



# The relationship between perceptions of teaching concerns, teacher efficacy, and selected teacher characteristics

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## Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between teacher characteristics (gender, grade level taught, experience), personal and general teacher efficacy, and the perception of teaching concerns. Participants included 292 Lebanese teachers from diverse school backgrounds with a wide range of teaching experience. They completed a standard teacher efficacy questionnaire and another questionnaire that assessed their concerns about their professional practice. Results indicated that experience and personal efficacy were negatively related to the perception of teaching concerns whereas gender, grade level taught, and general efficacy were not related to the perception of any of the categories of teaching concerns. The results also revealed that beginning teachers and those with low sense of personal efficacy were concerned about the task of teaching and the impact they make as teachers more than their highly experienced and more personally efficacious counterparts. Implications for teacher development and suggestions for further research are discussed. © 1999 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers' concerns about their professional practice have attracted the attention of researchers for quite some time now (e.g., Barkhuizen, 1997; Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Guillaum & Rudney, 1993; Pigge & Marso, 1997; 1987a,b; Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985). These researchers, among others, have identified a wide range of teaching concerns ranging from self-survival concerns as teachers to handling the demands of the teaching tasks, having an impact on student learning, and improving the educational system more generally.

Furthermore, the literature has identified several personal and contextual variables that influence the development of teaching concerns. Chief among these variables are gender (Pigge & Marso, 1987b), previous school experiences (Bullough, 1990; Calderhead & Roboson, 1991; Zahorik, 1989), and overall experience (Fuller & Bown, 1975).

Similarly, teachers' sense of teaching efficacy has been studied and discussed extensively (e.g., Ashton & Webb, 1986; Coladarcis & Breton, 1997; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Greenwood, Olejnik & Parkay 1990; Guskey, 1988; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). However, there is a lack of research that examines the connection between the two areas of teaching concerns and teacher efficacy. In this study, we set out to examine this connection

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based on the assumption that high efficacious teachers may have different concerns about their professional practice than their low efficacious counterparts. This is because the more efficacious teachers are more likely to take charge of their own growth and to resolve their problems. In addition, we examined the influence of gender, level taught (elementary vs. intermediate), and experience on the development of teaching concerns. Thus, the present study had two general objectives: (a) to examine the intuitive association between teachers' sense of personal and general efficacy and the categories of teaching concerns, i.e., self-survival, task, impact, and total concerns, and (b) to examine the influence of such personal and context variables as gender, level taught, and experience on the development of teaching concerns.

### 1.1. *The construct of teacher efficacy*

Researchers have linked the construct of teacher efficacy to Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, two types of expectations determine human behavior: (a) an expectation that a certain behavior will lead to a certain outcome, and (b) an expectation that one can perform the required behavior in order to bring about the desired outcome. Within the context of teaching, Coladarci and Breton (1997) explained that the belief that the "normative teacher" or "an abstract collective of teachers" are capable of delivering skillful instruction that can overcome the negative effects of an impoverished home environment constitutes a sense of "general efficacy" (p. 230). Meanwhile, personal efficacy refers to a teacher's personal confidence that he or she is capable of delivering such skillful instruction. These researchers further emphasized that the distinction between these two types of efficacy (personal and general) is critical. This is because teachers may have a high sense of general efficacy, but may still harbor serious doubts about their personal ability to perform the necessary activities in order to produce the desired outcomes.

Several teacher efficacy researchers have proposed similar conceptualizations to those proposed above using different labels such as "teaching efficacy" and "personal teaching efficacy" (Ashton

& Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and "general teaching efficacy" and "personal teaching efficacy" (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). Meanwhile, other researchers have dealt with the construct of teacher efficacy as a uni-dimensional construct (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Guskey, 1988; Greenwood et al., 1990). Similarly, while Ashton and Webb (1986) stressed that teacher behavior is best predicted as personal efficacy and teaching efficacy act in concert in a general rather than domain-specific sense, Bandura and Jourden (1991) maintained that self-efficacy is a situation-specific determinant of behavior rather than a global personal trait. In the context of the present study, we dealt with personal and general efficacy in a general sense as two separate variables defined by Anderson, Greene, and Loewen (1988):

1. "personal teaching efficacy" is the teachers' own expectations that they will be able to perform the actions that lead to students learning, and
2. "general teaching efficacy" is the belief that the teacher population's ability to perform these actions is not limited by factors beyond school control.

### 1.2. *The development and consequences of teacher efficacy*

Research on the development of teacher efficacy indicates that both personal and general efficacy are likely to increase as pre-service student-teachers progress through their teacher education programs (Brousseau, Book & Byers 1988; Housego, 1990; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Spector, 1990). However, general efficacy may decline whereas personal efficacy continues to increase as student-teachers gain experience (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Dembo & Gibson, 1985). In addition, previous research has shown that teacher efficacy is more likely to be stable among in-service teachers with some decline in both personal and general efficacy as they stay longer in the profession (Anderson et al., 1988; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Guskey & Passero, 1993; Korevaar, 1990).

Furthermore, the literature includes evidence linking the development of teacher efficacy to such

school context variables as the achievement levels of students (Smylie, 1980), academic climate, interaction among colleagues, as well as teaching at different grade levels (Parkay, Olejnik & Proller, 1986). That is, efficacy may increase among teachers in schools where students make satisfactory academic gains and colleagues interact about instructional matters, and among elementary-level teachers compared with high school teachers. Furthermore, it has been shown that efficacy could be enhanced through in-service training (Stein & Wang, 1988; Ross, 1994).

In the literature there is also evidence that the high personally efficacious teachers are more willing to adopt instructional innovations such as cooperative learning (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997b) and mastery learning (Guskey, 1988). It has also been found that efficacy is positively related to improved student academic achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Dembo & Gibson, 1985), to stress-reduced relationships with parents, and to more commitment to the teaching profession. (Parkay et al., 1986).

### 1.3. *Teaching concerns*

Several researchers have investigated the professional concerns of teachers. For instance, during the late 1950s and 1960s several researchers speculated about the nature of teachers' concerns (Fuller, 1969). Later on, dozens of studies, mostly surveys, have described the nature and development of teaching concerns (e.g., Barkhuizen, 1997; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Guillaum & Rudney, 1993; Pigge & Marso, 1997, 1987a,b; Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985; Veenman, 1984). These studies have shown that teachers' concerns encompass a wide range of issues from maintaining classroom discipline and meeting the expectations of parents and administrators to improving the educational system more generally. On the other hand, Fuller (1969) and Fuller and Bown (1975) proposed a developmental conceptualization of teaching concerns. These researchers maintained that beginning teachers might have an amorphous view of their concerns following which they become concerned with their "self-survival" as teachers. That is, as teachers join the profession, they become concerned with their self-

adequacy as teachers in terms of being able to control classes, possessing adequate knowledge, finding a place in the power structure of the school, and meeting the expectations of parents and supervisors. Fuller (1969) and Fuller and Bown (1975) further maintained that teachers gradually develop "task concerns" and eventually "impact concerns" as they gain more experience. The task concerns refer to teachers' concerns about planning instruction, teaching too many students, and having to carry the burden of clerical work. The impact concerns include meeting the individual needs of students and motivating them to learn.

Research evidence on the development of teaching concerns has yielded mixed results. For instance, Pigge and Marso (1987a) and Richards and Gipe (1987) reported that teachers' self-survival concerns had indeed decreased with the increase in years of experience. However, other studies have reported similar concerns to those conceptualized by Fuller (1969) and Fuller and Bown (1975), but not necessarily experienced in a particular sequence (Calderhead, 1989; Pigge & Marso, 1987b; Reeves & Kazelskis, 1985). Furthermore, Guillaum and Rudney (1993) maintained that many personal, program, and context variables may "interact with classroom experience to arouse teachers' concerns" (p. 66). Examples of the personal variables that have been found to influence the perception of teaching concerns include gender (Pigge & Marso, 1987b), reflections based on cognitive structures (Winitzky, 1990), and teachers' belief systems and perceptions based on previous school experiences (Bullough, 1990; Calderhead & Roboson, 1991; Zahorik, 1989). Similarly, Ghaith and Yaghi (1997a) reported that the time frame of teacher education programs influences the perception of teaching concerns by student-teachers. These researchers reported that student-teachers enrolled in a three-year undergraduate program had higher concerns than their peers enrolled in a one-year post B. A. diploma program across all of the self-survival, task, and impact categories of concerns.

### 1.4. *The present study*

This study had two main objectives. First, we set out to explore the relationship between personal

teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy and teachers' perceptions of the degree of the seriousness of self-survival, task, impact, and total teaching concerns in order to provide a research foundation for the intuitive association between these areas. Second, we examined the connection between teacher gender, grade level taught, experience and the development of teaching concerns. More specifically, the study addressed the following broad questions:

1. To what extent are the variables of gender, grade level taught, experience, personal and general teaching efficacy and the perceptions of teaching concerns internally related?
2. Are there significant differences in the perception of teaching concerns across gender, grade level taught, experience, and levels of personal and general efficacy of teachers?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The participants in this study were 292 teachers of all subjects from seven representative Lebanese schools selected on the basis of size, location, and demographics. Three schools were considered urban schools enrolling students with high socioeconomic and educational family backgrounds, but following different school policies with regard to discipline, school schedule, and parental involvement. Another school was also considered urban, enrolling students from low and medium socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The remaining three schools were considered suburban schools with diverse students in terms of the socioeconomic and educational level of the parents. There were 27 male teachers, 250 females and 15 teachers who did not report their gender. In general, the participants were experienced teachers with an average of 8.76 years of teaching experience. The range of experience was 36 years with a standard deviation of 8.35.

As will be seen below, however, this sample was reduced with the introduction of list-wise deletion of missing cases when applied to the correlation

and MANOVA analyses run in the study. The sample ( $N = 225$ ) in the correlation analysis constituted about 77% of the initial sample whereas the sample ( $N = 273$ ) in the MANOVA analysis for personal teaching efficacy constituted about 93% of the initial sample. Meanwhile, the sample ( $N = 278$ ) in the MANOVA analysis for general teaching efficacy constituted about 95% of the initial sample and the sample ( $N = 233$ ) in the MANOVA analysis for teaching experience constituted about 79% of the initial sample.

### 2.2. Instruments

Teachers' sense of efficacy was measured through the Gibson and Dembo standard teaching efficacy scale (1984) whereby participants responded to 16 six-point agree/disagree statements. Nine statements dealt with personal teaching efficacy and the remaining seven dealt with general teaching efficacy. Factorial validity of the scale was established by two clear factors that the authors linked to Bandura's two-factor model of self-efficacy. Consistencies (alpha reliabilities) were 0.78 for the personal efficacy factor, 0.75 for the teaching efficacy factor, and 0.79 for the total 16 items. In addition, to assess teachers' perceptions of the seriousness of teaching concerns, we used the Ghaith and Yaghi (1997a) measure of teaching concerns. This measure was developed based on Veenman's (1984) list of teaching problems and included 28 items that are categorized into self-survival, task, and impact concerns according to Fuller's (1969) and Fuller and Bown's (1975) conceptualizations of teaching concerns. Twelve items addressed the self-survival, nine items the task, and seven items the impact teaching concerns. The self-survival items focused on teachers' perceptions of the degree of the seriousness of such concerns as their relations with their supervisors and parents, student expectations, class discipline, and adequate salary. Meanwhile, the task concerns items focused on lesson planning and organizing the curriculum over the academic year, developing teaching materials and obtaining supplies, and carrying the burden of clerical work, whereas the impact concerns items addressed the concerns of motivating students and meeting their individual learning needs. This scale has an internal

consistency of 0.78 for the 12 self-survival items, 0.81 for the nine task items, 0.68 for the seven impact items, and 0.89 for the total 28 items. Respondents rated their levels of concerns on a six-point scale ranging from (1) negligible to (6) very serious. In addition, the questionnaire included demographic items about the participant's gender, teaching experience, and the level at which they teach, i.e., elementary or secondary.

### 2.3. Data analysis

Two composite scores of personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy were computed for each respondent by adding the scores on the nine and seven items in the teaching efficacy scale respectively measuring personal and general teaching efficacy. The coding of the negatively stated items was reversed in order to ensure that high scores meant high efficacy on all items of the scale. Similarly, a total concerns score as well as three additional composite concerns scores were computed by adding the scores on the 28, 12, 9, and 7 items, respectively, measuring total concerns, self-survival, task, and impact concerns. Descriptive statistics and product moment correlation coefficients were then computed for all variables in order to examine relationships among teachers' gender, grade level taught, experience, sense of personal and general teaching efficacy and teachers' perceptions of the degree of seriousness of teaching concerns. In addition, we ran two multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests with the self-survival, task, and impact teaching concerns as dependent variables and the levels of personal and

general teaching efficacy as independent variables (factors) in order to determine if the teachers with high and low personal and general efficacy differed in their perceptions of teaching concerns. The levels of efficacy were established by using a sample median split to form categories of high and low personal and general efficacy teachers. Finally, we ran a third MANOVA test followed by a series of *t*-tests to compare the levels of teaching experience (beginning, experienced, highly experienced) as independent variables on the categories of teaching concerns as dependent variables. Teachers were considered beginning if they had less than five years of experience ( $N = 122$ ), experienced if they had between five and 15 years ( $N = 75$ ), and highly experienced if they had more than 15 years of experience ( $N = 55$ ).

### 3. Results

All statistical tests used to address the questions in the present study used 0.05 as the minimum alpha level. The following tables present some descriptive statistics about variables as well as highlights from the intercorrelations matrix of the variables and the results of the MANOVA and *t*-test analyses run in the study.

The mean scores and standard deviations of the high and low personal and general efficacy teachers are shown in Table 1. The table reveals that the mean scores of the low personal efficacy teachers are consistently higher than the mean scores of their high efficacy counterparts across all the categories of teaching concerns. Conversely, the mean

Table 1  
Descriptive statistics for rating of teaching concerns by low and high personal and general efficacy teachers

Variable	Personal teaching efficacy				General teaching efficacy			
	Low ( $n = 167$ )		High ( $n = 106$ )		Low ( $n = 150$ )		High ( $n = 128$ )	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Self-survival	26.42	8.60	24.70	8.77	25.41	9.59	25.97	7.62
Task	23.49	6.85	21.47	7.05	22.01	6.86	23.41	6.82
Impact	18.25	5.48	16.27	5.80	17.03	5.77	17.87	5.43

scores of the low general efficacy teachers are consistently lower than the mean scores of the high general efficacy teachers also across all the categories of teaching concerns; however, the differences between the two groups are fairly small. This suggests that teachers with less personal efficacy are concerned about their professional practice more than their more efficacious counterparts. Meanwhile, general efficacy does not seem to influence teachers' perceptions of professional concerns in any major way.

### 3.1. Correlational analysis

The correlational analysis is reported in Table 2 and indicates that general efficacy, gender, and the grade level taught were not related to any of the categories of teaching concerns. Conversely, Table 2 shows that personal efficacy was negatively correlated with all the categories of teaching concerns. That is, there was a negative relationship between personal efficacy and the perception of self-survival concerns ( $r = -0.14, P < 0.05$ ), between personal efficacy and the perception of task concerns ( $r = -0.22, P < 0.01$ ), and between personal efficacy and the perception of impact concerns ( $r = -0.17, P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, there was a negative relationship between personal efficacy and the perception of total teaching concerns ( $r = -0.19, P < 0.01$ ). In addition, the study showed that general efficacy, personal efficacy, and

experience, were unrelated whereas the categories of concerns were all positively internally related. Similarly, Table 2 shows that experience is negatively related to the perception of self-survival concerns ( $r = -0.24, P < 0.01$ ), to the perception of task concerns ( $r = -0.16, P < 0.01$ ), and to the perception of impact concerns ( $r = -0.26, P < 0.01$ ) (see Table 2).

### 3.2. MANOVA analyses

#### 3.2.1. Personal teaching efficacy scores.

The results of the MANOVA analysis for the high and low personal efficacy scores are shown in Table 3 and reveal the following: First, the multivariate analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between the low and high personal efficacy teachers in their perception of teaching concerns  $F(3, 225) = 2.78, P = 0.04$ . This indicates teachers with low sense of personal efficacy have higher concerns about teaching than teachers with a high sense of personal efficacy. Second, the univariate analysis of variance showed no significant difference in the perception of the self-survival concerns between the low personal efficacy teachers and their high personal efficacy counterparts  $F(1, 227) = 2.14, P = 0.14$ . However, there were significant differences between the low personal and high personal efficacy teachers in their perceptions of the task  $F(1, 227) = 4.59, P = 0.03$  and impact concerns  $F(1, 227) = 6.71, P = 0.01$ .

Table 2  
Intercorrelations among variables ( $n = 225$ )

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. General efficacy									
2. Personal efficacy	-0.03								
3. Self-survival	0.00	-0.14*							
4. Task	0.04	-0.22**	0.71**						
5. Impact	0.01	-0.17**	0.67**	0.66**					
6. Total	0.02	-0.19**	0.93**	0.88**	0.88**				
7. Experience	0.00	0.02	-0.24**	-0.16**	-0.26**	-0.26**			
8. Grade level	0.12*	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.08	0.01	-0.22**		
9. Gender	0.03	0.00	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.24*	0.16**	
Mean	24.36	40.91	25.64	22.67	17.44	65.76	8.76	-	-
SD	5.35	6.01	8.67	6.92	5.67	19.20	8.35	-	-

Significant at  $P < 0.05$ .

Table 3  
Multivariate analysis of variance summary of ratings of teaching concerns by low and high personal teaching efficacy teachers

Multivariate ANOVA <sup>a</sup>		Univariate ANOVA <sup>b</sup>		
Source	F	Self-survival	Task	Impact
Personal efficacy	2.78 <sup>c</sup>	F 2.14	4.59 <sup>c</sup>	6.71 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>df's = (3,225).

<sup>b</sup>df's = (1,227).

<sup>c</sup>P < 0.05.

<sup>d</sup>P < 0.01.

Table 4  
Multivariate analysis of variance summary of ratings of teaching concerns by low and high personal teaching efficacy teachers

Multivariate ANOVA <sup>a</sup>		Univariate ANOVA <sup>b</sup>		
Source	F	Self-survival	Task	Impact
General efficacy	1.26	F 23	2.41	1.31

<sup>a</sup>df's = (3,230).

<sup>b</sup>df's = (1,232).

### 3.2.2. General teaching efficacy scores.

The results of the MANOVA analysis for the high and low general efficacy scores are shown in Table 4 and do not reveal any differences between the low and high general efficacious teachers in their perceptions of all the categories of teaching concerns i.e., self-survival, task, and impact concerns.

### 3.2.3. Experience scores.

The results of the MANOVA analysis for beginning, experienced, and highly experienced teachers are shown in Table 5 and reveal the following: First, the results revealed a significant difference among beginning, experienced, and highly experienced teachers in their perception of teaching concerns  $F(6, 456) = 3.63, P = 0.00$ . Second, the univariate analysis of variance showed significant differences in the perception of the self-survival concerns  $F(2, 230) = 9.11, P = 0.00$ , in the perception of task concerns  $F(2, 230) = 4.99, P = 0.00$ , and in the perception of impact concerns  $F(2, 230) = 7.49, P = 0.00$  among beginning, experienced, and highly experienced teachers. Finally,

Table 5  
Multivariate analysis of variance summary of ratings of teaching concerns by low and high personal teaching efficacy teachers

Multivariate ANOVA <sup>a</sup>		Univariate ANOVA <sup>b</sup>		
Source	F	Self-survival	Task	Impact
Experience	3.63 <sup>c</sup>	F 9.11 <sup>c</sup>	4.99 <sup>c</sup>	7.49 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>df's = (6,456).

<sup>b</sup>df's = (2,230).

<sup>c</sup>P < 0.05.

<sup>d</sup>P < 0.01.

Table 6  
*t*-test results for beginning and experienced teachers

Variable	Experience				
	Beginning (N = 114)		Experienced (N = 69)		<i>t</i> -value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Self-survival	27.64	9.06	25.95	8.71	1.25
Task	23.33	7.11	23.39	6.51	0.06
Impact	18.64	5.78	17.89	5.83	0.84

Table 7  
*t*-test results for beginning and highly experienced teachers

Variable	Experience				
	Beginning (N = 114)		Highly Experienced (N = 50)		<i>t</i> -value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Self-survival	27.64	9.06	21.46	6.95	4.76 <sup>a</sup>
Task	23.33	7.11	20.42	6.47	2.74 <sup>a</sup>
Impact	18.64	5.78	17.89	4.83	4.38 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>P < 0.01.

the series of *t*-test results showed no significant difference between beginning and experienced teachers in their perceptions of the self-survival, task, and impact concerns (see Table 6).

However, the results showed that beginning teachers differed significantly from the highly experienced teachers in their perceptions of all the categories of teaching concerns (see Table 7).

Table 8  
*t*-test results for experienced and highly experienced teachers

Variable	Experience				<i>t</i> -value
	Experienced ( <i>N</i> = 69)		Highly experienced ( <i>N</i> = 50)		
	M	SD	M	SD	
Self-survival	25.95	8.71	21.46	6.95	3.13 <sup>a</sup>
Task	23.39	6.50	20.42	6.47	2.61 <sup>a</sup>
Impact	17.89	5.83	15.04	4.83	3.05 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*P* < 0.01.

Likewise, experienced teachers differed from the highly experienced teachers also in the perception of the categories of teaching concerns (see Table 8)

#### 4. Discussion

This study has examined the relationship between gender, grade level taught, experience, personal and general teaching efficacy and the perception of teaching concerns. On the basis of the data analyzed, the results suggested the following aspects of interest. First, the study revealed that personal and general teaching efficacy were not internally related whereas the categories of teaching concerns were all positively internally related. This suggests that personal and general efficacy represent two distinct indices that ought to be measured separately. This is in agreement with the findings of Ashton and Webb (1986), Ghaith and Yaghi (1997b), Gibson and Dembo (1984) and Hoy and Woolfolk (1990), who reported similar results. The findings also suggest that teachers who are concerned about any category of teaching concerns are likely to be equally concerned about all the categories of teaching concerns. However, in the present study both gender and the level of teaching (elementary and intermediate) were found to be unrelated to the perception of teaching concerns. This contradicts the finding of Pigge and Marso (1987b) who reported that females and elementary teachers had higher teaching concerns than males and secondary teachers.

Second, the study showed that personal efficacy, rather than general efficacy, was related to the perception of teaching concerns. In fact, the study revealed that personal efficacy was inversely related to the self-survival, task, impact, and total concerns whereas general efficacy was unrelated to any of the categories of teaching concerns. This suggests a trend that teachers who believe in their personal ability to provide effective teaching that would bring about student learning are less concerned about their self-survival as teachers and about the demands of the teaching task than their less efficacious counterparts. Such high personal efficacy teachers may also be more confident about meeting the individual learning needs of their students and motivating them to learn than the low personal efficacy teachers. These findings corroborate the assumptions of Dembo and Gibson (1985) and those of Parkay, Greenwood, Olejnik and Proller (1988) who maintained that teachers with low sense of general efficacy might produce less stress or dissatisfaction because they believe that all teachers are unable to produce positive results with some students. Meanwhile, teachers with low personal sense of efficacy are more likely to blame themselves for poor student outcomes. Conversely, high personal efficacy teachers may feel less concerned about their teaching, as was the case in the present study, because they are more likely to attribute success to their personal efforts and ability to solve their problems.

Based on the premise that teachers are key agents of change and that their traits should be considered in the successful implementation of educational innovations, these findings suggest implications for programs concerned with the professional development of teachers. It seems warranted that teacher trainers and staff developers ought to develop intervention programs to increase teachers' sense of efficacy in order to alleviate the effect of teaching concerns. Such programs should focus on the personal sphere of trainees, not just on increasing their content knowledge and pedagogical skills. In this regard, teacher training and staff development programs should aim at developing and enhancing a strong sense of personal efficacy among teachers, both in pre-service and in-service settings. This is needed in order to avoid teacher



burnout and encourage the attribution of successful outcomes to personal efforts. It is also equally important to provide teachers with opportunities to exercise control over the curriculum, to become innovative, to get peer support, and to focus on insights gained rather than dwell on self-blaming when things fall flat as suggested by Fritz, Miller-Heyl, Kreutzer and MacPhee, 1995.

Furthermore, the results confirm the claim of Short (1992) that personal teacher efficacy is one of the important dimensions of teacher empowerment defined as the process of taking charge of one's own growth and resolving one's own problems. In this regard, empowered teachers ought to believe that they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it because they are provided opportunities to make decisions as well as develop and display competence.

Third, the results of the present study regarding the effect of experience on the development of teaching concerns were only partially supportive of the Fuller (1969) and the Fuller and Bown (1975) conceptualizations of the sequential development of teaching concerns as teachers gain more experience. In fact, the study has confirmed that teachers' self-survival concerns have declined as they stayed longer in the profession. However, contrary to the expectations of the sequential model of concerns, our findings revealed that teachers with more than 15 years of experience were less concerned about all the categories of teaching concerns than their beginning and experienced counterparts, including the impact category of concerns. This indicates that teaching concerns are more likely to be context-specific rather than universal. The results, too, suggest that intervention programs for increasing teachers' sense of efficacy in order to alleviate professional concerns could be more relevant in the case of student-teachers and beginning teachers, as highly experienced teachers may have less concerns about their professional practice than beginning teachers.

The results obtained in the present study provided a research foundation for the intuitive association between teachers' sense of efficacy and the perception of teaching concerns. These results underscore the value of enhancing teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy, especially with beginning teachers and those enrolled in teacher preparation

programs. Further research is needed to examine the generalizability of these findings with regard to the connection of teacher efficacy to the perception of teaching concerns in different settings. Likewise, it is important to investigate change in teachers' sense of efficacy and consequently perception of concerns in such domain-specific contexts as teaching low versus high-achieving students and teaching different subject areas.

It is also equally important to investigate the classroom and school practices of the high and low efficacious teachers in order to describe the thought processes and behaviors of teachers with varying degrees of concerns about self-survival, task and the impact they make as teachers. Furthermore, it would be useful to investigate the personal teacher characteristics, program, and school context variables that may influence the development of teachers' efficacy and their concerns about their practice.

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