

He's up to no good, is he?

Teacher efficacy, teachability, gender role attitudes, and gender composition

Introduction - Although teachers' perceptions of their own teaching abilities are subjective, teachers experience them as the truth. Teacher efficacy is one of the most powerful predictors of teachers' (pedagogical) decision-making and effectiveness (Summers, Davis and Hoy 2017). Most studies into teacher efficacy, however, overlook contextual factors (Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2017), whereas teachers' expectations and perceptions of the teaching environment are shaped by student characteristics, such as gender, academic achievement, stereotypes, etc. (Jussim and Harber 2005). Teachers feel less efficacious when teaching boys (Auwarter and Aruguete 2008) and this association might be explained by teachers' expectations and teachability perceptions toward their students (Diamond, Randolph and Spillane 2004). Teachers' perceptions can be gender biased as well. Teachers consider similar traits of boys and girls as (not) appropriate depending on their gender role attitudes (Kerr 2001). Cahill and Adams (1997) reported that teachers were more forgiving toward cross-gender behaviors of girls, which might indicate that teachers feel more efficacious when teaching girls, because teachers perceive girls as less problematic, even when they show cross-gender behavior. Still, research concerning this association is very scarce. Therefore, this study investigates the association of schools' gender composition with teacher efficacy and examines whether this association can be explained by teachers' teachability perceptions and gender role attitudes. In addition, the link between teachers' gender and teacher efficacy is showing inconclusive results (e.g., Wood 2012). Since previous findings are quite ambiguous, we will investigate male and female teachers' efficacy feelings separately, considering schools' gender composition, gender role attitudes and teachers' teachability perceptions to understand whether and how teacher efficacy and its dimensions are related to context factors such as schools' gender composition.

Methodology - Multilevel analysis was carried out on data of 1247 teachers clustered in 59 schools (2012-2013). All variables were added in a stepwise manner to explore possible mediation effects.

Results - Schools' gender composition influenced both male and female teachers' efficacy feelings in classroom management. Teachers feel less effective in controlling the classroom when teaching mostly girls. Female teachers feel less efficacious in classroom management when holding traditional gender role attitudes, and male teachers feel more efficacious in classroom management when they perceive their students as teachable. Female teachers also feel more efficacious in instructional strategies when they perceive their students as teachable, whereas male teachers show lower feelings of efficacy in instructional strategies when holding traditional gender role attitudes.

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