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**RELATIONSHIP OF SETTING AND GENDER WITH TEACHERS’
SELF EFFICACY IN PAKISTAN**

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Abstract

The most common disparities registered by a large majority of education researchers in Pakistan are related to students’ outcomes by location and gender. However, these differences do not highlight the ‘invisible’ disparities between the self-efficacy of teachers by location and gender. The objective of our research was to assess the direction and strength of the relationship between gender, rural/urban setting and the self and collective efficacies of Pakistani teachers. The research question for the study was; do self and collective efficacies of teachers differ by location and gender? Data for the study were collected over a period of eighteen months in 2015-16 through two instruments; a self-efficacy questionnaire with 24 items and a Collective self-efficacy questionnaire with 21 items. The sample was selected with a combination of different sampling techniques including snowballing and convenience sampling. Data were analyzed with the help of statistical measures of association. Our findings reveal that female teachers from rural areas have the lowest self-efficacy scores but their male counterparts have the highest followed by the urban male teachers. These results partially re-confirm the findings of similar studies as far as females are concerned but rural males being more efficacious than their urban counterparts is a different find; it suggests that the sources of efficacy may be different for males and females in rural setting. Our findings also reinforce the need for enhancing teachers’ motivation and confidence through teacher preparation and training programs. The study makes a significant contribution to the field of teacher education.

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Keywords: Teacher efficacy, rural urban setting, gender, teacher education, Pakistan.



1. Introduction

Education in Pakistan is not a level field for all stakeholders. There are inequalities related to access to schools, distribution of physical and financial resources and the quality of teaching and learning. The most common differences registered in this respect are related to setting, i.e., rural-urban (Rahman, Hayat, Habib and Iqbal, 2011; Tayyaba, 2012;) and/or gender (Daraz, Khan, & Sheikh, 2013; Farid, Anwar, Iqbal, Jan & Khattak, 2014). These disparities have long caught the attention of the majority of our educationists, policy makers and researchers. At the same time, many of the ‘invisible’ disparities, embedded in the process of teaching and learning in schools are being ignored like the differences in the self-efficacy of teachers by gender and rural/urban setting. The most important for improving the process of teaching and learning is the performance of teachers because students’ academic outcomes are affected by teachers’ faith in their own competence related to teaching or their ‘self-efficacy’ (Bandura, 2006). It may, therefore, be a contributory factor in creating variations among the student outcomes. The conceptual stance of the present paper is that teachers’ efficacy is an important determinant of the quality of teaching and learning in schools and should be taken into account for comparing differences by location and gender.

Teachers have an important role to play in the process of teaching and learning in schools. As trained professionals, teachers’ efficacy beliefs determine the way they make use of their professional capabilities and may be empirically evident at micro level. However, the variations in usage create differences in students’ school experiences which ultimately affect their academic outcomes and thus ‘invisible’ becomes visible, measurable and verifiable at macro level. For this reason, the concept of teachers’ self efficacy theoretically becomes an important determinant of the quality of teaching and learning at the macro level as well and needs to be taken into account when exploring educational disparities by location and gender. In order to substantiate this claim, the primary objective of the present research was to look into the differences in self efficacy of Pakistani teachers by location and gender, i.e., rural/urban and male/female respectively. The research also had a secondary purpose which is discussed later as it is embedded in the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

1.1. Self efficacy and location

Literature on the relationship between self efficacy of teachers and location (or setting) shows mixed results. For instance, Page, Pendergraft and Wilson (2014) compared the self efficacy of urban, rural and suburban elementary school teachers from the south-eastern United States. Their results showed variations in the self efficacy scores with urban teachers scoring significantly lower than their counterparts. On the other hand, Knoblauch & Woolfolk (2008) did not find any significant differences in their study of teachers from different settings but when the study was replicated later (Knoblauch and Chase, 2015), the results were similar to that of Page et al. (2014). Furthermore Pan (2014), while exploring the relationship between the professional competency and self efficacy of Madrasa teachers in West Bengal, also found significant differences based on locality. Other studies that have looked into self efficacy of teachers by location include, Haq (2013), Haq and Akhtar (2013) among others.

1.2. Self efficacy and gender

Studies on teachers' self efficacy by gender are aplenty and most of them agree that self efficacy is significantly different by gender. In a sample of teachers from Western Canada, Klassen and Chiu (2010) investigated the impact of gender on three domains of teachers' self efficacy. Their conclusion was that gender differences did exist in two of the domains whereas Butucha (2013), in his study of Ethiopian teachers by gender, found significant differences between males and females in all domains. Similar results are also reported by others like Sarfo, Amankwah, Sam and Konin (2015) and Butucha (2014). These research studies re-confirm the differences between the self efficacy of males and females in various contexts. Such evidence is important for strengthening the validity of our claim that gender differences may also be significant determinant of rural-urban disparities in teaching and learning of Pakistani students.

1.3. Theoretical framework

The self-efficacy of teachers is context-specific (Haq & Akhtar, 2013; Abdollahzadeh & Rezaeian, 2011); it is the micro-level of teachers' daily functioning which is directly connected to their personal and professional sphere of action, i.e., classroom teaching. It is mostly considered an isolated activity and the accountability is individual; the brand image of teachers as 'good' and 'bad' as perceived by students emerges in this domain. For the purposes of our research, self-efficacy of teachers is defined as; "a self-system that controls most personal activity, including appropriate use of professional knowledge and skills" (Harun & Pektaş, 2015). Seen from this perspective, the self-efficacy of teachers is a personal trait which can best be studied at individual level. At the same time, teachers as individuals are important and their self efficacy being a significant determinant of their day to day functioning may increase or decrease the value of their individual contributions toward the school experiences and academic outcomes of their students. Hence, the teachers' self efficacy may well be a micro level personal trait but has macro-level implications for sustaining rural-urban disparities in students' academic achievements because teachers' professional life (and their influence by implication) is multilayered in addition to being complex,

The teachers' professional knowledge and skills are not exercised in isolation but as part of larger networks at micro, meso and macro levels. The first or 'micro' level of the teachers' multifaceted professional life is 'classroom' where teachers get to exercise their expert knowledge and skills known as 'teaching'. In almost all situations this apparently an 'individual act' is carried out in a school context which is larger than classroom and involves many more facets of professionalism than classroom teaching. School is part of a larger organization which shapes teachers personal beliefs and professional efficacies thus making a teacher an 'organizational person' (Friedman & Kass, 2002). At this level, the school experiences and academic outcomes of students are shaped by the 'collective' efficacies of these organizational persons. The teachers' collective efficacy is "the group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required for producing given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.477). In agreement with Friedman and Kass (2002), we extend the concept of teacher self efficacy to include 'school' but keeping it at 'meso' level because schools in public sector are not independent entities but part of larger federal and/or provincial bureaucracies in Pakistan. Hence, school context especially in rural areas is just an extension of the classroom with slightly higher levels of activities as teachers come into contact with parents and other stakeholders in the surrounding communities.

In addition to the above two domains of classroom and school, teachers in public sector are employees of the Government of Pakistan and through local, provincial or federal tiers of administration are ultimately accountable to the Education Ministry. It is at this macro level that the distinction between classroom-school context and profession-policy context emerges. While not denying the relevance of this level, we have not included the macro level of teachers' professional life in our study in light of the ground realities; in Pakistan the status of teaching as a profession is low and teachers in general and school teachers in particular are not consulted in matters related to education policies (Qureshi, 2015). We have observed that school teachers especially in rural areas limit their sphere of action to their day-to-day teaching within the classroom and their sphere of influence not beyond schools in most cases. In such a context their judgment of their professional capabilities related to teaching and learning may be very high but their perception of their ability to change their professional environment will be low. The repercussions of such context will be that teachers would blame 'others' for disparities in students' academic outcomes. The following diagram presents the theoretical framework that has been utilized in our study.

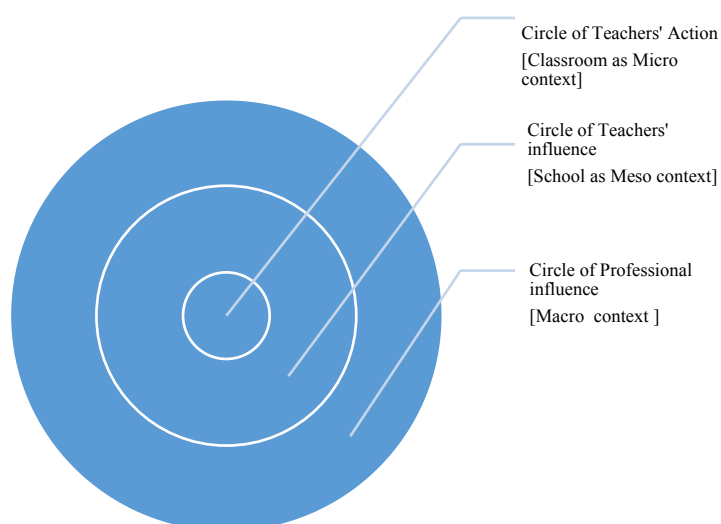


Figure 01. The multilayered context of teachers' professional lives

The first, innermost, circle of the model depicts teachers' daily realities of the classroom teaching and learning where teachers feel most competent in exerting their 'personal agency; therefore, one can assume that their perception of their own abilities will be the highest.

The second circle represents their daily activities as members of an organization. Since, "perceived collective efficacy is an important aspect of organizational culture" (Abdollahzadeh & Rezaeian, 2011, p. 124), the perception of school culture will not only be reflected in collective efficacy but will be part of the personal efficacy of teachers as well; hence a direct relationship between the two is postulated.

The third or the outermost circle embodies the influence of teachers' in changing their professional environment. A great majority of Public sector teachers may not include this circle in the domain of their personal or collective efficacy. The secondary purpose of the research was to verify this part of the model separately.

2. Problem Statement

In Pakistan, “There is a pronounced disparity in the provision of education in urban and rural areas” (Jamal & Khan, 2005, p.100). Research studies have also pointed out disparities between the academic experiences of male and female students (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009). The education statistics record these differences and researchers draw our attention to the causes and consequences; yet, an important aspect of teaching and learning that may also be contributing to these disparities silently is largely ignored by these sources. Our stance is that self efficacy and collective efficacy of school teachers are important variables and should be considered while measuring the differences in educational outcomes by location and gender.

3. Research Questions

Is there a significant difference between the self and collective efficacy scores of?

- a) Rural and urban teachers?
- b) Male and female teachers?

4. Purpose of the Study

The primary objective was to examine the relationship of self and collective efficacy of Pakistani teachers with their gender and setting (rural/urban).

The secondary objective was to understand the theoretical relevance of the proposed model in general and justification for inclusion of the third tier, in particular, for explaining the professional context of teachers in Pakistan.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Sample

The universe of the study is school teachers associated with the public sector in Pakistan. A sample of teachers of primary, middle and high schools from rural and urban areas, males and females, participated in this research. For selecting the sample, first snowballing technique was used to identify teachers known to us directly or through friends. They further identified groups of colleagues and members of teacher communities. Lastly, groups of teachers attending various training sessions or refresher courses during the study period were also included. These groups were identified through different networks of teachers from all over Pakistan. Our final sample includes 200 teachers. These descriptive statistics of sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 01. Demographic Composition of the Sample

Gender	Location/Rural	Location/Urban	Total
Male	52	48	100
Female	51	49	100
Total	103	97	200

5.2. Instrument

Data for the study were collected over a period of eighteen months in 2015-16 through 2 instruments;

5.2.1. Teacher self-efficacy questionnaire

This was developed by Tschannen–Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). For our purposes, the scale refers to the ‘classroom domain’ (Friedman & Kass, 2002) where “the choices teachers make—[and] the ways in which they exercise personal agency” (Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2004: 3) shape the schooling experiences of young learners. This set of data measures the self efficacy of school teachers at micro level and relates to the innermost ring of their professional lives, i.e., the circle of action.

5.2.2. Collective Teacher Efficacy questionnaire

This was developed by Roger D. Goddard, Wayne K. Hoy and Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2000). The instrument contains 21 items which are divided into 2 sub-scales; the former deals with “perceptions of ...teachers’ abilities to successfully educate the students within their school” (McCoach & Colbert, 2010, p.33) while the latter refers to “external resources and barriers that influence teachers’ perceptions of their abilities to educate students” (ibid; 32). For our purposes the scale measures the collective efficacy of school teachers at meso level and relates to the middle ring of their professional lives, i.e., the ‘School/ organization domain’ and the circle of their influence.

Internal consistency of both scales, indicated by Cronback Alpha, was within the acceptable range (Field, 2013) with values of 0.92 for the 24- item self-efficacy scale and 0.62 for 21- item collective efficacy scale respectively.

5.3. Methods of analysis

5.3.1. Statistical analysis

The efficacy variables were measured by the sum of individual responses on self and collective efficacy questionnaires. Co-relational descriptive research design was used to compare; a) rural vs. urban teachers and males vs. females. Group means were compared to find out the differences and Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were used to assess the strength, direction and significance of relationships.

5.3.2. Focus group discussions

We used Krueger’s (2002) and Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston’s (2013) guidelines for structuring our focus groups on two specific topics; group one (n = 12) comprised of 8 females and 4 males who expressed their views on the influence of teachers in changing their professional environment. Group 2 (n = 10) comprised of equal number of females and males (5 each), with whom we shared the actual results of our study and recorded their reactions. The discussions were held in different rooms on the same premises at the same time; hence the possibility of influencing others opinion could be ruled out.

6. Findings

6.1. Quantitative results

Descriptive statistics by settings are shown in Table 2.

Table 02. Descriptive Statistics by Setting

Types of Efficacy	Setting	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Collective/Meso	Rural	103	69.00	126.00	93.88	14.31
Self/Micro	do	103	114.00	211.00	158.59	22.46
Collective/Micro	Urban	97	62.00	113.00	87.06	13.25
Self/ Micro	do	97	109.00	198.00	152.47	21.55
Collective	Total	200	59.00	116.00	90.68 (90.00)*	13.99
Self	do	200	104.00	201.00	158.25 (152.00)	23.93

* Note: Following the advice of Field (2013), Median value is also reported (in parentheses) for non-normal distribution.

From the results in Table 04, one can see that in this sample of teachers;

1. The score of the most efficacious rural teacher was greater than the score of the most efficacious urban teacher at both levels, i.e., 126 vs. 113 at meso and 211 vs. 198 at micro levels respectively.
2. Similarly, standard deviations denoting the spread of the score distribution were also slightly lower for urban teachers signifying a less spread out scores for urban teachers compared to their rural counterparts.
3. The average scores of rural teachers were slightly higher than their urban counterparts (14 vs. 13 and 22 vs. 21 respectively).
4. The grand totals for the Mean scores of teachers self and collective efficacies are close to their group scores but in both cases Median is smaller than the Means indicating positive skew in the distribution, i.e. it means that the values towards the high end of scale 'strongly agree' are much higher than the rest of the values especially for the self efficacy scale.

Descriptive statistics by gender are shown in Table 3.

Table 03. Descriptive Statistics by Gender

Types of Efficacy	Gender	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Collective/Meso	Female	100	59.00	115.00	89.73	14.47
Self/Micro	do	100	104.00	195.00	153.87	22.59
Collective/Micro	Male	100	63.00	116.00	91.30	13.52
Self/ Micro	do	100	104.00	201.00	155.26	25.28
Collective	Total	200	59.00	116.00	90.68 (90.00)*	13.99
Self		200	104.00	201.00	158.25 (152.00)	23.93

* Note: Following the advice of Field (2013), Median value is also reported (in parentheses) for non-normal distribution.

From the results one can see that in this sample of teachers;

1. The score of the most efficacious male teacher was greater than the score of the most efficacious female teacher at both levels -116 vs. 115 at meso and 201 vs. 195 at micro levels respectively.
2. At the meso level the standard deviations denoting the spread of the score distribution were almost similar but at the micro level the male teachers' efficacy scores were slightly more spread out than their female counterparts.
3. The average scores of male teachers were slightly higher than the females; 91 vs. 90 and 155 vs. 154 respectively.

Descriptive statistics pointed out slight differences in the average efficacy scores of males vs. females and rural vs. urban teachers. Keeping in mind the non-normal distribution of our original sample we compared the Pearson Correlation Coefficients with Spearman's rho. There was not much difference between the strength and direction of relationships. The relationships of our interest, i.e., self and collective efficacy with setting and gender were not only significant but were also the strongest- coefficients in the range of 0.7 +. The weakest relationship was displayed by the types of efficacies with gender ($0.2 < 0.5$).

Table 04. Correlation analysis

Variables	Gender	Self Efficacy	Collective Efficacy	Setting
Gender	1			
Self Efficacy	-0.40**	1		
Collective Efficacy	-0.32**	0.58**	1	
Setting	0.011	-0.73**	-0.74**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The negative correlation between setting and teacher efficacies meant that rural teachers (coded 0) were more efficacious than their urban counterparts at both micro and meso levels (classroom and school contexts) in Pakistan. Apparently, the average differences between the two groups are not so big, i.e., M (rural) = 93.88, SD = 14.31 vs M (urban) = 87.06, SD = 13.25 at micro and M (rural) = 158.59, SD = 22.46 vs M (urban) = 152.47, SD = 21.55 at meso level respectively, but they are statistically significant. Therefore, the answer to our first research question is affirmative; the self and collective efficacies of Pakistani teachers are related to their setting and the differences between the rural and urban teachers are significant. In this sample of teachers, these are the strongest correlation coefficients that fall in the range of > 0.7 . Similarly, the negative correlations between gender and teacher efficacies meant that male teachers (coded 0) were more efficacious than females at both micro and meso levels (classroom and school contexts) in Pakistan. Although the average differences between the two groups do not seem big, i.e., M (males) = 91.30, SD = 13.52 vs M (females) = 89.73, SD = 14.47 at micro and M (males) = 155.26, SD = 25.28 vs M (females) = 153.87, SD = 22.59 at meso level respectively, they are statistically significant. Therefore, the answer to our second research question is also affirmative; the self and collective efficacies of Pakistani teachers are related to their gender and the differences between male and female teachers are significant. However, the relationship falls in the 'weak' category with values between ($0.2 < 0.5$). Finally,

the relationship between types of efficacies- self and collective- is also in the expected direction, $r = 0.58$ with $p < .05$ which falls in the 'moderate' range ($0.5 < 0.7$). It is important to note that all these relationships are significant at 99% of confidence level which is high for these kinds of variables and relationships.

6.2. Qualitative results

6.2.1. Group 1: the influence of teachers in changing their professional environment

Broadly speaking, the members classified the context of teachers' influence as bi-polar, i.e., the practical i.e., the physical context of classrooms and schools vs. theoretical sphere of their professional lives. They believed that former was the arena where individual teachers were more in control of the outcome; by 'being' teachers in classrooms they could make a difference to students' lives through, a) their mastery of subject content and teaching skills; b) effective use of instructional strategies for engaging students meaningfully and c) managing classrooms successfully

We are teachers and like our family members we know how to interact with our students... Classrooms are part of our second home besides we have also been trained to manage classrooms effectively.

It was clear that the group members had a high internal classroom related locus of control as they ranked teachers self efficacy the highest in influencing their immediate physical context; here the emphasis was more on what could be controlled by them 'within' the classroom. As the discussion swung to the notion of collective efficacy, their focus shifted more towards 'others' in schools.

Most of the decisions that affect our schools are made by the higher management many a times without consulting even the heads of schools. Through office memos from Education department or education ministry we are told, for instance whether to enlist parental or community involvement or not. What of 'collective power' can we talk in such a milieu?

They were less sure of their collective efficacy for school improvement. While they believed that an encouraging school climate can be created for students to have positive school experiences and produce better academic outcomes through home-school connection and cooperation among colleagues but the outcome was perceived to controlled more by higher management located outside schools;

We hear policy makers blaming teachers for poor quality and low standards of education but would they take input from these teachers when making policies? No and how could they ask teachers [with a touch of satire]; teachers do not have degrees in educational management and the 'lived' [adding emphasis] experiences that teachers have do not count with the hoity-toity academic scholars

They did not feel efficacious with regard to influencing the profession-policy context because; "The field is divided; teachers' domain is limited to classrooms and head-teachers manage school affairs. We [the teachers] are the foot soldiers; we 'do' [adding the emphasis]". The members were also of the opinion that few head-teachers were consulted occasionally and even these were mostly from urban areas and headed big schools; however, the policy drafts were always pre-prepared and the changes made 'after' consultations were negligible.

They [the higher management] deal with the larger issues of profession in Pakistan with professional theories borrowed from the West. These theories 'assume and advocate' nobility of the teaching profession; we [teachers] in Pakistan 'live' with low status in the society.

These teachers believed that teaching as a job and teaching as a profession were two interrelated but separate entities; the former revolved around the daily lives of teachers where they believed that he or she can influence events and their outcomes; therefore, they were more likely to be actively engaged in bringing about the desired outcome. Referring back to Figure 1, the two inner circles represent the practical sphere of teacher's action and influence with classroom at the heart of it.

Teachers displayed 'internal locus of control' (Gangai, Mahakud, & Sharma, 2016), while discussing the sphere of their influence at classroom and school level; they were "Masters of Fate" (Schwartzman & Boger, 2017:3). But when it came to enacting changes for improving the status of teachers and teaching profession they portrayed themselves as "Victims of Circumstances" (ibid) surrendering all powers to 'external locus of control' (Akkaya & Akyol, 2016); teachers had no control over their professional environment at large. None of them mentioned any difference in the efficacies of teachers due to gender or setting in this respect.

We cannot change policies... we do not have effective platforms for getting our voices heard... we know we can offer practical alternatives to theoretical suppositions that are put down in almost all documents coming out of the education departments but the high ups are more interested in fancy theories than practical solutions.

6.2.2. Group 2: reaction to the actual results of the research study

The members accepted the finding that teacher efficacies were different by location but the scores of rural teachers being higher was received with reservations;

One would expect urban teachers to be more efficacious at both levels as they have more resources and facilities at all levels; bigger schools, more trained teachers, the kind of environment that should generate higher level of confidence in teachers.

At the start the differences between structures and facilities like, "there are rural schools with no proper buildings... classes are held in the open in all seasons... many of the rural schools do not even have the basic facilities like toilets or drinking water...students sometimes have to be sent far to fetch water...". Rural students' plight was also commented upon by noting the weak infrastructure which forced students to cover long distances, on foot, in order to reach to schools. Then there was a gradual shift in the discussion and it moved toward the contextual realities of the daily life of rural teachers. The members agreed that rural life was difficult in general and that of teachers was no exception; "rural terrain is tough, and mountain rural is tougher... no doubt, the working environment of rural teachers is more challenging than urban teachers". At this point they also appreciated the resilience of humans by emphasizing that the same harsh environment could also become their strength;

We heard our elders say that environments shape our characters... rural people have to survive by overcoming these challenges. ...rural people are bound to bring forth their 'personal' resources to overcome the challenges present in their physical contexts...a teacher's personal resource is his professionalism and how do they [teachers] demonstrate it by having strong belief in their capabilities and show it through classroom and school management.

The discussion on the broader culture around schools and its influence on teachers' perceptions of abilities unravelled the nuanced nature of community culture and its important elements like religion and its effect on teachers' estimations of themselves;

Asian religions, in general, hold teachers in high esteem. For Muslims teaching is the 'legacy of Prophets'. This belief alone may get respect from the community and boost teachers' self confidence while granting them legitimate authority and thus raising their perceptions of self-strength.

Another source of strength for the rural teachers, according to the group, was the 'power of single identity';

Traditionally, in our rural areas, families have also been identified by their occupations and teaching for rural folk is still a noble profession... rural teachers and their families are given respect by the community... this usually sole identity becomes very important for the holder.

Throughout the discussion all members, females included, used masculine gender for teachers. Therefore, we tried to probe the issue along gender lines but the group did not go for separation; "a teacher is a teacher, male or female what difference does it make" or "we say 'he' but we mean both". However, in the later discussion it became clear that culture 'did' differentiate between boys and girls (and men and women by implication).

The members also accepted that females had lower efficacies but questioned whether it existed at all levels of education; "Females are good with children and they know it; therefore, female teachers should feel more efficacious at the primary level of education at least... and in the classroom for sure".. In this respect, the gender of students also came under discussion; "It is natural for females to be surer of their competence in handling adolescent girls than boys. For the boys of this age group, of course, male teachers will be more suitable, for all practical reasons, you know". They also highlighted the 'gendered' culture of the educational landscape; "Our society requires segregation of students after certain age, and teachers as well. It is better for the moral development of boys and girls if they study separately with teachers of their own gender". More research was suggested to further probe the phenomenon

7. Conclusion

The primary objective of our research was to find out if the efficacy scores of Pakistani teachers diverged by location and gender or not. This was the 'applied' side of our research in order to establish the empirical relevance of location and gender to the debate on educational disparities. While our finding of efficacy scores being different by gender, agrees with Awofala, Fatade and Udeani's (2015) research who concluded that gender remained a determining factor of self efficacy at all levels, it is rejected by Odanga, Raburu and Aloka (2015) and Tanriseven (2012) with studies of Kenyan and Turkish teachers respectively. Similarly, our other finding regarding efficacy scores being significantly different by urban-rural setting, agrees with Almeida, Jameson, Riesen and McDonnell's (2016) research from the United States. While the agreements with our findings back our stance, rejections caution us not to make definitive claims.

The secondary objective of our research was what qualifies as 'basic' research and "The aim of basic research is theoretical, to improve general understanding" (Roll-Hansen, 2009, p.5) of a phenomenon of interest but did it really resonate with the experiences of others in the field was an epistemological question. It needed to be explored further for making a meaningful contribution to the scholarship of teachers'

professional lives and their role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers in our study agreed that education sector consisted of two parallel worlds; of teachers and of policy makers or bureaucrats. This finding highlights the separation between policy makers and policy implementers and thus indicates gap between theory and practice; in other words, what looks good on paper may not work in the field because, “How policies are interpreted by teachers influences their practice and those practices can result in the reckonable effects (Huma, 2014, p.2).

An important finding of the study is the concept of ‘community culture as a source of teachers’ efficacy beliefs. Literature on the subject acknowledges four sources of teachers’ efficacy beliefs including, “mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional experience” (Lavado, 2018, p.3). Studies exploring these sources have largely remained within the correlates of these parameters (Lavado, 2018; Wang, Tan, Li, Tan, & Lim, 2017). Our research identifies rural culture as additional source of efficacy for rural teachers; the positive perceptions of rural teachers grew out of rural society's interpersonal interactions which gave them respect and expected exemplary performance in return. In addition, the Islamic beliefs were also emphasized about teaching being the legacy of Prophets’ thereby implying high morals and professional expectations of the community. This finding resonates with Lavado (2018) who realized that “a sense of vocation, or the belief in a divine calling to teach, had deep meaning for the participants” (P: ii).

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