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SUPPORT ON TEACHING EFFICACY OF LECTURERS IN
CHINESE UNIVERSITIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW**Huimin Feng¹, Soon Singh Bikar Singh^{2*}, Xing Ming³¹ Faculty of Education and Sports Studies, University Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia
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This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

As China's higher education enters the stage of popularization, the demand for higher-quality talent training is increasing. Teaching efficacy, a key measure of education quality, is essential for lecturers to maximize their teaching potential. Enhancing university lecturers' teaching efficacy is critical to ensuring educational quality. This study explores the mechanisms influencing teaching efficacy among university lecturers in China, drawing on Perceived Organizational Support and Self-Efficacy theories. Through a comprehensive literature review and theoretical analysis, perceived organizational support is categorized into three key external factors: organization support, leadership support, and colleague support. The findings reveal that high-quality organizational support significantly enhances lecturers' teaching efficacy while positively impacting their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and mental well-being. The study underscores the need for educational administrators to optimize policies, provide emotional support, and allocate resources effectively to strengthen teaching efficacy. This research offers theoretical insights and practical guidance for improving faculty management and education quality in higher education institutions.

Keywords:

Teaching Efficacy, Organization Support, Leadership Support, Colleague Support

Introduction

Teaching efficacy, defined as a teacher's subjective judgment about their ability to influence student outcomes, is a key factor in shaping their teaching behavior, emotional engagement, and professional growth. The concept is grounded in Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, which emphasizes the significant impact of an individual's belief in their capabilities on their actions. In the context of higher education, teaching efficacy influences not only lecturers' motivation and job satisfaction but also the quality of their teaching, their level of commitment to their profession, and the overall educational experience they provide to students.

As China's higher education system continues to expand and evolve, universities face increasing demands for enhanced educational quality, especially in the context of large-scale student populations and rapid institutional growth (Mok, K. H., & Jiang, J.2016). University lecturers are central to fulfilling these demands, as their teaching efficacy directly impacts student learning and the quality of talent development. Despite this, various challenges such as mounting teaching and research responsibilities, performance evaluation pressures, and unequal resource distribution hinder the optimal expression of lecturers' teaching efficacy.

Recognizing the importance of addressing these challenges, the Chinese government and educational institutions have increasingly emphasized the need for improved lecturer support systems. Policies aimed at enhancing organization, leadership, and colleague support for lecturers have become central to fostering a more conducive environment for teaching excellence. Understanding how these external factors—such as organization, leadership, and colleague support—affect lecturers' sense of efficacy is crucial for formulating effective educational policies and improving overall teaching quality.

This research seeks to analyze the influence of perceived organizational support on teaching efficacy among Chinese university lecturers. By reviewing existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the study explores how external support factors contribute to lecturers' teaching efficacy, offering insights for policy-making and practical recommendations for educational management. Through these efforts, the research aims to contribute to enhancing both lecturer satisfaction and educational outcomes in China's higher education institutions.

Theoretical Basis And Conceptual Framework

This study is carried out under the guidance of organizational support theory and self-efficacy theory.

Organizational Support Theory

Organizational Support Theory was introduced by Eisenberger et al. (1986), focusing on employees' general perception of the organization's concern for their well-being and recognition of their contributions. According to this theory, when employees perceive support from their organization, they receive a strong signal that their efforts and contributions are acknowledged, and the organization is willing to reward their efforts (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In the context of higher education, lecturers are key members of the university organizational system. Their performance not only directly impacts the smooth execution of classroom teaching but also affects students' learning outcomes and the overall quality of higher education (Ma, 2023). Thus, providing high-quality organizational care to lecturers is of paramount importance.

Tang (2018) and Zhou (2020) define organizational support as the recognition and appreciation that lecturers feel from their university administrators for their contributions to work, as well as the administrators' concern for their well-being. This includes support provided by university leaders, relevant policies and systems, care for lecturers' welfare, and acknowledgment of their professional value. From the perspective of job performance, Cao (2018) further defines organizational support as a series of actions, such as effective policy-making, fostering a sense of leadership support, and promoting mutual care and assistance among colleagues. These actions reflect the institution's recognition of lecturers' contributions and focus on their well-being. Such perceived support can enhance lecturers' work motivation, strengthen their organizational commitment, and improve teaching performance, thereby achieving institutional objectives.

Regarding the structural dimensions of perceived organizational support, scholars have differing views. Eisenberger emphasizes the concept of global perception from a psychological perspective, focusing on emotional support as a general subjective experience. McMillin (1997) proposed that comprehensive organizational support should include two dimensions: emotional support and instrumental support, which complement each other to produce positive effects. Cheng (2011) categorized organizational support into three dimensions based on sources of support: organization support, leadership support, and colleague support. Puah et al. (2016) further validated this categorization, identifying organization support, supervisor support, and coworker support as three key components of perceived organizational support. They also highlighted that supervisor support exerts the strongest influence on employees' compliance with safety and health behaviors.

Building on these multidimensional studies of organizational support, this research adopts a framework based on sources of support. Organizational support is categorized into three major external factors: organization support, leadership support, and colleague support. This classification aligns with existing studies and provides a theoretical basis for the present literature review, aiming to further explore the mechanisms and influence of these external support factors on university lecturers' teaching efficacy. Cross-Border Internationalization

Cross-border internationalization is an essential component of higher education internationalization and refers to various forms of educational and academic activities that transcend national borders. For faculty members, participation in cross-border internationalization is primarily manifested through multinational academic exchanges, international research collaborations, overseas study visits, and involvement in international programs (Altbach & Knight, 2007). These activities not only provide faculty with opportunities to interact with the global academic community but also facilitate the transnational dissemination and exchange of knowledge, skills, and culture.

Self-efficacy Theory

The Theory of Self-Efficacy, introduced by American psychologist and founder of Social Learning Theory, Bandura, in 1977, first proposed the concept of "self-efficacy." Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "an individual's belief in their ability to organize, execute, and complete specific tasks in a given context to achieve certain goals." As a critical psychological mechanism, self-efficacy is considered a significant influencing factor for individual behavior and a key predictive variable. Betz and Hackett (1986) found that individuals who lack self-efficacy in certain aspects of their career field may experience limitations in career choices,

satisfaction, planning efforts, and achievement realization. Even when displaying relevant behaviors, such individuals are less likely to persist in the face of challenges or setbacks. Graham (1996) further confirmed that self-efficacy is a critical predictor of individual behavioral outcomes. Its core lies in individuals' belief in their abilities rather than the actual level of objective ability. Therefore, enhancing efficacy expectations related to careers—namely, career self-efficacy—is of great importance.

Teaching efficacy, an application of Bandura's self-efficacy theory within education, reflects a teacher's self-assessment of their ability to effectively teach and influence student outcomes. This belief plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' instructional behaviors, job satisfaction, commitment to their profession, and overall well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). The literature largely explores the link between teaching efficacy and both teaching practices and student success. In Chinese higher education, a lecturer's sense of efficacy is influenced by individual attributes as well as the support they receive from their institution (Zhang, 2017). Research indicates that when lecturers perceive substantial institutional support in areas such as resource allocation, policies, and emotional care, their sense of teaching efficacy and job satisfaction are significantly boosted (Xiong, 2023). Lecturers with a strong sense of teaching efficacy are often more enthusiastic about their work, delivering higher quality education and achieving better outcomes for students. This underscores the importance of creating an environment that nurtures and sustains teachers' belief in their own teaching capabilities.

Based on the aforementioned theories and research findings, this study constructs the following basic conceptual framework (as illustrated in Figure 1).

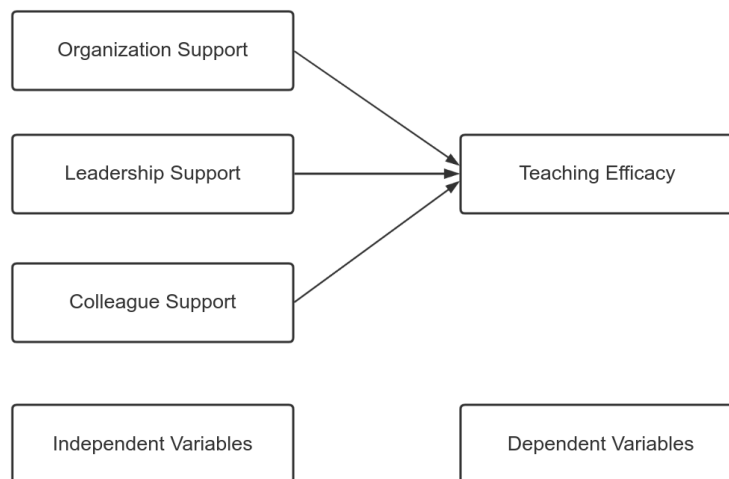


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Significance

Theoretical Significance

Research on university lecturers' teaching efficacy has offered valuable insights into the relationship between teaching behaviors and the overall quality of education. However, compared to Western countries, the research on teaching efficacy among Chinese university lecturers is still in its early stages, particularly when it comes to understanding how external support factors influence teaching efficacy. Through a comprehensive review of relevant

literature, this study develops a conceptual framework centered around organization support, leadership support, and colleague support. It also examines the current state of research, the mechanisms through which these support factors operate, and their empirical findings. This approach contributes to enhancing the theoretical framework in the field of teaching efficacy research, particularly in the context of Chinese higher education.

Practical Significance

Enhancing the teaching efficacy of university lecturers not only helps to optimize lecturers' career development, but also significantly improves the quality of education and teaching in universities. This study provides a practical reference for university administrators to optimize the support system and improve the incentive mechanism. By identifying and improving key factors such as organization support, leadership support and colleague support, lecturers' burnout can be effectively alleviated and their confidence and motivation in teaching can be enhanced. In addition, the findings of the study also provide educational policy makers with targeted recommendations for improvement, which will promote the optimization of the teaching support environment in higher education, and thus improve the quality of talent cultivation.

Methodology

This study adopts a content analysis approach to systematically review the literature on perceived organizational support and teaching efficacy. Relevant articles were selected from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and CNKI, using keywords including teaching efficacy, organization support, leadership support and colleague support. To refine the search process, Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR, NOT) were utilized to exclude irrelevant studies and focus on literature directly addressing the research question (Krippendorff, 2018).

To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established. The inclusion criteria required studies to be peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, or book chapters published in reputable academic sources. Additionally, only studies written in English or Chinese were considered to provide a broader perspective. The research needed to specifically focus on perceived organizational support and teaching efficacy within higher education contexts, particularly among university lecturers. To incorporate the most recent findings, only articles published between 2010 and 2025 were included. Conversely, studies focusing on K-12 education or non-academic professions were excluded, as were papers that lacked empirical evidence or theoretical discussions on the relationship between organizational support and teaching efficacy. Duplicate records and studies with insufficient methodological details were also removed from the final selection (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This systematic approach ensures a rigorous and comprehensive synthesis of the literature, facilitating a deeper understanding of the impact of perceived organizational support on teaching efficacy in higher education.

Findings and Analysis

Based on the literature reviewed, three main themes emerge regarding the influence of perceived organizational support on teaching efficacy: organization support, leadership support, and colleague support. The following section discusses these themes in detail.

Influence of organization support on teaching efficacy of lecturers

Organization support refers to lecturers' subjective perception of the emotional, institutional and material support of the university. Existing research shows that university lecturers' perception of organization support directly affects their teaching efficacy to a certain extent, and significantly improves their teaching involvement and teaching efficacy by improving their working environment, improving their psychological state and stimulating their teaching motivation.

In terms of the direct effect of organization support on perceptions of teaching efficacy, Guo et al. (2022) found through a questionnaire survey of 8,044 lecturers from 93 undergraduate universities in China that lecturers' perceptions of support in the teaching environment significantly affected their perceptions of teaching efficacy. When lecturers perceived more support such as management services, colleague communication, and student feedback, they had more confidence in their teaching ability, had a better teaching experience, and were willing to invest more time and energy in teaching activities. Zheng et al. (2024) further investigated the effects of work resources provided by organizations on lecturers' emotions and teaching efficacy. Through a survey of 316 Chinese public university lecturers, they found that work resources (e.g., teaching space, technical support, etc.) were positively related to lecturers' emotions, which indirectly enhanced teaching efficacy. Therefore, the study suggests that universities can improve teaching efficacy by optimizing resource allocation and improving lecturers' emotional state.

In terms of the specific forms and mechanisms of organization support, Zhang (2022) combined theoretical and practical analyses and pointed out that the specific forms of organization support in universities include the supply of teaching resources, lecturer development training and teaching evaluation feedback. When lecturers feel fully supported by the university, they will take the initiative to update their knowledge reserves and enhance their teaching input, which in turn will enhance their sense of teaching efficacy. This suggests that systematic and structured support has a more profound effect on lecturers' sense of teaching efficacy. Lin (2022) analyzed the role of university organization environment on lecturer development through a questionnaire survey of university lecturers in several provinces and cities in China. It was found that organization support not only directly affects the developmental motivation of university lecturers, but also has an indirect effect by satisfying lecturers' basic psychological needs. This is consistent with the findings of Bakker et al. (2004) that the provision of adequate developmental resources and supportive conditions helps lecturers to positively evaluate the organization and enhance their sense of teaching efficacy. Through a survey of 379 Chinese university faculty members, Zheng et al. (2018) found that technical support, as an important component of organization support, significantly affects faculty members' acceptance and use of learning management systems (LMS) in online teaching. The study pointed out that universities should create a supportive environment through resource allocation and management of workload so as to reduce lecturers' burden anxiety and enhance their teaching motivation and sense of efficacy.

In terms of the current status and impact of perceived organization support among university lecturers, some studies have shown that although the role of organization support in universities in enhancing lecturers' sense of teaching efficacy has been widely recognized, there is a general difference in the level of perceived organization support among lecturers. Dong (2019) took 253 lecturers from some full-time universities in Zhejiang Province as the research subjects

and found that university lecturers' teaching efficacy was overall low, perceived organization support was only at a moderate level, and there was a general problem of low achievement and mild burnout. The study emphasized that enhancing the sense of organization support is an important breakthrough in improving lecturers' teaching efficacy. At the same time, some researchers have also pointed out that lecturers' sense of teaching efficacy may be negatively affected in contexts of insufficient organization support. Yin et al. (2020) found that insufficient organization support and increased teaching stress weakened lecturers' sense of teaching efficacy through a survey of 2,758 lecturers at 25 higher education institutions in China. In addition, new teaching challenges and limited resource allocation exacerbated this phenomenon. The study suggests that teaching stress can be effectively alleviated by improving lecturers' job support and livelihood benefits, thereby enhancing teaching efficacy.

Aiming at a special group, Guo et al. (2024) used a mixed research method combining interviews and questionnaires to study young returnee lecturers imported from a university in Zhejiang. They found that the provision of material resource support (e.g., experimental equipment, research funding) to meet the competence needs of the returnee lecturers was the key to guaranteeing their commitment to teaching and research and to resisting the risks of academic innovation. This study suggests that organization support needs to be tailored to the specific needs of lecturers and provide precise support strategies to better promote teaching efficacy.

In conclusion, organization support significantly enhances the teaching efficacy of university lecturers through emotional, institutional and material support, which improves psychological status and enhances teaching competence and work engagement. Although existing studies have verified its positive effects, there are still deficiencies in the refinement of support forms, specific group needs and dynamic influence mechanisms. In the future, intervention strategies should be designed with practical contexts in mind to explore in depth how organization support can satisfy lecturers' psychological needs and optimize their emotional states, thereby enhancing teaching quality and sense of efficacy in general.

Influence Of Leadership Support On Teaching Efficacy Of Lecturers

Leadership support refers to the extent to which employees perceive that their leaders value their contributions and care about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). In the university setting, leadership support is primarily reflected in the promotion of lecturers' teaching efficacy by setting goals, providing feedback, and encouraging innovation. Research has shown that leadership support plays an important and direct role in the enhancement of lecturers' teaching efficacy in universities and serves as a key mediating variable in the relationship between organizational support and teaching efficacy (Liu, & Yu, 2009).

Some researchers have examined the impact of leadership support on university lecturers' sense of teaching efficacy from different dimensions. Liu et al.'s (2021) study showed that when leaders provide lecturers with recognition, praise, and care, they can help university lecturers obtain more psychological support, which helps university lecturers gain a higher sense of psychological security and professional value, and makes them have a higher positive evaluation of their role in the organization. This kind of support not only relieves university lecturers' emotional burden due to teaching stress, but also enhances their motivation and confidence in teaching, thus significantly increasing their sense of teaching efficacy. Material support, on the other hand, includes specific measures such as leaders providing lecturers with

resources, power, practical help, and focusing on lecturers' professional development (Jiang & Li, 2020). It was found that when university leaders helped lecturers cope with their work challenges by providing superior and fair allocation of resources, lecturers were able to complete their teaching tasks more efficiently and cope with work pressure better. This not only enhanced lecturers' work ability, but also their professional well-being and commitment to teaching. On the contrary, if lecturers perceive that their leaders allocate resources unfairly or neglect their personal needs, they may develop negative attitudes towards their leaders and organizations, which may in turn weaken their sense of teaching efficacy (Xiong, 2023).

Research has also shown that leadership support not only enhances lecturers' teaching efficacy through direct assistance but also indirectly influences it by affecting their psychological state. Tian and Huang (2014) highlighted that when lecturers perceive recognition from leadership regarding their importance and work performance, their sense of belonging to the organization and self-efficacy is strengthened. Conversely, insufficient leadership support may lead to a sense of low significance within the organization, thereby reducing lecturers' willingness to invest in teaching and diminishing their teaching efficacy.

In recent years, distributed leadership has garnered increasing attention in research. By empowering lecturers and sharing leadership responsibilities, distributed leadership has been found to significantly enhance lecturers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Liu, Y. et al, 2021). An empirical study conducted by Liu and Wang (2024) on 2,229 lecturers in Shanghai revealed that when distributed leadership provides abundant resource support and demonstrates care and respect for lecturers, it fosters a positive social exchange relationship between leaders and lecturers. This exchange relationship enables lecturers to feel that their efforts are adequately, or even exceptionally, rewarded, motivating them to respond with a positive attitude and behaviors toward teaching. This mechanism not only improves classroom teaching quality but also strengthens lecturers' trust in and commitment to their institutions, thereby enhancing their teaching efficacy.

In conclusion, leadership support enhances teachers' teaching efficacy both directly and indirectly through emotional care and resource empowerment while simultaneously boosting teaching motivation and job satisfaction. However, existing research still exhibits limitations in the refinement of support forms and cross-cultural adaptability. Future studies should consider the specific contexts of higher education institutions and teacher characteristics to optimize leadership support strategies, providing both theoretical and practical guidance for improving teaching efficacy.

Influence Of Colleague Support On Teaching Efficacy Of Lecturers

Beyond organization and leadership support, colleague support has emerged as a critical factor influencing higher education lecturers' teaching efficacy. Particularly when lecturers lack sufficient organization or leadership support, positive relationships with colleagues can enhance their sense of belonging and significantly improve their teaching efficacy. Ismayilova and Klassen (2019) observed that when lecturers receive emotional support and share experiences with colleagues, their professional well-being increases markedly, motivating them to invest more in their teaching efforts. In the context of Chinese universities, colleague support has proven particularly valuable in enhancing lecturers' teaching capabilities and job satisfaction (Fang, 2011). Research also indicates that a collaborative team environment fosters job satisfaction through shared experiences and emotional interactions, further promoting

teaching efficacy (Zheng, 2022). Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jiao (2020) found that collaborative support from colleagues helped lecturers alleviate some of the stress associated with online teaching, playing a crucial role in maintaining their teaching efficacy under challenging circumstances.

Scholars have also explored the impact of colleague support on teaching efficacy from different dimensions. Regarding emotional support, Ismayilova and Klassen (2019) found that when lecturers received positive feedback from colleagues, it satisfied their need for belonging, fostering positive emotions, alleviating professional stress, and enhancing teaching efficacy. Emotional support also contributes to greater psychological resilience, enabling lecturers to better adapt to challenges in teaching (Zheng, 2022). In terms of material support, Xia highlighted that collaboration in teaching tasks, resource sharing, and assistance during emergencies are key aspects. When lecturers encounter difficulties or require urgent support in their teaching activities, solidarity and cooperation among colleagues significantly boost work efficiency and positively influence teaching efficacy (Xia, 2016). Wang (2020), in a study of 213 lecturers in Anqing, further emphasized the critical role of colleague collaboration in accomplishing complex teaching tasks, such as delivering in-home instruction.

In addition, the exchange of work experience among colleagues is also important for the improvement of teaching ability. Wu's (2022) survey showed that young lecturers can not only effectively solve practical problems at work through teaching discussions and exchanges with colleagues, but also stimulate work motivation and increase the willingness to commit to teaching. However, Wu's study also found that most young lecturers had less frequent teaching exchanges with their colleagues, suggesting the need to further strengthen the interaction and cooperation among university lecturers.

In summary, colleague support significantly enhances university lecturers' teaching efficacy through emotional support and resource sharing, especially when organization or leadership support is insufficient. Its mechanisms of action include enhancing sense of belonging, improving mood, and promoting teamwork. However, the low frequency of interaction among university lecturers, especially the insufficient communication opportunities for young lecturers, limits the effect of collegial support. In the future, lecturer collaboration mechanisms should be optimized to explore the effects of colleague support in different contexts, which will provide a reference for improving the lecturer support system.

Concluding Comments

This study conducts a comprehensive literature review on teaching efficacy, organization support, leadership support, colleague support, and Chinese higher education lecturers. Guided by a conceptual framework, relevant research was systematically collected and analyzed from databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Google Scholar, Scopus and others. Existing studies demonstrate that organization, leadership, and colleague support are critical external factors in enhancing the teaching efficacy of higher education faculty. Research in this domain has made significant progress, offering theoretical insights and empirical references for understanding the factors influencing teaching efficacy. However, compared to studies on teaching efficacy in primary and secondary school teachers, the exploration of higher education lecturers—particularly those in diverse types of institutions—remains underdeveloped. Moreover, most existing research focuses on faculty in public universities, with limited attention to private universities or other levels of higher education.

Additionally, the predominant reliance on quantitative research methods has constrained a comprehensive understanding of the complex mechanisms through which external support influences teaching efficacy, as studies rarely integrate qualitative and mixed-method approaches.

Based on these observations, future research can advance this field in several directions. First, future studies should refine their scope to include diverse types, levels, and regions of higher education institutions, such as private universities and vocational colleges, to uncover the varied characteristics of teaching efficacy among faculty. Second, there is a need to deepen the research content by investigating the multidimensional structure of teaching efficacy and its influencing factors. This includes examining specific mechanisms of emotional, instrumental, and institutional support to uncover their internal dynamics. Third, adopting more diverse methodologies—such as increasing the use of qualitative and mixed-method approaches—can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the processes underlying the formation and variation of teaching efficacy across macro, micro, individual, and group levels.

These efforts will contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements by offering a scientific basis for designing and evaluating supportive interventions. They will also aid in exploring strategies for improving institutional management, optimizing leadership behaviors, and fostering effective team collaboration. Such developments not only enhance the teaching efficacy of higher education faculty but also drive the continuous improvement and overall development of higher education quality, supporting innovation and excellence within the sector.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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