



SELF-EFFICACY AS A PREDICTOR OF LIFE SATISFACTION IN MALE AND FEMALE COLLEGE TEACHERS: A STUDY IN THE INDIAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: Teacher well-being has emerged as a critical concern in educational psychology due to its implications for instructional quality, professional sustainability, and institutional effectiveness. Among indicators of well-being, life satisfaction represents a central cognitive evaluation of individuals' overall quality of life. Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory, the present study examined self-efficacy as a predictor of life satisfaction among male and female college teachers within the Indian cultural context. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design, data were collected from 240 college teachers (120 males and 120 females) employed in government and private degree colleges. Self-efficacy was assessed using the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, while life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression analyses were conducted separately for male and female teachers. Results revealed significant positive associations between self-efficacy and life satisfaction for both genders. Regression analyses indicated that self-efficacy significantly predicted life satisfaction for both genders. Regression analyses indicated that self-efficacy significantly predicted life satisfaction among male teachers ($\beta = .20$, $R^2 = .22$) and female teachers ($\beta = .28$, $R^2 = .31$), with a stronger predictive effect observed for women. These findings suggest that self-efficacy functions as a vital psychological resource for enhancing life satisfaction, particularly among female college teachers facing complex professional and socio-cultural demands. The study highlights the importance of gender-sensitive and culturally responsive interventions aimed at strengthening teachers' self-efficacy to promote psychological well-being in Indian higher education.

Index Terms - self-efficacy, life satisfaction, teacher well-being, gender differences, Indian higher education..

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being has increasingly emerged as a critical area of concern within contemporary educational psychology due to its significant implications for instructional effectiveness, student engagement, school climate, and the long-term sustainability of educational systems. Recent researches have emphasized that teachers' psychological health influences not only their professional functioning but also classroom interactions, emotional support for students, and teacher retention (Herman et al., 2020; McCallum et al., 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that teachers with higher well-being demonstrate greater instructional quality, more positive teacher-student relationships, and lower levels of burnout and attrition, thereby contributing to more stable and effective learning environments (Benevene et al., 2020; OECD, 2023). Consequently, teacher well-being is now viewed not merely as an individual concern but as a systemic factor essential for institutional effectiveness and educational quality.

II. Within this broader framework, life satisfaction has received sustained and growing attention as a key component of subjective well-being, reflecting individuals' global evaluation of their lives based on personally meaningful standards (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 2018). Recent studies continue to affirm life satisfaction as a robust indicator of teachers' psychological well-being, closely linked to mental health, work engagement, and professional fulfillment (Skaalvik&Skaalvik, 2021; Capone et al., 2024). Research grounded in positive psychology and self-determination theory further highlights that fulfillment of basic psychological needs, supportive institutional climates, and perceptions of competence and autonomy significantly enhance teachers' life satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Collie, 2022). Taken together, contemporary evidence underscores life satisfaction as a vital construct for understanding teacher well-being and its effects on classrooms, institutions, and broader educational outcomes.

III. The teaching profession is widely recognized as emotionally demanding, cognitively complex, and socially intensive. Teachers routinely encounter role overload, high performance expectations, administrative pressures, and accountability demands, all of which may adversely affect their well-being. At the college level, these challenges are further intensified by the multiplicity of professional roles that faculty members are expected to perform. College teachers must balance instructional responsibilities with research productivity, curriculum development, administrative duties, and student mentoring. In the Indian higher education system, these demands are often compounded by limited institutional resources, large class sizes,

evolving accreditation norms, and increasing emphasis on measurable outcomes. Consequently, understanding the psychological factors that contribute to college teachers' life satisfaction in the Indian context is both timely and necessary.

IV. Within this context, self-efficacy has emerged as a particularly salient psychological resource. Rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capability to organize and execute actions required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs play a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive challenges, regulate emotions, sustain motivation, and persist in the face of adversity. Teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to approach professional demands with confidence, interpret stressors as manageable, and maintain psychological resilience, all of which may enhance their overall life satisfaction.

V. Although a substantial body of international research has documented positive associations between self-efficacy and various indicators of well-being, including life satisfaction, relatively little attention has been paid to gender differences in this relationship within the teaching profession. Gendered socialization processes, differential expectations regarding work and family roles, and unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities suggest that psychological resources may function differently for men and women. In teaching, a profession traditionally associated with caregiving and emotional labor, these gendered dynamics may be particularly pronounced.

VI. The Indian cultural context adds another layer of complexity to the study of self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Indian society is characterized by collectivistic orientations, strong family obligations, hierarchical organizational structures, and deeply embedded gender norms. These sociocultural features may influence how teachers perceive their competence, derive meaning from their professional roles, and evaluate their overall life satisfaction. Despite the rapid expansion of higher education in India and the growing emphasis on faculty performance and accountability, empirical research examining psychological predictors of life satisfaction among Indian college teachers remains limited, particularly from a gender-sensitive perspective.

VII. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine self-efficacy as a predictor of life satisfaction among male and female college teachers in India. By employing correlational and regression analyses separately for each gender group, the study aims to clarify the strength and nature of this relationship while contributing to a more nuanced and culturally grounded understanding of teacher well-being.

VIII. Review of Current Literature

IX. (i) *Self-Efficacy: Conceptual Foundations*

X. The construct of self-efficacy originates from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences in shaping human functioning (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs determine whether individuals initiate coping behaviors, how much effort they invest, how long they persist in the face of obstacles, and how resilient they remain following failure. Unlike general self-concept or self-esteem, self-efficacy is task- and context-specific, making it particularly relevant for understanding occupational functioning.

XI. Bandura (1997) identified four primary sources of self-efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. In professional contexts, repeated experiences of success, observation of competent peers, constructive feedback, and effective emotion regulation contribute to stronger efficacy beliefs. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to appraise demanding situations as challenges rather than threats, thereby reducing stress and fostering adaptive coping.

XII. In educational settings, teacher self-efficacy has been conceptualized as teachers' beliefs in their ability to plan, organize, and implement instructional activities that facilitate student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Extensive research has linked teacher self-efficacy to instructional quality, classroom management, student achievement, job satisfaction, and professional commitment. More recently, scholars have emphasized its role in teachers' psychological well-being, including reduced burnout, emotional exhaustion, and work-related stress (Skaalvik&Skaalvik, 2019).

XIII. (ii) *Life Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being*

XIV. Life satisfaction represents the cognitive-evaluative dimension of subjective well-being, distinct from affective components such as positive and negative emotions (Diener et al., 2018). It reflects individuals' global judgment of their life circumstances in relation to personal values, aspirations, and expectations. Life satisfaction is considered relatively stable over time and influenced by enduring psychological traits, social relationships, cultural norms, and coping resources.

XV. High levels of life satisfaction have been associated with numerous positive outcomes, including better mental health, physical health, longevity, and occupational adjustment. In organizational contexts, employees with higher life satisfaction tend to exhibit greater engagement, lower turnover intentions, and

enhanced performance. For teachers, life satisfaction has been linked to reduced burnout, higher job engagement, and sustained commitment to the profession (Collie et al., 2020).

XVI. Given the cumulative and chronic nature of stressors in teaching, psychological resources that promote positive life appraisal are particularly important. Life satisfaction not only reflects teachers' evaluations of their professional experiences but also integrates broader assessments of family life, social relationships, and personal fulfillment.

XVII. (iii) Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction

XVIII. A growing body of empirical research supports a robust positive relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction across diverse populations and cultural contexts. Individuals with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to adopt problem-focused coping strategies, maintain emotional balance, and interpret life events in a constructive manner, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with life (Luszczynska et al., 2005; Schönfeld et al., 2019).

XIX. Within the teaching profession, self-efficacy has been identified as a key predictor of both job-related and global well-being outcomes. Caprara et al. (2006) demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs predicted job satisfaction and psychological well-being over time. More recent studies have extended these findings, showing that self-efficacy buffers the negative effects of occupational stress and contributes to teachers' life satisfaction and overall mental health (Fathi et al., 2021).

XX. Theoretically, self-efficacy enhances life satisfaction by fostering a sense of control, competence, and mastery over life circumstances. Teachers who believe in their ability to manage professional challenges are more likely to experience autonomy, meaning, and coherence in their lives, all of which are central components of subjective well-being.

XXI. (iv) Gender Differences in Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction

XXII. Gender differences in psychological functioning have been widely documented, particularly in relation to coping strategies, emotional labor, and work-family balance. Women, especially in caregiving-oriented professions such as teaching, often report higher levels of emotional demands, role conflict, and work-family interference. These pressures may amplify the importance of internal psychological resources, such as self-efficacy, for maintaining well-being.

XXIII. Empirical evidence suggests that self-efficacy may play a stronger role in predicting well-being outcomes among women than men. Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) found that female teachers' burnout and well-being were more closely linked to self-efficacy beliefs, whereas male teachers' outcomes were influenced by a wider range of contextual factors. Klassen and Chiu (2010) similarly reported gender differences in the determinants of teacher well-being, highlighting the differential role of personal resources.

XXIV. However, findings regarding gender differences remain inconsistent, partly due to methodological limitations and the lack of gender-disaggregated analyses. Many studies include gender as a control variable rather than explicitly examining whether predictive relationships differ across genders. This gap underscores the need for studies that systematically compare predictive models for male and female teachers.

XXV. The Indian Cultural Context and Research Gap

XXVI. Most research on self-efficacy and life satisfaction has been conducted in Western, individualistic societies, raising concerns about cultural generalizability. In collectivistic cultures such as India, self-concept, well-being, and life satisfaction are often embedded within social relationships, family roles, and cultural expectations. Professional success and personal fulfillment may be evaluated not only in terms of individual achievement but also in relation to social harmony and familial responsibilities.

XXVII. Gender norms in India continue to shape professional experiences, particularly for women, who often shoulder disproportionate domestic and caregiving responsibilities alongside their professional roles. For female college teachers, managing these multiple roles may heighten the salience of self-efficacy as a psychological buffer against stress and dissatisfaction.

XXVIII. Despite the relevance of these cultural and gendered dynamics, empirical studies focusing on psychological predictors of life satisfaction among Indian college teachers are scarce. Even fewer studies have employed gender-comparative analyses. Addressing this gap is essential for developing culturally responsive and gender-sensitive interventions aimed at promoting teacher well-being in Indian higher education.

XXIX. Rationale of the Study

XXX. In light of the theoretical, empirical, and contextual gaps identified in the literature, the present study seeks to examine self-efficacy as a predictor of life satisfaction among male and female college teachers in India. By adopting a gender-specific analytical approach and employing correlational and regression techniques, the study aims to clarify whether self-efficacy operates differently for men and women in

predicting life satisfaction. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on teacher well-being and inform interventions tailored to the specific needs of male and female teachers within the Indian cultural context.

XXXI. *Method of Study*

XXXII. The present study adopted a **quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design** to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among college teachers. This design was considered appropriate as the primary objective was to assess the strength and direction of associations between variables and to evaluate the predictive role of self-efficacy on life satisfaction without manipulating any variables. Gender-specific analyses were conducted to examine whether self-efficacy functioned differently as a predictor of life satisfaction among male and female teachers.

XXXIII. The sample comprised **240 college teachers**, including **120 male and 120 female teachers**, drawn from government and private degree colleges. Participants were selected using a **purposive sampling technique**, ensuring representation of both genders and a range of academic disciplines. All participants were full-time faculty members with a minimum of five years of teaching experience, thereby ensuring adequate professional exposure to institutional and instructional demands.

XXXIV. The age of participants ranged from early adulthood to mid-career, reflecting the typical demographic profile of college teachers in the Indian higher education system. Teachers from arts, science, and commerce streams were included to enhance the heterogeneity and generalizability of the findings within the collegiate teaching context.

XXXV. *Measures*

XXXVI. *Self-efficacy* was assessed using a **standardized self-efficacy scale (New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE), Chen et al., 2001)** with well-established psychometric properties. The scale measures individuals' generalized beliefs about their capability to effectively manage tasks, challenges, and demands across situations. Items are rated on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating stronger perceived self-efficacy. Previous studies have reported satisfactory internal consistency and construct validity for the scale in educational and occupational settings.

XXXVII. *Life satisfaction* was measured using a **standardized life satisfaction scale (Diener et al, 1985)** designed to assess individuals' global cognitive evaluation of their overall quality of life. The scale captures respondents' subjective judgments about their life as a whole rather than domain-specific satisfaction.

Responses are recorded on a Likert-type format, with higher scores reflecting greater life satisfaction. The scale has demonstrated robust reliability and validity across diverse cultural contexts, including Indian samples.

XXXVIII. Procedure

XXXIX. Prior to data collection, institutional permissions were obtained from the respective colleges.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of **voluntary participation**, **confidentiality**, and **anonymity** of responses. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Data were collected using **paper-and-pencil questionnaires** administered in group settings within college premises. Clear instructions were provided, and participants were encouraged to respond honestly. No time limit was imposed, and questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to minimize response bias. The study adhered to established ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

XL. Data were screened for accuracy and completeness prior to analysis. **Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients** were computed separately for male and female teachers to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. To assess the predictive role of self-efficacy, **simple linear regression analyses** were conducted independently for each gender group, with life satisfaction as the criterion variable and self-efficacy as the predictor variable. All statistical analyses were performed using standard statistical software. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$, with additional consideration of **effect sizes** to evaluate the magnitude of relationships and predictive effects.

XLI. Results

XLII. Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction

XLIII. Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among male and female college teachers. Results indicated a statistically significant positive association between self-efficacy and life satisfaction for both gender groups (see Table 1).

XLIV. For male teachers, self-efficacy demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with life satisfaction, $r = .26, p < .01$, indicating that higher levels of perceived efficacy were associated with greater life satisfaction. For female teachers, the relationship was comparatively stronger, with self-efficacy showing a moderate-to-strong positive correlation with life satisfaction, $r = .35, p < .01$. These findings suggest that self-efficacy is

positively related to teachers' cognitive evaluations of their overall quality of life across genders, with a stronger association observed among female teachers.

Table 1

***Correlation between Life Satisfaction and Self Efficacy among Male and Female Teachers
(N=120 in each group)***

	Male Teachers	Female Teachers
Variables	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy
Life Satisfaction	0.26**	0.35**

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

XLV. Regression Analysis for Male Teachers

XLVI. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether self-efficacy significantly predicted life satisfaction among male teachers ($N = 120$). The overall regression model was statistically significant, indicating that self-efficacy reliably predicted life satisfaction outcomes. Self-efficacy emerged as a significant positive predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = .20$). The model accounted for 22% of the variance in life satisfaction ($R^2 = .22$), with an adjusted R^2 of .21, suggesting a moderate and stable explanatory contribution of self-efficacy. These results indicate that, among male teachers, increases in perceived self-efficacy are associated with corresponding increases in life satisfaction, although a substantial proportion of variance remains attributable to other factors (see Table 2).

Table 2

Linear Regression Analyses with Self-efficacy Regressed on Life Satisfaction of Male Teachers (N=120)

DV	Predictor	Beta	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Life Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy	0.20	0.22	0.21

XLVII. Regression Analysis for Female Teachers

XLVIII. A similar regression analysis was conducted for female teachers ($N = 120$) to assess the predictive role of self-efficacy in explaining life satisfaction. The regression model was statistically significant, with self-efficacy emerging as a stronger positive predictor of life satisfaction compared to the male sample ($\beta = .28$). The model explained 31% of the variance in life satisfaction ($R^2 = .31$), with an adjusted R^2 of .29, indicating a relatively robust predictive relationship (see Table 3). These findings suggest that self-efficacy plays a more substantial role in shaping life satisfaction among female teachers than among male teachers within the present population.

Table 3

Linear Regression Analyses with the Measure of Self-efficacy Regressed on Life Satisfaction of Female Teachers (N=120)

DV	Predictor	Beta	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Life Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy	0.28	0.31	0.29

XLIX. Discussion

L. The present study examined self-efficacy as a psychological predictor of life satisfaction among male and female college teachers within the Indian cultural context. Consistent with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy was found to be positively and significantly associated with life satisfaction across both gender groups, underscoring its role as a key cognitive resource in teachers' subjective well-being.

LI. The correlational findings indicate that teachers who perceive themselves as competent, capable, and effective in managing professional demands tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction. This pattern is theoretically coherent, as self-efficacy influences how individuals appraise challenges, regulate emotions, and sustain motivation in the face of stressors. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to experience a sense of control and mastery, which contributes to more favorable cognitive evaluations of life circumstances. These results are consistent with earlier empirical work linking self-efficacy to subjective well-being, psychological adjustment, and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2018; Luszczynska et al., 2005).

LII. Importantly, gender-based differences were observed in the strength of the relationship. While self-efficacy significantly predicted life satisfaction for both male and female teachers, the association was stronger among female teachers, as reflected in higher correlation coefficients and greater variance explained in regression analyses. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that women's occupational well-being may be more closely tied to internal psychological resources, such as perceived competence, self-regulatory confidence, and adaptive coping (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008).

LIII. Among male teachers, self-efficacy accounted for a meaningful but comparatively smaller proportion of variance in life satisfaction. This suggests that, although self-efficacy is an important determinant, male teachers' life satisfaction may be influenced by a broader constellation of contextual, organizational, or socio-cultural factors, including institutional climate, career progression, professional autonomy, and role-related expectations. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing the multifactorial nature of well-being in professional populations.

LIV. The findings are particularly salient within the Indian socio-cultural context, where gendered role expectations and differential work-family demands remain pronounced. Female teachers often balance multiple professional and domestic responsibilities, which may heighten the functional importance of self-efficacy as a psychological buffer against stress and role strain. The stronger predictive role of self-efficacy observed among female teachers highlights the need for gender-sensitive interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' confidence, mastery experiences, and self-regulatory skills.

LV. Overall, the results extend existing literature by demonstrating that self-efficacy is not only associated with, but also a significant predictor of life satisfaction among college teachers, with gender-specific variations in strength and explanatory power. These findings underscore the value of fostering self-efficacy through professional development, mentoring, and institutional support as a pathway to promoting teachers' psychological well-being and long-term professional sustainability.

LVI. *Implications*

LVII. The results suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy, such as professional development programs, mentoring, and supportive leadership practices, may contribute to improved life satisfaction among college teachers, particularly women. For male teachers, well-being initiatives may benefit from addressing both individual psychological resources and broader organizational factors.

LVIII. Limitations and Future Directions

LIX. Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference. Future research may employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine changes in self-efficacy and life satisfaction over time. Additionally, incorporating contextual variables such as job satisfaction, organizational support, and work-life balance may provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher well-being.

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