

Research article

Junior High School Novice Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Managing Students' Challenging Behaviour in Indonesia

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Abstract. One of the issues commonly faced by teachers is managing students' challenging behaviour. This behaviour might lead to teachers' frustration and helplessness, especially in novice teachers. In addition, the issues that arise from this challenging behaviour, such as bullying towards peers and teachers, increase the necessity for teacher competence in managing these problems. However, previous studies have found that some Indonesian teachers claim to be unprepared when dealing with students' challenging behaviour. Thus, this study analysed the self-efficacy of novice teachers from two Indonesian junior high schools in managing challenging behaviour and the influence of their professional training on their sense of self-efficacy. The study used a narrative inquiry methodology and the participants' accounts of their experiences were collected through semi-structured interviews. Through the participants' narratives, it was found that the teachers in this study were influenced differently by the sources of self-efficacy, and that their self-efficacy differed. These differences could have been affected by the varying levels of professional training that the teachers had received.

Keywords: self-efficacy, student's challenging behaviour, novice teacher, professional training

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1. Introduction

Behaviour challenges such as aggression and bullying in Indonesia education sector are placed as the fourth major issue by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission. There are 3,194 cases of children involved in aggressive behaviour, bullying, and school withdrawal during 2016-2020 period [1]. However, studies found that Indonesian teachers feel unprepared and have a lack of competency in managing challenging students' behaviour [2, 3]. Some Indonesian teachers still implement corporal punishment to deal with challenging behaviour as they believe it to be the correct method to discipline students[4]. To contrast, in other cases, teachers may also become the target

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of student bullying. These are evidence that Indonesia still has serious issues centred on challenging student behaviour, teachers' efficacy, and classroom management.

Self-efficacy has proven to have a high influence on the success of classroom management. [5–7]. In dealing with managing challenging students, teachers' decision is affected by their self-efficacy [5]. It can also affect how teachers adapt to their problems [6]. Thus, this study analysed junior high school novice teacher self-efficacy in managing students challenging behaviour. The investigation of teacher self-efficacy in this study will increase awareness of self-efficacy's importance in managing challenging behaviour. Furthermore, the reflection of teacher self-efficacy might support teachers' preparation in their classroom behaviour management.

In addition, a previous study found that teachers' sense of self-efficacy can be influenced by the preparation that they receive when developing their skills and knowledge [8, 9]. Therefore, this research further examined the influence of a teacher's professional learning on their self-efficacy.

2. Teacher self-efficacy in managing challenging behaviour

Self-efficacy is what drives people to participate in an activity [10], and in completing a task. Bandura [10] states the sense of efficacy refers to the cognitive process of individual belief of one's capabilities in executing some courses of action at a given level of attainment. One's self-perception towards their ability will influence their practical coping mechanisms [11] and can either over-or under-value their actual ability [5]. Thus, teachers' beliefs in their abilities become a great factor that can influence their action in managing students challenging behaviour.

In analysing teacher self-efficacy, it is essential to view the efficacy in their context, as a teacher's personal efficacy will vary if positioned in different contexts and situations [13]. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy will believe that challenging students are teachable with extra effort and appropriate technique [12]. A teacher who feels confident in creating a positive classroom environment will be ready, willing, and more able to support students with challenging behaviour [14]. They will experience more enjoyment through their job, less anxiety, and have a more positive response to teaching [15]. On the contrary, a teacher with low efficacy will feel less confident in their classroom management abilities and can be easily stressed and angered by students [12]. They tend to reduce their efforts and believe that they can do nothing to help and support the students [16, 17]. A study by Alvarez [18] found that teachers who feel stressed out

due to their work will spend 20% of their time in negative interactions. Thus, a teacher with low self-efficacy and mentally pressure will use improper strategies when dealing with students' behaviour and can easily perceive students as challenging [11, 19].

2.1. Sources of self-efficacy

There are four primary sources of efficacy that impact one's efficacy levels. The impact of these sources contributes to the analysis of teachers' perceptions of their competence [15]. The four sources are mastery experience, physiological and emotional state, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion.

2.1.1. Mastery experience

According to Bandura [12], mastery experience is a highly influential source for one's sense of efficacy. He explains that it provides authentic reasons whether a person can do whatever it takes to achieve a successful outcome. Moreover, the successful experience will build powerful beliefs in one's efficacy as difficulties faced through a task can become opportunities to exercise better control of events by learning to change failure into a success [12]. Nevertheless, the extent to which the experience will influence the perceived efficacy depends upon several other factors, such as the preconceptions of one's ability, the difficulty of the task, the effort applied, the aid received, and the situation in which a person is expected to perform [12].

2.1.2. Physiological and emotional states

The second most influential source of efficacy is the physiological and emotional state of the individual [15]. The positive or negative emotional or physical condition of a person will manipulate their self-perception [12, 15]. Bandura further explains that stress and depression will influence people's belief in their capabilities. Thus, those who believe they can control are less likely to experience negative thoughts [10].

Besides the emotional state, a physical response such as fatigue, pain, increased heart rate, and trembling hands can be seen as either a positive reaction (excitement) or a negative reaction (anxiety) depending on the environment [12, 15]. Thus, people can misjudge their physical condition as a sign of deficiency. However, a moderate level of emotional and physiological arousal can improve the result of the task by controlling and concentrating the attention and energy on the performance [15].

2.1.3. Vicarious Experience

Observation of other teachers at school, gossip in the teachers' lounge, or images of an educator created during the teacher education provides information and impressions of the nature of teaching [15]. Through this vicarious experience, teachers learn who is accountable and who can make a difference.

2.1.4. Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion refers to the realistic feedback from others. The extra verbal support from others such as colleagues, principals, parents, and trainers will help teachers face challenging student behaviour [9, 19, 20]. Yet, the input can either strengthen the beliefs of efficacy or diminish them [13]. In facing a difficult challenge, it will be easier to sustain one's efficacy if people within the teacher's circle express their belief in the teacher's capability to manage the task successfully [12].

Successful classroom management can effectively minimise student misconduct and intervene with negative student behaviour when it happens [8, 21]. In classroom behaviour management, teachers are involved in several tasks, such as managing students' activities, creating a productive environment, and employing effective techniques to address students' challenging behaviour [22]. According to the 2013 Indonesian curriculum signed by the Ministry of Culture and Education (MoEC, 2013) [23], classroom management in Indonesia includes the management of the classroom conditions and situations, such as discipline, order, safety and convenience.

2.2. Professional learning on classroom behaviour management in Indonesia

Successful classroom management can effectively minimise student misconduct and intervene with negative student behaviour when it happens [8, 21]. In classroom behaviour management, teachers are involved in several tasks, such as managing students' activities, creating a productive environment, and employing effective techniques to manage students' challenging behaviour [22]. According to the 2013 Indonesian curriculum signed by the Ministry of Culture and Education [23], classroom management in Indonesia includes the management of the classroom conditions and situations, such as discipline, order, safety and convenience.

The professional learning on students' behaviour and management should be given to teachers at the earliest opportunity as the earlier the program, the more influential the teachers are in preventing the challenging behaviour [8]. Indonesia's universities are also obligated to provide academic coursework for their teachers on methods, strategies, knowledge and theory that can be used to establish and support an effective learning process [23].

A professional development program conducted by the institution in the first several years of teaching could develop a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs [25]. Gebbie et al. [19] accentuate that proper teacher training can increase a teacher's self-efficacy, especially in managing challenging behaviour, as it provides the four sources of efficacy. Thus, the training given to teachers should prepare them with different strategies to be applied in actual situations [8, 9, 14], becoming less controlling and provide more autonomy.

3. Data and Method

This study implemented a narrative inquiry as the methodological approach in analysing the data. Narrative inquiry works with detailed stories of the participants [27]. Thus, only two participants were employed in this research to have a comprehensive, detailed analysis of each story. The participants in this study were novice teachers who had only less than three years of teaching experience. One of the participants is a junior high school teacher from a state school, and the other participant is a junior high school teacher from a private school. The participants in this narrative inquiry study are considered "active interpreters" of their lived experience rather than treated as "mere reporters", as their knowledge and experience will be reflected throughout the stories [27].

In the data collection, a semi-structured interview was administered. A list of questions specific to the topic will be used as a guide. In this research, the interview questions were divided into three sections. The first section was focused on analysing the novice teacher's story as a teacher. The second part of the interview was designed based on the theoretical framework of self-efficacy by Bandura [13] which used the sources of self-efficacy as its indicator. In the third section of the interview, the questions were formed to determine the influence of a teacher's professional learning on their sense of efficacy in managing challenging student behaviour.

The transcribed interview data were analysed through a 'restorying' process to capture the complex human affairs and make sense of the story being told. Restorying involves analysing the key elements (such as time, settings, characters, and plot) of

the story to help enlighten why and how things happened [28]. Moreover, the narrative inquiry was rewritten in a chronological sequence. This step provided a causal link among the ideas shared and helped highlight the connection of the events and choices made [27]. Consequently, this narrative study was analysed through a thematic analysis.

Furthermore, the individual experiences that were targeted as the focus of the study lead this research to implement the collaborative features of narrative inquiry to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. The collaboration created a coherence between the findings and the perspectives of the participants' experiences, which was used to ensure the validity of the study [29]. In addition, due to the ethical consideration in this study, the names and all other important information of the participants were concealed, and pseudonyms were used.

4. Discussion

4.1. Beth's story

Becoming a teacher was a second option for Beth. She once dreamt of being a doctor, however, did not get accepted to medical school. Hence, she chose to follow her mother's footsteps and became a teacher. She felt that her mother's decision played a significant role in her decision. Beth has now been working as a junior high school teacher for one year and eight months. She is currently working in one of the public schools in the suburban area of Indonesia. She explained that because of the area of the school, most students are challenging, and she believes that there are more problematic students than students who excel.

Throughout her teaching experience, Beth believes that the most challenging aspect is "engaging students and entering their environment". Although Beth does not consider managing students' behaviour as a challenging task, she still finds challenging students in her class. Beth often discusses her problems with her colleagues or senior teachers who are close to her and have more experience. She feels that other teachers' experiences mainly influence her way of managing students' behaviour along with her own. Consequently, in managing challenging behaviour, she will "evaluate the situation, ask for advice, communicate, seek further advice, and then implement the strategy".

During the interview, Beth told me about one of her students who often committed self-harm and influenced others to do the same. She was anxious and worried for her student and asserted that "I am not going to lose her. I am not going to let her die under my care". This encouraged her to seek help from other teachers, especially the school

counsellor. With the support that she received, Beth felt that the strategy employed had helped the student. However, other than dealing with this particular student, Beth still found it difficult to manage other students in her class. As she claimed, "nowadays, they are getting more out of control. Their attitude is not getting better, and they are becoming more brazen". She thought that perhaps it was because of her personality, as she felt she was being "too friendly, too easy-going and had allowed more freedom, so there is no fear". She said, "Maybe they are not afraid of me". Beth later shares that "when I saw other teachers, they sometimes portrayed themselves as scary teachers, so their students are more disciplined than mine".

Her childhood memories partly influence Beth's views towards challenging students. She looked at her former teacher who often got angry with her classmates and sometimes executed a physical punishment. These memories helped shape her classroom management strategies as she tries her best to avoid methods that remind her of her past teachers. She stated that "I don't like teachers like that, and I don't want to be those teachers now. I will try my best not to speak harsh words, be rude, and demotivate my students". Her interest in mental health issues has also helped her understand the problems that her students face. She believes that school should be a safe space for her students as they might be running away from their problems at home.

4.1.1. Beth's professional learning

In the interview, I asked Beth other questions specifically related to her training on classroom behaviour management. She then talked about a unit that she has at her university. She felt that the course given to her did not have any significant impact on her teaching life. Moreover, she revealed that the school does not provide her with any support. She said

This may sound too harsh, but the school never give any support, the only help I have is the school counsellor and my other colleague. The school has certain expectations on how they want the students to behave, but it seems that they are just washing their hand (Beth's interview)

She then talked about a private institution that came to the school to give teachers a professional development program on giving students hope. She mentioned that this program was designed to help students to have hope and ambition so that they can enjoy learning, as she explained that "sometimes a challenging student does not have ambition, dreams, or purpose to go to school".

4.2. Ana's story

Ana has been teaching junior high school for over a year. Currently, she works as a teacher at a private school in Indonesia. Despite her education degree, Ana worked as a reporter before becoming a teacher due to her deep interest in literature and writing. However, she later found that the role is unsuitable for her. Now she enjoys working as a teacher much more than to work as a reporter. For her, being a teacher means that she can develop not only herself, but she can also instil her interest in literature and writing to her students.

Ana shared a story of a non-compliant student. She realised that the student could succeed in the lesson, but that "he often disregards" what she said. At first, Ana was "annoyed". Yet, she started to care about the student and tried to find the cause of his behaviour. She was concerned that "it is because of the unexciting lesson or was it because of the student felt that the lesson is unimportant for his life?". In dealing with the situation, she tried to "talk to the students one by one" as she was afraid that the student's social environment would be disrupted if other pupils saw her reprimand the problematic student. Other steps that she took in dealing with this issue were working with other teachers and "have a meeting to discuss ways so that this student can learn like the other students". She also read a child psychology book, as she speculated that "he can be challenging because of his psychology". Ana believes that even though she faces some problems in managing her students' behaviour, it will all work out with time.

In the interview, Ana points out that through this experience, she learned the importance of "working in collaboration with another teacher". Thus, she said she preferred to ask or listen to the teacher "who is close to the particular challenging student, the teacher who has similar experiences and the teacher who has more experiences". Moreover, she expressed that "it will motivate me to think that I can do it too", as long as the teacher still has the same teaching value as her. This experience has led Ana to realise that she can learn more about the strategy that she has applied, analyse what is successful, and maybe implement the techniques later in the future.

4.2.1. 4.2.1. Ana's professional learning

Ana also shared the training that she received from her school. The trainings the school provides are three weeks and three months long. Within this time frame, training on managing student behaviours is included. Ana mentioned that "this training helps me a lot, so we all have the same voice in facing different problems". The training that they

receive is mandatory. Ana explained that "all teachers and even the school psychologist will have to participate". The training was focused more on actual practical knowledge. "The teachers were given a case, and these cases were put on display like a video, and we were playing roles to work on resolving the issue together".

Nevertheless, the school's practical training was different from the professional training that she received in university or from the government. Ana mentioned that "I already forgot what was given from my university; most focus only on theory. Moreover, the teacher professional education program provided by the government mostly focused their training on the administrative part".

4.3. The participants' self-efficacy

Bandura [12] claimed that teacher self-efficacy is constructed by the four primary sources of information: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Thus, the four sources that influence the participants' efficacy were analysed in investigating teacher self-efficacy in this study.

This study found that both participants claimed that they often rely on their colleagues and discuss the support they are given in managing challenging behaviour. For instance, in Ana's interview, she stated, "I often share with other teachers, so we discuss a lot". Beth also said "I was influenced a lot by other people's experiences, in how they manage the students, and from their successes and failures in managing students". Hence, this study found that verbal persuasion and vicarious experience were very influential for both participants. These findings are significant with Shoviana [25] study, as she found that teachers with less experience will consider vicarious experiences as valuable. Bandura [12] explains that to be influenced by others, either by feedback or experience, a person will pay attention to the social comparison and how similar the other is to themselves. Looking at the two sources of efficacy, both teachers claimed that they listened to the opinions of close colleagues who hold the same values. However, even though both participants found similar criteria in their colleagues, they were influenced differently.

Beth's experience as a student and her interest in mental health developed her beliefs on the strategy she wanted to use in her classroom. Nevertheless, after watching other teachers' performances in managing student behaviour, Beth felt anxious about her method as she started to doubt her ability and personality. According to Bandura [12], if one does not believe in their skill, observing the experiences of others can lower the level of efficacy as it might discourage their motivation. On the other hand, if they

believe in themselves and assume that they can improve, their efficacy will not be hindered. Thus, this is equivalent to how Ana was influenced by the verbal persuasion and experience of others as she found herself become much more "motivated". She has been able to push and support herself to work better. This is synonymous with Tschannen-Moran et al. [15], who elucidate that when beginner teachers compare themselves to others, it can lead them to believe that they have the same competencies to succeed.

Alongside verbal persuasion and vicarious experience, mastery of experience holds an essential role in impacting teachers' self-efficacy. However, a teacher's mastery experience might not be influential if the teacher perceives the task as easy or if they gain a notable external assistance [13]. This relates to the findings in the interview as both participants claimed that they do not consider managing challenging behaviour to be the most difficult task in teaching. In addition, they have considerable support from their colleagues. Therefore, mastery experience in this study might not have a notable influence on the participants.

However, if considering the preconceptions of the participants' abilities, Ana and Beth's feeling towards their experiences can influence their self-efficacy. If one feels that their experiences are inconsistent with their ability, the memory of success tends to be forgotten and reconstructed [13]. This is consistent with the findings, as even though Beth has a successful experience in managing the students, she still thought she had failed in controlling the students. Conversely, Ana who also faces difficulty in managing the students, was much more motivated. Ana's opinion was that if she failed, it was due to lack of preparation, not lack of ability. Therefore, even though both participants believed that they learn a lot through their experiences, their self-efficacy was influenced differently.

The last sources of efficacy are the psychological and emotional state of the participants. Bandura [12] explains that a stressed reaction can be read as a sign of weakness and generate more stress. Moreover, this can lead to a feeling of inefficacy [12]. Ana and Beth's sense of worry and anxiousness, or sometimes anger towards students' behaviour, does not create a significant disturbance. They do not see it as a sign of deficiency. Therefore, the state of their emotions and psychology does not negatively influence their efficacy. Likewise, in these sources of self-efficacy, it is essential to look at the individual interpretation of their emotion and physical state [12]. For instance, Ana and Beth see their emotion as a form of care as they put effort to seek support and aid for their students. Consequently, this source influenced their efficacy positively.

From those four sources of efficacy, it can be seen that both participants have slightly different levels of efficacy. Both portrayed their concern towards the students by asking for support from another colleague. They also share that they genuinely care about their students and that they want to help them. Therefore, both participants have been able to respond to the students positively. According to Tschanen-Moran and McMaster [13] teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy will have a more positive response and find more enjoyment in teaching. Ana asserted that she wanted to motivate her student and showed him that he could do better. According to Tschannen-Moran et al. [15], these beliefs are an example of teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy as those teachers will believe that they can control the students or influence the students' motivation and achievement. In addition, Murshidi et al. [16] claim that beginner teachers with high efficacy would approach their problems as challenges instead of threats. Therefore, they will not focus on the difficulties and undermine their skills [16].

However, Beth's self-efficacy might be lower as she criticises her personality and methods in approaching the students. She further describes that she felt somewhat overwhelmed by the students' behaviour. In this case, Barker et al. [5] accentuate that teachers who have lower efficacy often feel discouraged by students' behaviour. Barker et al. further reveal that the lack of belief in one's own ability might lead teachers to think that control is needed. It might even cause teachers to believe that disciplinary actions such as punishment must be taken. In the study, Beth does not give any punishment to her students. However, she did consider that maybe she 'failed' because she does not instil fear in order to discipline and control her students. Consequently, the different levels of efficacy experienced by the participants in this study might also be influenced by the professional training they received.

4.4. Teachers' professional learning

The participants in this study both have an education degree where they were prepared to become a teacher. However, both participants state that they do not recall what was being taught at the university. As described by Bandura [12], a modelled event cannot have a big impact if the person does not remember it. Thus, in this study, both participants claimed that the professional learning they have in university does not notably influence them, especially when managing students. Baker [14] explained that the teachers' dissatisfaction with the program might cause them to be unaffected.

Upon investigation of the professional training that the participants received from the institution, it is apparent that the results are different: Ana received specific training on

managing challenging behaviour and Beth did not. Ana often talked about the training that she had in the interview. She said that practical training had given her immense help and support. Consequently, this boosted her confidence in managing students. These findings conform to Alvarez [18] who claimed that teachers' stress levels decrease with additional training. In addition, Ana, Ross and Bruce [29] discovered that a case study scenario can improve teachers' self-efficacy. The visualisation of oneself implementing strategies could strengthen teachers' beliefs in their abilities [12]. Hence, Bandura [12] accentuates that the modelling training along with cognitive rehearsal can build a more substantial efficacy. Further to increasing teachers' self-efficacy, the training given could also become a new source of mastery experience and symbolic modelling to support the teachers' vicarious experience [15, 25, 29].

To contrast, Beth claimed that the school does not provide her with any training aside from the private company's. Thus, how the institution's professional training affects Beth's efficacy cannot be investigated. However, Beth's perspectives on her students' behaviour and her thought of embedding fear into her students might be influenced by the lack of training on strategies specifically for managing challenging student behaviour. It is also stated in Paramita et al. [4], where cases were discovered in which teachers believed that physical punishment was acceptable to teach and discipline students. In compliance with Paramita et al. [4], Alvarez [18] found that with training, teachers will propose more positive and active interventions as they will be less stressed out. Consequently, training and preparation can enhance teacher's self-efficacy [19].

5. Conclusion

The four sources of efficacy regarding the participants in this study, show that it is clear that both of the participants were more influenced by vicarious experience and verbal persuasion rather than mastery of experiences. This is caused by their limited experience as a novice teacher. Moreover, throughout the analysis, it can be found that despite similar sources of efficacy, teachers' self-efficacy can be influenced differently as demonstrated by both participants possessing slightly different levels of efficacy. It can be seen from the findings that Ana might have a higher sense of efficacy compared to Beth. Evidence for this comes from the ways the participants were influenced by the sources of efficacy and how they portrayed their own competencies in managing challenging behaviour. Ana's assurance in her methods of managing students, consideration of her abilities, and her motivation showed that she has a high efficacy in managing challenging students. However, even though Beth felt motivated to support

her students positively, her uncertainty of her own methods and her own personality demonstrate her low levels of efficacy.

The findings also show that teacher self-efficacy might also be affected by the training that the teachers receive. Nevertheless, the academic course that they received in university has not been able to affect their self-efficacy in managing students' behaviour. The reason for this requires further research. The training administered by Ana's institution provided real practice and was proven to have influenced Ana's self-efficacy. Therefore, in providing training for teachers, practical training with real-life scenarios could be given. In addition, the training that is administered should also accommodate and strengthen teachers' sources of efficacy.

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