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Exploring Professional Efficacy of School Teachers of Northern Districts of West Bengal, India

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Abstract

The present study examined Professional Efficacy (PES) as a significant factor concerning school teachers. The study was conducted in two districts of Northern West Bengal using a descriptive survey approach. Using a self-developed Professional Efficacy Scale (PES), the researchers assessed 300 school teachers. Before administering the scale, a pilot study was conducted to perform item purification/selection and to establish the reliability of the instrument. Out of 53 items, only three failed to meet the prescribed criteria and were therefore eliminated from the final Professional Efficacy Scale (PES) for further standardisation. The self-developed PES demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.938. The Split-Half reliability coefficient of the PES was 0.855 ($p < 0.01$), indicating high reliability for assessing teachers' professional efficacy in the context of Northern West Bengal. The findings revealed that the participants exhibited an average level of professional efficacy. Furthermore, no significant differences were found in the professional efficacy of secondary and higher secondary school teachers with respect to the location of their schools. No significant

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association was found between school location and professional efficacy. Furthermore, school location was not found to be a significant predictor of teachers' professional efficacy.
Key Words: *Professional Efficacy, School Teachers, Teaching Learning Process, Professional Development, 21st Century Skills, Acquaintance to NEP 2020*

Introduction

Education has a profound impact on an individual's life. It enables people to think, feel, and act in ways that support their personal achievement while contributing to the well-being of both themselves and their communities. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful future and provides numerous benefits, including better career opportunities, higher social status, and greater self-confidence. Therefore, education is regarded as the foundation of future success (AI-Shuaibi, 2014). Teachers are key stakeholders in educational institutions and play a vital role in bringing about this transformation. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, 1998), in *Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education*, stated that teachers are primarily responsible for implementing the educational process at all stages. This highlights the importance of investing in teacher education and professional preparation to safeguard the nation's future. The contribution of qualified teachers to the education system cannot be overstated. Similarly, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) emphasised the increasing demands and expectations placed on teachers, which must be addressed through both pre-service and continuous professional development programmes.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, posits self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capacity to perform tasks successfully, which is an essential determinant of adaptive teaching behaviours. Empirical evidence (e.g., Kaur & Bala, 2022; Dignath et al.,

2022; Mamgain, 2018) supports Bandura's view that higher self-efficacy translates into more responsive and sustained pedagogical action. Several factors in the academic context influence this belief. Teachers' self-efficacy has gradually gained prominence in school psychology research due to its influence on teaching effectiveness, instructional practices, and students' academic achievement. Understanding the major antecedents of self-efficacy may therefore have significant implications for improving teachers' well-being, as well as school performance and effectiveness (Barni et al., 2019). Addressing this gap through an integrated, region-specific framework grounded in Social Cognitive Theory can clarify how efficacy and demographic variables jointly predict teachers' attitudes and engagement in inclusive education.

Literature Review

Antonio and Quirap (2025) teachers' efficacy was found to be very high. Action Research and the School Learning Action Cell showed a weak positive relationship with efficacy, whereas In-Service Training demonstrated a weak negative relationship with efficacy. Mukhia and Rao (2024) revealed that, secondary school teachers have average level of professional efficacy. Paschal and Srivastava (2021) studied 'Self-Efficacy and Teacher-Effectiveness of Secondary School Teacher'. The goal of this study was to investigate the divergence in self-efficacy among teachers working in secondary school of Patna with regards to their gender, type of institution and year of teaching experience. The study revealed significant difference in self-efficacy of research participants i.e., secondary school teachers with regards to their gender, and type of institution. On the basis of teacher effectiveness, significant differentiation was revealed among teachers teaching in private and government schools, but no significant dissimilarity was seen between male and female teachers. Significant relationship was found between self-efficacy and teacher-effectiveness of the participants. Barni et al., (2019) found a positive relationship between teachers' value and teachers' self-efficacy with regards to the level and type

of motivation. Differences were observed between openness to change and self-efficacy and between self-transcendence and self-efficacy. Teachers' value and their efficacy also depend upon their motivation. Kumar et al., (2017) conducted an empirical study on 'Self-Efficacy among Higher Secondary School Teachers'. A male teacher comprises high level of self-efficacy than female teachers. No significant differences was investigated among higher secondary teachers of Jammu and Kashmir towards self-efficacy with regards to subject, educational qualification and teaching experience.Shahzad and Naureen (2017) carried out the exploratory qualitative research design on "Impact of Teacher Self-Efficacy on Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement. It was discovered that, teachers' self-efficacy has positive impact on the students' academic achievement. Menon and Sobha (2017) Secondary educators (teachers) believe their efficacy to be acceptable. Regarding their management style and kind of teaching experience, there was not a noticeable difference in the mean scores of teachers' efficacy. Shahzad and Naureen (2017) investigated impact of teacher self-efficacy on secondary school students' academic achievement. It was revealed that, teachers' self-efficacy has positive impact on the students' academic achievement. The study conducted by Kaur and Paramjot (2016) carried out a study to examine the association between secondary school teachers' teaching competency and teacher efficacy in relation to their gender and location. The relationship between the variable's teacher efficacy and teaching competency was also investigated. According to the study's findings, there were significant differences in the efficacy and ability of secondary teachers working in Punjab's Gurdaspur district's rural and urban areas. The district's secondary school teachers' teaching skill and efficacy did not appear to be significantly correlated. Muhammed and Aruna (2014) revealed that, teachers working in public and private schools differ significantly in terms of teacher efficacy but at the same time, no significant difference was observed between male and female teachers and teachers with more and less experience on the basis

of teacher efficacy. Positive relationship was observed between professional development and teacher efficacy of the participants.

While there is a growing body of research on teacher efficacy in Western contexts, there is a need for more studies that examine the interplay among these variables in diverse cultural and educational settings (Mukhia & Rao, 2024). Furthermore, there is a specific research gap in the context of Northern West Bengal, where no study has examined the combined influence of the study variables and the demographic variable within the broader framework of Social Cognitive Theory. Addressing this research gap can provide valuable insights to inform policies and practices aimed at effectively enhancing teachers' professional efficacy.

Need of the Study

Accomplished and exceptional teachers are crucial not only for the future of the students they teach but also for the future of the nation. This is because the quality of teachers significantly influences the strength and stability of a country. Therefore, it is essential that nations and educational systems strive to develop competent teachers who, in turn, can nurture productive citizens and contribute to building a strong and stable nation (Bhebhe & Nxumalo, 2016).

In the context of school education, professional efficacy, also known as teacher efficacy or teaching efficacy, refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to organise, plan, and implement the activities necessary to achieve educational goals and positively influence student learning. It includes teachers' confidence in their ability to engage students, manage classrooms effectively, teach efficiently, and support learning and understanding among diverse groups of students.

The need and significance of professional efficacy among school teachers are paramount for several interconnected reasons, each contributing to the broader goal of enhancing educational outcomes and fostering positive school environments. Professional efficacy not only

influences teachers' attitudes and behaviours but also directly affects students' achievement, motivation, and the overall school climate.

However, many areas of teaching still lack clear standards of practice, particularly in the integration of technology. The majority of teachers remain within their comfort zones by relying on traditional teaching methods, making it difficult for them to adopt newer technology-oriented teaching approaches.

Furthermore, the location of a school also plays an important role in its overall functioning. Several studies have reported differences between teachers working in rural and urban schools. For instance, Kaur and Paramjot (2016) found significant differences in teacher efficacy and teaching competency among secondary school teachers in the rural and urban areas of Gurdaspur district, Punjab. In this context, the present study not only assesses the professional efficacy of school teachers but also examines its relationship with the location of the school.

Excellent teachers are essential not only for the future of children and the education system but also for the overall development of the nation. The findings of the present study are expected to provide useful insights and recommendations for enhancing teachers' professional efficacy, while also suggesting directions for future research.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the levels of professional efficacy (overall) among school teachers in various aspects, including Efficacy towards Teaching learning Process, Professional Development, 21st Century Skills, and Acquaintance to NEP 2020.
- To study the significant differences in the mean scores of professional efficacy (overall) of school teachers with regards to their location of school.
- 2a.To study the significant differences in the mean scores of efficacy towards teaching learning process among school teachers with regards to their location of school.

- 2b. To study the significant differences in the mean scores of efficacy towards professional development among school teachers with regards to their location of school.
- 2c. To study the significant differences in the mean scores of efficacy towards 21st century skills among school teachers with regards to their location of school.
- 2d. To study the significant difference in the mean scores of efficacy towards acquaintance to NEP 2020 among school teachers with regards to their location of school.
- To study the significant association between location of school (rural and urban) and levels of Professional Efficacy of school teachers.
- To find whether the locality of schools is significant predictor of professional efficacy of school teachers.

Research Question

1. What are the levels of professional efficacy (overall) among school teachers in various aspects, including Efficacy towards Teaching learning Process; Professional Development; 21st Century Skills; and Acquaintance to NEP 2020?

Hypotheses of the Study

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of professional efficacy (overall) of school teachers with regards to their location of school.
$H_0$1a: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of efficacy towards teaching learning process among school teachers with regards to their location of school.
$H_0$1b: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of efficacy towards professional development among school teachers with regards to their location of school.
$H_0$1c: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of efficacy towards 21st century skills among school teachers with regards to their location of school.

$H_0$1d: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of efficacy towards acquaintance to NEP 2020 among school teachers with regards to their location of school.

$H_0$2: There is no significant association between location of schools and levels of Professional Efficacy of school teachers.

$H_0$3: Location of school is not a significant predictor of professional efficacy of school teachers.

Methods of the Study

For the present study, the researchers adopted a descriptive survey approach. Professional efficacy was treated as the dependent variable, while school location served as the demographic and independent variable. A quantitative research design was employed; therefore, the collected data were analyzed quantitatively.

The population of the study consisted of secondary and higher secondary school teachers from two northern districts of West Bengal. A total of 300 teachers from the selected districts were chosen as the representative sample.

Tool Used

To collect data, the Professional Efficacy Scale (PES), developed by the investigators, was administered to the research participants. After the finalization of the scale items, content validity and face validity were established. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted for item selection and to establish the reliability of the scale. The purpose of item analysis was to retain only those items that were reliable and consistent.

Finally, the *t*-values of all 53 items were calculated using SPSS, and the items with *t*-values equal to or greater than 2 were retained in the final version of the Professional Efficacy Scale. Out of the 53 items, only three failed to meet the prescribed criteria and were therefore eliminated. The remaining 50 items, comprising 35 positive and 15 negative statements across four dimensions (Efficacy towards Teaching-Learning Process, Efficacy towards Professional Development, Efficacy towards 21st Century

Skills, and Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020), were retained in the final Professional Efficacy Scale (PES) for further standardization.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the Professional Efficacy Scale was found to be 0.938, indicating excellent internal consistency. The Split-Half reliability coefficient was 0.855 ($p < 0.01$), demonstrating that the scale was highly reliable for measuring the professional efficacy of school teachers.

For data collection, the investigators first randomly selected schools offering both secondary and senior secondary (higher secondary) education from the two districts of West Bengal (Darjeeling and Cooch Behar). Subsequently, the research participants were selected from these schools using stratified random sampling.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical principles relating to voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent. Respondents are informed about the purpose of the study, and the information collected is used exclusively for academic purposes. The study also ensures that no harm or discomfort is caused to the participants.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data of the current study was analyzed quantitatively employing different statistical techniques like frequency and percentages, independent sample t-test, chi-square and linear regression were used

Table No-1: Demographic Profile

SI.NO.	Demographic Variables	Categories	f	Percentage	Total
1.	Location of School	Rural	138	46%	300 participants
		Urban	162	54%	

The above table (Table No-1) states demographic profile of research participants. A total of 300 research participants (teachers) of the concerned area i.e., Northern Districts of the state of West Bengal were gathered

adopting stratified random sampling. 46% of samples were from rural location and 54% teachers were form urban location.

Table No-2: Professional Efficacy Levels of School Teachers

	Levels	**f**	**Percentage**
Professional Efficacy (Overall)	High	58	19.3%
	Average	153	50.8%
	Low	90	29.9%
Efficacy towards Teaching learning Process	High	63	21%
	Average	157	52.3%
	Low	80	21%
Efficacy towards Professional Development	High	73	24.3%
	Average	152	50.7%
	Low	75	25%
Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills	High	68	22.7%
	Average	149	49.7%
	Low	83	27.7%
Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020	High	64	21.3%
	Average	169	56.3%
	Low	67	22.1%

Table No-2 is the evident that, 19.3% of the teachers perceive high level of professional efficacy. 50.8% of participants have average level of professional efficacy and 29.9% of the research participants (teachers) have low level of professional efficacy.

In addition, greater number of research participants (school teachers) in the entire dimensions of professional efficacy falls under average level i.e., 52.3% in Efficacy towards Teaching Learning Process, 50.7% in Efficacy towards Professional Development, 49.7% in Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills and 56.3%Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020. Few participants are directed towards high (21% in Efficacy towards Teaching Learning Process, 24.3% in Efficacy towards Professional Development, 22.7% in Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills

and 21.3% Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020) and low level (21% in Efficacy towards Teaching Learning Process, 25% in Efficacy towards Professional Development, 27.7% in Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills and 22.1% in Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020)of professional efficacy in the above given table

Table No. 3: Means, SDs, t-values of Research Participants towards Professional Efficacy with reference to their Location of the school.

Professional Efficacy& its dimensions	**Locality of school**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**SEM**	**t-values**	**Decision**
Professional Efficacy (Overall)	Rural	138	191.86	23.26	1.98	0.447@ (p=0.65)	(p>0.05) NS
	Urban	162	196.41	23.56	1.85		
Efficacy towards Teaching Learning Process	Rural	139	62.70	6.92	0.58	0.012@ (P=0.99)	(p>0.05) NS
	Urban	161	62.69	6.28	0.49		
Efficacy towards Professional Development	Rural	139	36.60	6.15	0.52	2.078** (P=0.03)	(p<0.05) Sig
	Urban	161	38.03	5.71	0.45		
Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills	Rural	139	54.74	7.82	0.66	0.051@ (P=0.95)	(p>0.05) NS
	Urban	161	54.74	7.80	0.61		
Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020	Rural	139	39.43	6.53	0.55	0.077@ (p=0.09)	(p>0.05) NS

NS= Not Significant Sig= Significant

Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviation (SD), standard error of the mean (SEM), and independent-samples *t*-test results for the professional efficacy of school teachers with respect to school location. The

findings indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in the overall professional efficacy scores between teachers working in rural and urban schools, $t(298) = 0.447$, $p = .650$. Since the p-value was greater than .05, the null hypothesis (H_o1), stating that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of overall professional efficacy between school teachers based on school location, was not rejected. Thus, school location did not significantly influence the overall professional efficacy of the teachers.

Similarly, no statistically significant differences were observed in the dimensions of efficacy towards Teaching-Learning Process, t (298) = 0.012, $p = .990$; Efficacy towards 21st Century Skills, t (298) = 0.051, $p = .950$; and Efficacy towards Acquaintance to NEP 2020, $t(298) = 0.077$, $p > .05$. Therefore, the corresponding null hypotheses (H_o1a, H_o1c, and H_o1d) were not rejected**.**

However, a statistically significant difference was found in the dimension of Efficacy towards Professional Development, t (298) = 2.078, $p = .030$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_o1b) was rejected**,** indicating that teachers' efficacy towards professional development differed significantly according to school location. The mean scores further revealed that teachers working in urban schools (M = 38.03, SD = 5.71) demonstrated significantly higher efficacy towards professional development than those working in rural schools (M = 36.60, SD = 6.15).

Table No-4: The Chi- Square values between Levels of Professional Efficacy and Location of School

Demographic Variables	**Categories**	**Levels of Professional Efficacy (Overall)**			**Chi - Square**
		High	Average	Low	
Location of the schools	Rural	30	65	43	1.272@ (p>0.05)
	Urban	29	86	47	

Table 4 presents the results of the chi-square test examining the association between the overall levels of professional efficacy and school location. The analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant

association between the overall levels of professional efficacy and school location, $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 1.272$, $p > .05$. Since the p-value exceeded the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_o2), stating that there is no significant association between school location and the levels of professional efficacy among school teachers, was not rejected. These findings indicate that the level of professional efficacy is independent of school location, suggesting that teachers working in rural and urban schools exhibit comparable levels of professional efficacy.

Table No-5: Linear Regression between Location of school and Professional Efficacy

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	153.670	1	153.670	.277	.599[b]
	Residual	165520.997	298	555.440		
	Total	165674.667	299			

Note. Dependent variable: Professional efficacy of school teachers (PES). Predictor: Location of school.

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether the location of school significantly predicted the professional efficacy of school teachers. The regression model was not statistically significant, F (1, 298) = 0.277, p = .599, indicating that location of school did not significantly predict teachers' professional efficacy. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_o3), stating that *location of school is not a significant predictor of professional efficacy of school teachers*, was not rejected.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the research participants perceived an average level of professional efficacy. Similarly, across all four dimensions of professional efficacy, namely efficacy towards the teaching-learning process, efficacy towards professional development, efficacy towards 21st-century skills, and efficacy towards acquaintance with NEP 2020, most of the participants reported an average level of professional efficacy. No significant difference was observed in the mean

scores of school teachers' professional efficacy with respect to their school location. However, a significant difference was found in the dimension of *efficacy towards professional development* among school teachers based on their location. Similar findings were reported by Kaur and Paramjot (2016), who observed a significant difference between secondary school teachers from rural and urban areas of Gurdaspur district, Punjab.

Furthermore, no significant association was found between the location of schools and the overall level of professional efficacy. Similarly, no significant association was observed between school location and the different dimensions of professional efficacy, namely efficacy towards the teaching-learning process, efficacy towards professional development, efficacy towards 21st-century skills, and efficacy towards acquaintance with NEP 2020. The study also revealed that school location was not a significant predictor of teachers' professional efficacy.

Conclusion

It is necessary to examine these issues related to the different aspects of school teachers' professional efficacy in a comprehensive manner. A major concern is the lack of proficiency in various areas associated with professional effectiveness. Therefore, specific interventions and training programmes are required to enhance the level of professional efficacy among the selected sample. Additionally, recently formulated educational policies should also receive adequate attention in this regard. Achieving excellence in any profession becomes possible when individuals possess a high level of confidence and belief in their professional capabilities.

Teachers with high professional efficacy are more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies, establish high expectations for their students, and demonstrate persistence in supporting the learning of all students, thereby contributing to improved student outcomes. A high level of professional efficacy also enhances teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and resilience in addressing educational challenges. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are more inclined to participate in professional

development opportunities and seek new knowledge and strategies to improve their teaching practices.

Furthermore, effective teachers contribute to creating positive classroom environments and overall school climates where students feel respected, valued, and motivated to learn. Teachers who have strong confidence in their professional abilities are more likely to undertake leadership responsibilities, participate in decision-making processes, influence school policies, and contribute effectively to school improvement initiatives.

Suggestions

Given that the professional efficacy of the research participants was found to be at an average level, enhancing professional efficacy among school teachers is essential for improving students' academic achievement and overall development. This requires a commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration, and a focus on addressing both teachers' professional needs and students' learning requirements. By addressing these areas, schools can establish more effective, adaptable, and engaging learning environments.

Enhancing professional efficacy in the teaching-learning process is crucial for achieving educational success and requires a comprehensive approach that integrates teachers' needs with effective pedagogical practices. Similarly, improving professional efficacy in the area of professional development can help teachers remain updated with emerging trends, innovations, and practices in the teaching profession.

Strengthening professional efficacy among school teachers in relation to 21st-century skills is also important for preparing students to effectively navigate the complexities of the modern world. Teachers should be provided with appropriate training to integrate technology effectively into classroom practices and develop skills related to creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving.

The level of professional efficacy of school teachers regarding their acquaintance with NEP 2020 was also found to be average. Enhancing teachers' professional efficacy in terms of their understanding and familiarity with NEP 2020 is essential for the effective implementation of

the policy. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced by the Government of India represents a significant transformation in the educational landscape, aiming to make learning more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and aligned with the demands of the 21st century while recognizing the unique potential of every learner.

Teachers should be provided with comprehensive training programmes to develop a deeper understanding of the objectives, strategies, and vision of NEP 2020. Such programmes should cover the major components of the policy, including the revised pedagogical and curricular framework of 5+3+3+4**,** emphasis on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), integration of vocational education, promotion of critical thinking and experiential learning, the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), practice-based teacher education curriculum, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), and the implementation of 360-degree assessment practices. Such initiatives would enhance teachers' confidence and preparedness, thereby contributing to the effective realization of NEP 2020's vision of transforming the Indian education system to meet the evolving needs of the 21st century.

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