructional Practices

Research shows teacher efficacy strongly influences instructional quality and practices. Teachers with strong efficacy beliefs often use student-centred methods, differentiated instruction, and innovative approaches.



Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2007) found that teachers with higher efficacy beliefs demonstrated greater instructional flexibility and persistence in the face of classroom challenges. Similarly, Robert Klassen and Ming Ming Chiu (2010) reported that experienced teachers possessed stronger instructional efficacy than novice teachers.

A longitudinal study conducted by Daniel Holzberger and colleagues (2013) showed that successful teaching experiences strengthened efficacy beliefs over time. Likewise, the meta-analysis by Marjolein Zee and Helma Koomen (2016) confirmed that teacher efficacy positively affects instructional preparation and student engagement.

2. Teacher Efficacy and Classroom Management

Classroom management efficacy is necessary for organised and supportive learning environments.

Edmund Emmer and Eric Sabornie (2015) found that experienced teachers demonstrated greater confidence in maintaining discipline and controlling disruptive behaviours. Similarly, Chris Tsouloupas and colleagues (2010) observed that emotional exhaustion negatively influenced classroom management efficacy.

Maria Poulou (2017) further identified that positive teacher-student relationships strengthened teachers' confidence in classroom management and behavioural control.

3. Teacher Efficacy and Work Engagement

Teacher efficacy links to higher work engagement and professional commitment.

Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker (2010) reported that teacher efficacy strongly predicted vigour and dedication among teachers. Similarly, Helen Granziera and Harsha Perera (2019) found that teachers with high efficacy beliefs demonstrated stronger professional engagement and emotional commitment.

Research by Ahmed A. and Malik M. (2022) further showed that teacher efficacy reduced the negative impact of workplace stress and strengthened occupational engagement.

4. Teacher Efficacy and Psychological Well-being

Teacher efficacy affects emotional well-being, resilience, and burnout prevention.

Einar Skaalvik and Sidsel Skaalvik (2016) found that low teacher efficacy was associated with emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout among teachers.



The literature consistently indicates that teachers with stronger efficacy beliefs are more emotionally resilient, optimistic, and better equipped to manage professional stress and educational challenges effectively.

5. Emerging Themes in Teacher Efficacy Research

Digital Teaching Efficacy

Recent studies from 2018 to 2024 have increasingly focused on teachers' confidence in integrating technology into instruction. Digital teaching efficacy has become particularly significant in online and blended learning environments.

Teachers with strong digital efficacy beliefs exhibit greater confidence in online classroom management, virtual instruction, and technology-supported learning activities.

Inclusive Teaching Efficacy

Another emerging area concerns teachers' confidence in inclusive teaching practices. Studies indicate that teacher preparation, professional development, and institutional support significantly influence efficacy in managing diverse classrooms and supporting students with varied learning needs.

DISCUSSION

The review demonstrates that teacher efficacy remains a central factor influencing instructional quality, classroom management, engagement, and emotional well-being. Teachers with high efficacy beliefs exhibit stronger professional commitment, greater resilience, and more adaptive instructional practices.

Research trends from 2006 to 2024 indicate that teacher efficacy studies have expanded considerably beyond traditional instructional concerns to include technological competence, emotional regulation, and inclusive education.

However, several methodological limitations persist across studies. Most investigations rely heavily on cross-sectional designs and self-report measures, while few employ longitudinal methods, classroom observations, or mixed-method approaches.

Despite these limitations, teacher efficacy is recognised as a foundational psychological resource supporting effective teaching and sustainable educational development.

MAJOR RESEARCH GAPS



1. Limited longitudinal research on teacher efficacy development.
2. Overdependence on self-report instruments.
3. Lack of observational and performance-based assessments.
4. Limited research in underrepresented regions.
5. Insufficient studies on digital teaching efficacy.
6. Limited investigation into inclusive teaching efficacy.
7. Need for more culturally adaptable efficacy scales.
8. Limited exploration of emotional intelligence and leadership variables.

CONCLUSION

Thematic analysis of research from 2006 to 2024 demonstrates that teacher efficacy remains one of the strongest predictors of effective teaching behaviour, classroom management, engagement, and psychological well-being.

Teachers with strong efficacy beliefs exhibit higher instructional competence, greater emotional resilience, and stronger professional commitment. Contemporary educational challenges, including digital learning and inclusive education, have further expanded the relevance of teacher efficacy research.

Although substantial progress has been made, future studies should employ longitudinal, culturally diverse, and mixed-method approaches to deepen understanding of teacher efficacy in evolving educational contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Conduct longitudinal studies examining efficacy across career stages.
2. Use observational and performance-based assessments.
3. Expand studies into diverse cultural contexts.
4. Investigate digital and inclusive teaching efficacy further.
5. Examine leadership and emotional intelligence as mediating variables.



6. Develop context-specific teacher efficacy scales.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

For Teachers

- Participate in reflective practice and collaborative learning.
- Strengthen instructional and technological competencies.

For School Leaders

- Create supportive school climates.
- Provide mentoring and constructive professional feedback.

For Policymakers

- Invest in teacher development and digital pedagogy training.
- Encourage policies supporting teacher well-being.

For Teacher Educators

- Incorporate efficacy-building experiences into teacher education programs.
- Promote emotional resilience and reflective teaching practices.

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