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The impact of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy

Zhen Ying*[1,2,4], doctoral candidate, Faculty of Education,
lecturer of College of Education Science, tutor of master students
Zhao Min[2,5], graduate student, Elementary Education, College of Education Science
Chen Xi[3,6], lecturer, School of Marxism
Zheng TingTing[2,7], graduate student, Elementary Education, College of Education Science
[1]*Northeast Normal University, Changchun (China)*
[2]*Mudanjiang Normal University, Mudanjiang (China)*
[3]*Mudanjiang Medical University, Mudanjiang (China)*

***E-mail:** 2018023@mdjnu.edu.cn

[4]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1484-8139
[5]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8250-2918
[6]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9800-6364
[7]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2101-0832

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Abstract: In order to investigate the impact of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy, how rural school support affects teachers' sense of efficacy, and whether there is a significant difference in the impact of different school support situations on teachers' sense of efficacy, a study was conducted in rural schools in a region of Heilongjiang Province. The study found that: (1) there is a significant positive correlation between teacher efficacy and rural school support. (2) Rural school support and its elements have a significant independent effect on teachers' sense of efficacy. (3) Different levels of rural school support have different impacts on teachers' sense of efficacy, and high levels of school support have a greater impact on teachers' sense of efficacy. In order to improve rural teachers' sense of efficacy, rural schools need to optimize the structure of the school support system and strengthen the construction of the teacher team; secondly, they need to improve the institutional support to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy; and thirdly, they need to pay attention to the role of professional support on teachers' sense of efficacy. Based on this, the improvement of education quality and equity can be promoted through the enhancement of teachers' sense of efficacy.

Keywords: teachers' sense of efficacy; school support; rural schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The reasons for the study

The Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Construction in the New Era[1] clearly state that the status and treatment of teachers should be continuously improved, so as to truly make teaching an enviable profession. In his speech at the National Education Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that "as the conditions for running schools continue to improve, education investment should be tilted more toward teachers, and the treatment of teachers should be continuously improved, so that the majority of teachers can teach with peace of mind and enthusiasm." The stronger the education support the more it can enhance teachers' sense of efficacy. From this, it can be seen that improving teachers' sense of efficacy has become an important task in the reform of teacher team building in the new era. However, in the face of current development requirements, and despite the continuous advancement of current educational policies and practices, the construction of the teaching force still faces challenges in many aspects, especially the enhancement of teachers' sense of efficacy. This is not only related to teachers' personal development and professional satisfaction, but also to the overall improvement of education quality and the realization of educational equity.

[1] *Central Committee and the State Council of the Communist Party of China. Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Construction in the New Era (January 20, 2018). The State Council the People's Republic of China. URL: http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2018-01/31/content_5262659.htm.*

Rural education plays a pivotal role in China's education system, and its level of development has a direct bearing on the overall balance of the country's education and the prospects for the growth of children in rural areas. However, the reality is that due to the accumulated historical problems, the uneven economic development and the complexity of the social structure, rural schools have encountered many difficulties in obtaining educational resources, obtaining support from schools, and building a high-quality teaching team. In particular, teachers' sense of efficacy, a seemingly abstract but critical indicator, is becoming a bottleneck that hinders the improvement of the quality of rural education. Teachers' sense of efficacy not only affects their teaching motivation and innovative spirit, but also determines, to a certain extent, whether rural education can realize a qualitative leap. Therefore, how to effectively enhance the sense of efficacy of rural teachers has become a key issue in promoting the development of rural education and realizing educational equity. This requires not only support at the policy level, but also extensive attention and active participation from all sectors of the society, so as to jointly inject new vitality and hope into rural education.

It has been found that 17.8 % and 20.3 % of in-service teachers in rural areas have a willingness to change schools and a willingness to withdraw from the teaching profession [1], while the willingness of young teachers to move is even stronger [2]. This suggests that the current state of teacher efficacy in China is not satisfactory. This raises a critical question: does rural school support promote a positive sense of teacher efficacy? More importantly, is there a significant difference in the influence of different school support situations on teachers' sense of efficacy? Therefore, based on the above questions, this study uses empirical analysis as a means to try to reveal the relationship between school support and teacher efficacy, and to explore the differences in the influence of different levels of support on teachers' sense of efficacy. We hope to find out the key factors affecting teachers' sense of efficacy and put forward practical suggestions to help improve teachers' overall sense of efficacy, thus promoting the improvement of education quality and the realization of education equity.

Theoretical analysis and research hypotheses

1. Social support theory

In the process of promoting the growth of teachers in rural schools, a key element is to create a harmonious and stable educational environment. Although there is still a lack of systematic theoretical discussion on "school support" in the academic world, the theoretical framework of "social support" is quite mature and widely recognized. In view of this, this study draws on the richness of social support theory as a basis for constructing a theory of school support that enhances teachers' sense of efficacy. By introducing the perspective of social support theory into the school support system, this paper aims to explore how to provide teachers with more effective help and support at the school level, so as to promote teachers' professional development and enhance their sense of teaching efficacy.

The concept of social support was first introduced and explained in detail in the literature of the discipline of psychiatry in the 1970s[2]. Subsequently, it was gradually embraced and used by other disciplines such as education and psychology. Then the concept of social support has been defined in past studies mainly in terms of social relations, the nature of social behavior, and the role of social resources [3]. From the perspective of social relations, social support a kind of exchange behavior based on interpersonal interaction, reflecting the mutual support relationship between people; from the perspective of the nature of social behavior, it is a kind of positive force to promote the development of the individual in the social environment; from the dimension of social resources, the concept of social support should contain three key elements: the source of support, specific behavioral behaviors or activities, and the individual's subjective evaluation of support. It is obvious that scholars have analyzed and discussed the theory of social support in depth from multiple perspectives and levels. Social support is a multidimensional system consisting of support providers, support recipients, and mediating factors. Among them, the support provided by the support provider to the service recipients is divided into two types: one is the obvious and observable objective support; the other is the support based on emotional experience and subjective feelings [4]. As a subsystem of society, schools provide critical support resources for teachers' growth, and some researchers have identified a "two-level, five-dimensional" analytical framework: first, objective support, including institutional support, conditional support, activity support, and cultural support; and second, subjective support, which mainly refers to emotional support. Based on this, this study locates four dimensions of school support: emotional support, material support, institutional support and professional support.

School support is essential to the personal growth of students and teachers. By creating a positive school climate and implementing effective management practices, schools are able to provide an environment full of opportunities and challenges for teachers and students, thereby promoting their development and progress. School support is the care and assistance given by the school to teachers in their professional endeavors, and the creation of a working atmosphere that makes teachers feel friendly, cooperative, and encouraging, based on which an environment conducive to teacher learning is formed [5]. On the basis of an employment relationship between the school and the teacher, the systems and activities developed by the school to promote the teacher's professional growth cover a wide range of support that emphasizes the importance of the teacher's personal development, respect for the teacher's opinions, and attention to the teacher's work experience, which is not only

[2] *Bandura A. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological review, 1977, vol. 84, no. 2, pp. 191–215. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.*

reflected in the managerial level, but may also involve other broader areas. School support aims to promote teachers' professional growth, improve teaching quality and enhance job satisfaction. In this paper, school support mainly refers to emotional support, material support, institutional support and professional support. Emotional support refers to the support and assistance provided by schools to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy. Schools provide teachers with full spiritual and emotional support to help them relieve work pressure and enhance their sense of efficacy; material support refers to the comprehensive support provided by schools to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy to meet the needs of teachers' teaching, research, and personal development in order to promote the development of their sense of efficacy; and institutional support refers to the support provided by schools to promote the development of their sense of efficacy; and institutional support refers to the support provided by schools to promote the development of teachers' sense of efficacy. School institutional support refers to a series of scientific and systematic institutional guidelines established by the school to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy. Good institutional support can create a stable and orderly working environment for teachers, and has a positive orientation and guiding effect on teachers. School professional support refers to a series of targeted training programs that enable teachers to continuously refresh their professional knowledge and enhance their teaching abilities, thereby promoting their professional growth and professional improvement.

2. Self-efficacy theory

In 1977, the famous American psychologist A. Bandura has identified self-efficacy as a social cognitive theory[3]. It was not until 20 years later that A. Bandura provided a comprehensive and systematic treatment of self-efficacy. According to A. Bandura, self-efficacy is not a character trait that exists universally in everyone, but rather a sense of competence generated by the mutual intervention of the environment, the individual, and the behavior. This sense of competence specifically refers to a person's judgment of his or her ability to successfully complete a particular task in a particular situation. A. Bandura further distinguishes between two kinds of expectations: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. Efficacy expectancies refer to beliefs about an individual's ability to take a certain action, while outcome expectancies refer to beliefs about whether an individual's behavior will produce a certain result[4].

The concept of teacher self-efficacy is actually derived and progressively developed from the basic idea of self-efficacy. It refers to teachers' confidence and beliefs about their ability to successfully perform teaching tasks in educational settings. Such beliefs affect not only teachers' teaching behaviors, but also their expectations and educational outcomes for their students. In short, teacher self-efficacy is a form of self-assessment and trust in teachers' ability to teach. Based on this, self-efficacy theory provides the theoretical underpinnings for this study and helps to provide insight into the impact of rural school support on teachers' self-efficacy, and it provides a framework for understanding how teachers in rural areas feel about their teaching abilities.

Between the 1970s and 1980s, A. Bandura's research focused mainly on self-efficacy. However, with the increasing interdependence of human social functioning and the importance of collective behavior, people began to pay more attention to and study collective efficacy, instead of limiting it to self-efficacy at the individual level. A. Bandura defined collective efficacy as "a shared belief among team members about the ability of their team to work together to achieve a particular level of performance in a given situation"[5]. Although teacher self-efficacy and teacher collective efficacy differ in their definitions and connotations, they both derive from social cognitive theory and reflect efficacy beliefs at the individual and group levels, respectively. Using self-efficacy as a theory, then, can help rural teachers increase their self-confidence and enhance their ability to face various challenges in educational work; in short, self-efficacy theory not only helps to analyze problems, but also provides practical tools for solving them.

Teacher efficacy refers to a teacher's perception of and belief in his or her ability to successfully carry out certain educational activities, and is a subjective judgment of a teacher's ability to positively influence students' learning and behavior, which is at the core of a teacher's beliefs about education [6]. Teacher efficacy encompasses both self-efficacy at the individual level and collective efficacy at the group level. In this paper, teacher efficacy is regarded as a holistic concept, which is a specific dimension of subordinate self-efficacy based on a group of teachers, focusing on the overall efficacy performance of a group of teachers. Teacher self-efficacy then refers to teachers' judgments and expectations about whether the teaching and research work activities they will engage in can be accomplished perfectly, and is a level of self-confidence in their ability to do their jobs [7]; teacher collective efficacy, on the other hand, refers to the perceptions of teachers in a school about the positive impact they, as a whole, can have on their students by working together [8]. A. Bandura defined teacher collective efficacy as "a shared belief among team members about their ability to work together as a team to achieve a particular level of performance in a given situation"[6]. The collective beliefs about teachers' ability to allocate, coordinate, and integrate relevant resources in order to collaboratively respond to a specific instructional task in a given context.

Based on this, this study takes the group of rural teachers in the rural environment as the research object, and pro-

[3] *Bandura A. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological review, 1977, vol. 84, no. 2, pp. 191–215. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.*

[4] *Bandura A. Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York, W.H. Freeman and Company Publ., 1997. 174 p.*

[5] *Bandura A. Social foundations of thought and action: a social cognitive theory. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Publ., 1986. 648 p.*

[6] *See 5.*

poses the research hypothesis H1: Rural school support has a significant independent effect on teachers' sense of efficacy; the research hypothesis H2: Different levels of school support have different effects on teachers' sense of efficacy.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research respondents

In order to better understand how rural school support affects teachers' sense of efficacy, this study researched rural school teachers in three districts in Heilongjiang Province.

Variable design

1. School support scale

The school support section is based on social support theory and comprehensively considers the dimensions of school support, which is categorized into four dimensions, namely emotional support, material support, institutional support, and professional support, with a total of 40 entries (Table 1). The scoring was based on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more support provided by the school. In this study, the reliability of the school support scale was 0.986.

Table 1. *Description of school support scale entries*
Таблица 1. *Описание элементов шкалы школьной поддержки*

Column name	Number of cases	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean value	Standard deviation
1. School leaders care about my teachers' professional development needs	2,069	1	5	1.89	1.027
2. School leaders are able to take a teacher's perspective when making decisions	2,069	1	5	1.98	1.090
3. When I work seriously, I can be recognized by my leaders	2,069	1	5	1.86	1.020
4. When I encounter difficulties in my work, I can get encouragement and help from the leaders	2,069	1	5	1.92	1.054
5. I can feel the leadership's attention, care and respect in my daily work	2,069	1	5	1.95	1.042
6. School leaders help and support me in my life	2,069	1	5	1.98	1.077
7. I can get support and help from my colleagues when I encounter difficulties in my teaching work	2,069	1	5	1.75	0.850
8. When I am depressed, I can get comfort and encouragement from my colleagues	2,069	1	5	1.80	0.879
9. When I encounter difficulties in my life, I can get help and care from my colleagues	2,069	1	5	1.79	0.885
10. I can get support and help from my colleagues when I do career planning for teachers	2,069	1	5	1.85	0.920
11. The school can provide sufficient funds for teachers' research and training	2,069	1	5	2.28	1.130
12. The school can provide sufficient funds for teachers' research	2,069	1	5	2.39	1.163
13. The school can provide teachers with the necessary resources (e. g. books, teaching aids, etc.) for work and study	2,069	1	5	2.09	1.037
14. The school has abundant hardware facilities and available resources	2,069	1	5	2.27	1.071
15. The school's network informationization infrastructure is complete	2,069	1	5	2.19	1.015
16. I am satisfied with the office conditions provided by the school	2,069	1	5	2.21	1.038

Continue of Table 1

Column name	Number of cases	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean value	Standard deviation
17. The school is able to provide as much convenience for teachers' life as possible	2,069	1	5	2.21	1.076
18. The school has more performance pay for teachers	2,069	1	5	2.86	1.226
19. The school has established a teacher-apprentice teaming system	2,069	1	5	2.14	1.124
20. The school has set up a system for teachers to listen to and evaluate lessons	2,069	1	5	1.82	0.899
21. The school has established a teacher training system	2,069	1	5	1.84	0.914
22. The school has established a teacher research system	2,069	1	5	1.91	0.952
23. The school has established a teacher teaching and research system	2,069	1	5	1.87	0.925
24. Schools have established a democratic management system	2,069	1	5	2.06	1.067
25. The school has established a salary and welfare system	2,069	1	5	2.68	1.295
26. The school has established a complete performance appraisal program	2,069	1	5	2.32	1.181
27. The school has established a complete system of title promotion, selection and evaluation of excellence	2,069	1	5	2.16	1.106
28. The school has established a system to encourage teachers to cooperate and innovate	2,069	1	5	2.29	1.151
29. The school will carry out teaching skill competitions for teachers	2,069	1	5	1.93	0.945
30. The school arranges pre-service training for young teachers	2,069	1	5	1.92	0.962
31. The school regularly organizes teachers to participate in various professional trainings	2,069	1	5	1.90	0.930
32. The school organizes collective teaching and research activities for teachers	2,069	1	5	1.85	0.890
33. The school will organize teachers to participate in web-based training activities	2,069	1	5	1.70	0.825
34. The school has established an advanced school philosophy	2,069	1	5	1.90	0.943
35. The school has formed common values	2,069	1	5	1.94	0.977
36. The school has formulated inspiring and distinctive school development goals	2,069	1	5	1.99	1.024
37. Teachers have a group concept of mutual help and cooperation	2,069	1	5	1.91	0.934
38. Harmonious learning atmosphere is formed among teachers	2,069	1	5	1.89	0.925
39. Teachers in the same research group are able to carry out research and study on their own initiative	2,069	1	5	1.92	0.939
40. Teachers in the same teaching and research group will collectively sharpen and prepare for the teacher's open class	2,069	1	5	1.87	0.910

2. Teacher efficacy scale

Based on the understanding of self-efficacy theory and drawing on Goddard's Collective Efficacy Scale [9], the Teacher Efficacy Scale was compiled by combining the actual job satisfaction of rural teachers. The scale consists of two dimensions: two dimensions of teachers' collective efficacy and teachers' self-efficacy, with a total of 15 items (Table 2). Scoring was done on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a higher sense of efficacy among teachers in the school. In this study, the reliability of the School Support Scale was 0.900.

Questionnaire quality

From the table of overall fitting coefficients (Table 3), it can be seen that CMIN/DF=5.273, RMSEA=0.045, SRMR=0.0404 results in good fit; CFI is 0.962, which is greater than 0.9, and results in good fit. Taken together, the model fit indices of the dimensions of the questionnaire and the overall structural model reached the recommended values, which not only indicates that the quality of the questionnaire is good, but also shows that the models of emotional support in rural schools, material support in rural schools, institutional support in rural schools, and professional support in rural schools are well adapted.

The factor loadings of each latent variable of emotional support, material support, institutional support, and professional support for rural school support corresponding to each topic in the questionnaire are all greater than 0.48, which indicates that each of its latent variables corresponding to the topic to which it belongs in the questionnaire

Table 2. *Description of teacher efficacy scale entries*
Таблица 2. *Описание элементов шкалы эффективности учителя*

Column name	Number of cases	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean value	Standard deviation
1. School teachers are not absent on a daily basis	2,069	1	5	2.22	1.054
2. School teachers are generally satisfied with the school	2,069	1	5	2.07	0.996
3. Parents are satisfied with the school teachers (Teachers subjective perception of parents' feedback)	2,069	1	5	1.93	0.872
4. Teachers' classroom instruction meets students' learning needs	2,069	1	5	1.85	0.840
5. The overall quality of classroom teaching in the school is high	2,069	1	5	1.93	0.879
6. There are always good and bad students in a class, and teachers cannot teach every student to become good students	2,069	1	5	2.38	1.124
7. Generally speaking, what students become is innately determined	2,069	1	5	3.41	1.211
8. Generally speaking, what students become is determined by their families and society, and it is difficult to change them through education	2,069	1	5	3.29	1.212
9. The influence of teachers on students is less than the influence of parents	2,069	1	5	3.11	1.229
10. The extent to which a student can learn is mainly related to his family situation	2,069	1	5	2.97	1.153
11. If a student is unruly at home, he will not do well in school either	2,069	1	5	3.04	1.187
12. All things considered, the influence of teachers on a student's performance is very small	2,069	1	5	3.37	1.182
13. Even if a teacher is capable and enthusiastic, it is difficult for him to change many poor students at the same time	2,069	1	5	2.94	1.213
14. A good student can learn when you teach him, but a poor student can't be taught at all	2,069	1	5	3.39	1.196
15. Teachers can improve students' performance, but they can't do much to develop students' moral character	2,069	1	5	3.48	1.224

Table 3. *Table of overall fit coefficients*
Таблица 3. *Таблица общих индексов соответствия*

CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
5.273	0.962	0.045	0.0404

is highly representative. The variance AVE of each latent variable is greater than 0.66, and the CR of each latent variable is greater than 0.9 (see Table 4), which can be inferred that the convergent validity of this questionnaire is relatively satisfactory.

As can be seen from Table 5, the absolute value of the correlation coefficients of institutional support, professional support, material support, and emotional support in rural schools is less than the square root of the corresponding AVEs, i. e., it shows that the discriminant validity of the variable data is more satisfactory. Based on the reliability analysis above, it can be found that the reliability and validity of this questionnaire is better and the model fit between the variables is better, so it is suitable for distributing this questionnaire.

Methods

In order to better understand how rural school support affects teachers' sense of efficacy, this study was conducted on rural school teachers in three districts of Heilongjiang Province. The study was conducted on teachers' sense of efficacy in rural schools. A total of 2,539 questionnaires were distributed and 2,069 valid questionnaires were collected, with a validity rate of 81.5 %. This study used the software SPSS22.0 and AMOS26.0 to analyze and process the research data. By combing and analyzing the relevant literature in China and abroad, it was designed with rural school support as the independent variable and teacher efficacy as the dependent variable. The questionnaire was based on a Likert self-assessment 5-point scale, where 1 represents the lowest score and 5 represents the highest score. From 1 to 5, it corresponds to "Strongly Disagree", "Somewhat Disagree", "Neutral", "Somewhat Agree", and "Strongly Agree", respectively. A higher numerical value indicates greater school support and stronger teacher efficacy. The questionnaire has two components, the first part is the subjects' basic information, including the subjects' gender, age, education, marital status, school location, school of graduation of the first degree, type of specialization of the first degree (teacher-training vs. non-teacher-training),

Table 4. *The convergent effect among variables*
Таблица 4. *Конвергентный эффект среди переменных*

Factor loading / Teacher efficacy	AVE	CR
Emotional support	0.7200	0.9623
Material support	0.7012	0.9491
Institutional support	0.6996	0.9586
Professional support	0.8016	0.9798
Teachers' collective efficacy	0.7579	0.9390
Teacher self-efficacy	0.6676	0.9517

Note. The emotional support dimension is represented by questions 1 to 10 of the school support scale (see Table 1).
The physical support dimension is represented by questions 11 to 18 of the school support scale (see Table 1).
The institutional support dimension is represented by questions 19 to 28 from the school support scale (see Table 1).
The professional support dimension is represented by questions 29 to 40 from the school support scale (see Table 1).
The teachers collective effectiveness dimension is represented by questions 1 to 5 of the teacher effectiveness scale (see Table 2).
The teachers self-effectiveness dimension is represented by questions 6 to 15 of the teacher effectiveness scale (see Table 2).
Примечание. Измерение эмоциональной поддержки представлено вопросами 1–10 шкалы школьной поддержки (таблица 1).
Измерение физической поддержки представлено вопросами 11–18 шкалы школьной поддержки (таблица 1).
Измерение институциональной поддержки представлено вопросами 19–28 шкалы школьной поддержки (таблица 1).
Измерение профессиональной поддержки представлено вопросами 29–40 шкалы школьной поддержки (таблица 1).
Измерение коллективной эффективности учителей представлено вопросами 1–5 шкалы эффективности учителя (таблица 2).
Измерение самоэффективности учителей представлено вопросами 6–15 шкалы эффективности учителя (таблица 2).

Table 5. *Distinguishing validity among the four variables*
Таблица 5. *Разграничительная валидность среди четырех переменных*

Variable name	Institutional support	Professional support	Material support	Emotional support
Institutional support	0.814			
Professional support	0.689	0.684		
Material support	0.751	0.645	0.941	
Emotional support	0.638	0.557	0.675	0.750
Square root of AVE	0.902	0.827	0.970	0.866

Note. The diagonal is the value of AVE.
Примечание. По диагонали представлено значение AVE.

education level at the time of post-graduation employment, the section of the school they taught, the subject they taught, and the duration of their work in rural schools [10]. The second part is the main body of the questionnaire, the independent variable is rural school support, including school emotional support, material support, institutional support, and professional support; the dependent variable is teacher efficacy, including teacher self-efficacy, and teacher collective efficacy.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of subjects' different personal characteristics on teachers' sense of efficacy, this study used independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA methods, taking into account factors such as gender, marital status, majors studied, school location, graduation school, education level, sections taught, disciplines taught, and working hours, to discover the differences between teachers' sense of efficacy in the presence of subjects' different personal characteristics.

In order to better analyze the independent effects of rural school support and its elements on teachers' sense of efficacy, this study correlates rural school support, each element of support, and teachers' sense of efficacy, and analyzes whether or not there is a correlation between rural school support and its elements and teachers' sense of efficacy.

In order to investigate whether there is an independent effect of rural school support and the elements of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy, this study used linear regression analysis to put the elements of rural school support and rural school support into the regression equation to investigate the extent of their influence on teachers' sense of efficacy.

This study explores the effects of each element of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy by using stepwise multiple regression and putting each element of rural school support into the model at the same time. In the stepwise multiple regression model, teacher efficacy is taken as the dependent variable, and emotional support, material support, institutional support, and professional support in rural schools are taken as independent variables to analyze the effects of each element of rural school support on teacher efficacy.

RESULTS

Significant differences in teacher efficacy among teachers of different genders and school locations

The study found that there were significant differences in teacher efficacy among teachers of different genders, with female teachers having higher teacher efficacy than male teachers; there were no significant differences in teacher efficacy among teachers with different marital status; there were no significant differences in teacher efficacy among teachers with different specializations; there were significant differences in teacher efficacy among teachers with different school locations, with those in villages having higher teacher efficacy than those in towns and county; no significant difference in teacher efficacy among teachers from different graduation schools; no significant difference in teacher efficacy among teachers with different academic qualifications; no significant difference in teacher efficacy among teachers with different teaching periods; no significant difference in teacher efficacy among teachers with different teaching subjects; and no significant difference in teacher efficacy among teachers with different working hours. The specific results are shown in Table 6.

There is a significant correlation between rural school support and teachers' sense of efficacy

The results (Table 7) indicate that there is a significant correlation between teachers' sense of efficacy and emotional support in rural schools, material support in rural schools, institutional support in rural schools, and professional support in rural schools. The correlation coefficient between emotional support in rural schools and teachers' sense of efficacy is 0.194, the correlation coefficient between material support in rural schools and teachers' sense of efficacy is 0.225, the correlation coefficient between institutional support in rural schools and

Table 6. *Relationship between subjects' personal characteristics and teachers' sense of efficacy*
Таблица 6. *Взаимосвязь между личными характеристиками испытуемых и чувством эффективности учителя*

Personal Characteristics		***N***	**Average value**	**Standard deviation**	***F*/*T***	**Significance**
Gender	Male	572	2.68	0.731	*t*=−3.074 *P*=0.002	
	Female	1,497	2.79	0.712		
Marital status	Married	1,882	2.75	0.719	*t*=−1.308 *P*=0.191	
	Unmarried	187	2.82	0.725		
Specialization	Teacher training programs	1,703	2.75	0.716	*t*=−1.116 *P*=0.265	
	Non-Teacher training programs	366	2.80	0.732		
School location	County seat	402	2.70	0.739	*F*=4.360 *P*=0.013	
	Townships	1,342	2.76	0.719		
	Village	325	2.85	0.686		
Graduation school	985 University	4	2.08	0.877	*F*=1.656 *P*=0.175	
	211 University	9	3.02	0.543		
	General undergraduate colleges	445	2.77	0.742		
	Colleges and secondary schools	1,611	2.75	0.713		
Qualifications	Postgraduate and above	12	2.65	0.680	*F*=1.293 *P*=0.275	
	Undergraduate	818	2.72	0.755		
	Post-secondary	690	2.77	0.691		
	Secondary and below	549	2.79	0.700		
Sections taught	Elementary school	1,302	2.77	0.718	*F*=0.680 *P*=0.507	
	Middle school	740	2.75	0.723		
	High school	27	2.62	0.664		
Subjects taught	Major subject	974	2.73	0.709	*F*=1.531 *P*=0.217	
	Minor subject	894	2.78	0.720		
	Major + Minor	201	2.81	0.759		
Working hours	16+ years	1,357	2.73	0.707	*F*=2.164 *P*=0.055	
	13–15 years	62	2.75	0.728		
	10–12 years	66	2.63	0.825		
	7–9 years	68	2.74	0.795		
	4–6 years	299	2.85	0.686		
	0–3 years	217	2.83	0.767		

Table 7. *Correlation analysis between rural school support and teachers' sense of efficacy*
Таблица 7. *Корреляционный анализ между поддержкой в сельских школах и чувством эффективности учителей*

	M	SD	Teacher efficacy	Emotional support	Material support	Institutional support	Professional support
Teacher efficacy	2.76	0.719	–				
Emotional support	1.88	0.868	0.194**	–			
Material support	2.31	0.943	0.225**	0.762**	–		
Institutional support	2.11	0.913	0.262**	0.771**	0.808**	–	
Professional support	1.89	0.850	0.253**	0.768**	0.763**	0.877**	–

*Note. ** Significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-sided).*
*Примечание. ** Значимые корреляции на уровне 0,01 (двусторонний тест).*

teachers' sense of efficacy is 0.262, and the correlation coefficient between professional support in rural schools and teachers' sense of efficacy is 0.253. It can be concluded from the data of (Table 7) that the correlation between institutional support in rural schools and teacher efficacy to a greater extent, followed by professional support in rural schools.

Rural school support and its components have positive influence on teachers' sense of efficacy

Based on the above (Table 8), it is clear that rural school support and its various elements have a significant impact on teachers' sense of efficacy. The explanatory power of the effect of school support on teachers' sense of efficacy is 6.5 %. All the different elements of support in rural schools have an influence of more than 3 % on teachers' sense of efficacy, with institutional support in rural schools having the highest influence on teachers' sense of efficacy at 6.8 %, and affective support in rural schools being the lowest at 3.7 %. From (Table 8), it can be inferred that rural school support and its various elements have a positive and positive impact on teachers' sense of efficacy.

Rural school system support has the strongest impact on teacher sense of efficacy

The independent influence of each element of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy was analyzed above, while in reality rural school support cannot work alone. The results (Table 9) show that the tolerance values of the multiple regression model ranged from 0.232–1.000, and the VIF values ranged from 1.000–4.317, neither of which was greater than the value of the rubric. It is thus clear that there is no problem of multiple covariance between the independent variables that enter the regression equation.

As can be seen from the summary table of stepwise multiple regression analysis below (see Table 9), there are two variables with significant predictive power of the previous four predictor variables, namely, "institutional support" and "professional support". "Emotional support" and "material support" were excluded from the model because their explanatory power was too small.

In terms of the size of influence, the most influential variable on "teacher efficacy" is "institutional support", with an adjusted R^2 of 0.068; the second most influential variable is "professional support", with an adjusted R^2 of 0.070. "The standardized regression coefficients β of the two predictor variables in the regression model are 0.262 and 0.103 respectively, which are both positive, indicating that the influence of these two predictor variables on "teachers' sense of efficacy" is positive.

DISCUSSION

The relationship between rural school support and teacher efficacy

The subjective evaluation of teachers' competence and values demonstrated in the classroom has a direct impact on their effectiveness and professionalism. In rural school settings, teachers may face additional challenges and pressures due to resource and condition constraints. In fact, rural school support is one of the most important sources of teacher efficacy. When schools provide adequate support and assistance to teachers, teachers will feel more respect and trust, which will enhance their self-confidence and motivation. This positive state of mind will make teachers more actively involved in teaching, actively exploring new teaching methods and means to improve their teaching effectiveness. At the same time, these positive behaviors of teachers will also be recognized and affirmed by the school, which will further form a benign interactive cycle and promote the personal growth of teachers and the overall development of the school. Therefore, we can see that there is a mutual influence and mutual promotion between rural school support and teacher efficacy. In order to enhance rural teachers' sense of teacher efficacy, we need to provide more support and assistance from the school level; at the same time, teachers also need to actively face various challenges in teaching and continuously improve their profes-

Table 8. *Summary table of regression analysis of the effect of rural school support and its components on teachers' sense of efficacy*
Таблица 8. *Сводная таблица регрессионного анализа влияния поддержки в сельских школах и ее компонентов на чувство эффективности учителей*

Independent variable	R^2	F	β
School support	0.065	144.405	0.256
Emotional support	0.037	80.790	0.194
Material support	0.050	110.009	0.225
Institutional support	0.068	152.426	0.262
Professional support	0.064	141.932	0.253

Table 9. *Summary table of stepwise multiple regressions of rural school support and teacher efficacy*
Таблица 9. *Сводная таблица поэтапного множественного регрессионного анализа поддержки в сельских школах и эффективности учителей*

Input variables	Adjusted R^2	F-value	B	Standard error	β	Tolerance	VIF
Institutional support	0.068	152.426	0.206	0.017	0.262	1.000	1.000
Professional support	0.070	79.087	0.087	0.037	0.103	0.232	4.317

sionalism and teaching ability. It can be said that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between rural school support and teacher efficacy.

Policy recommendations

Based on the above analysis, it was found that institutional support and professional support play a crucial role in enhancing teacher efficacy in rural school settings. Then, in order to further improve the sense of teacher efficacy in rural schools, the following suggestions are made:

1. Rural schools need to optimize the structure of the school support system and strengthen the teaching force

This study shows that a more comprehensive level of school support can enhance rural teachers' sense of efficacy to a large extent. Although the explanatory power of the effect of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy reached 6.5 %. However, rural school support did not act on teacher efficacy alone. Through correlation analysis, it was found that rural school institutional support and rural school professional support were associated with teacher efficacy to a greater extent; this was verified through regression analysis and found that rural school institutional support and rural school professional support positively predicted teacher efficacy. Therefore, schools should establish a systematic school support system centered on emotional, material, institutional, and professional support [11], so as to better enhance teacher efficacy.

In terms of emotional support in rural schools, schools should establish a good atmosphere of respect for teachers, understanding of teachers, give teachers more professional happiness and sense of belonging, which in turn enhances the teachers' beliefs and sense of mission to teach and educate people, and the enhancement of this intrinsic motivation will help teachers cope with the pressure of their work and life [12], and enhance the sense of teacher efficacy. At the same time, schools should pay attention to the emotional needs of teachers and provide teachers with good emotional value, for example, they can regularly organize teachers' symposiums, mental health lectures and other activities to help teachers alleviate work pressure and enhance stress resistance.

In terms of material support for rural schools, appropriate and reasonable economic support policies should be formulated to make up for the loss of rural teachers' interests arising from the spatial differences between urban and rural areas [13]. Schools should provide reasonable salaries and welfare benefits to ensure that teachers' labor is duly reported. Schools can also provide a comfortable working environment and improve teachers' office environment, such as providing spacious and bright offices, comfortable desks and chairs, and necessary office equipment, so that teachers can work in a comfortable environment, which can help to enhance their sense of teaching efficacy.

At the level of institutional support for rural schools, schools should do something to provide strong protection for the development of rural teachers, so schools should start from the two aspects of education and teaching and incentives and rewards to escort the development of teachers. At the level of professional support for rural schools, schools should have an in-depth understanding of the needs of teachers in order to provide accurate and powerful support for teachers. In addition to organizing various training activities to promote the professional development of teachers, schools should cooperate with local universities and educational research institutes to establish a teacher learning community in order to overcome professional isolation [14].

2. Rural schools need to improve institutional support to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy

Based on the above research findings, institutional support is a key factor in enhancing teachers' sense of efficacy. Specifically, the correlation coefficient between institutional support and teachers' sense of efficacy in rural schools is 0.262. Among all the support elements, the correlation coefficient of institutional support is the largest, which indicates that institutional support in rural schools is related to teachers' sense of efficacy to a greater extent, indicating that institutional support plays a key role in it, and that the explanatory power of the influence of institutional support on teachers' sense of efficacy in rural schools reaches 6.8 %, which is the largest compared with the other support elements. Compared with other support elements, institutional support in rural schools has the greatest influence on teachers' sense of efficacy. Therefore, rural schools need to make great efforts in building institutional support to ensure that teachers can feel more support and respect.

First, schools should develop a clear teaching management system to ensure that they have a clear and transparent teaching management system, including teaching programs, teaching assessment, and teaching feedback. Through the implementation of these systems, teachers can have a clear understanding of their teaching objectives and expectations, so that they can conduct their teaching activities in a more focused manner. Such clarity and transparency not only help to standardize teachers' teaching behaviors, but also allow teachers to find direction in the teaching process, thus enhancing their sense of teaching efficacy.

Second, establishing a fair and reasonable incentive mechanism is another important way to enhance teachers' sense of efficacy [15]. Schools set up a clear system of rewards and penalties to measure teachers' performance through a fair reward and punishment mechanism, and give recognition and rewards to teachers who have made outstanding achievements in teaching, which not only motivates teachers to continue to work hard, but also sets a role model for them, and stimulates teachers' enthusiasm and creativity. At the same time, teachers who are not performing well should be given appropriate guidance and assistance to help them improve.

Finally, the learning management should strengthen communication and exchange with teachers, understand their needs and expectations, and solve the problems they encounter in their work in a timely manner. This kind of communication and exchange not only enhances teachers' sense of participation and identification, but also helps them feel more supportive in their work. Through these measures, institutional support in rural schools will be improved and teachers' sense of efficacy will be enhanced.

3. Rural schools need to emphasize the role of professional support in teachers' sense of efficacy

In the context of the current education reform, professional support in rural schools is particularly important for enhancing teachers' sense of efficacy. Correlation analysis shows that professional support in rural schools is highly correlated with teachers' sense of efficacy, with a correlation coefficient of 0.253. Verification through regression analysis reveals that the explanatory power of the impact of institutional support on teachers' sense of efficacy in rural schools reaches 6.4 %, indicating that professional support in rural schools positively predicts teachers' sense of efficacy, further emphasizing the importance of professional support in the process.

In order to better achieve this goal in terms of professional support in rural schools, rural schools should take a series of specific measures. First, schools should organize regular professional training and refresher courses to ensure that teachers are able to update their educational philosophies and teaching methods [16]. These trainings should cover a wide range of aspects such as curriculum design, teaching methods, classroom management, and so on, to help teachers continuously improve their professional skills and knowledge in their teaching practice. Through these trainings, teachers can not only enhance their teaching ability, but also feel a greater sense of accomplishment and efficacy in the teaching process [17].

Secondly, schools should encourage teachers to participate in scientific research activities and provide necessary support for scientific research, such as research funds and time schedules. By participating in scientific research, teachers can continuously explore and discover new teaching concepts and methods, and improve their own scientific research ability and professionalism. At the same time, the school can also invite experts to review and guide teachers' scientific research results to help them better transform scientific research results into teaching practice. Again, schools should encourage teachers to carry out teaching innovation and try new teaching methods and strategies [18]. To this end, schools can set up a teaching innovation fund to recognize and reward teachers who have achieved remarkable results in teaching innovation, in order to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm for teaching innovation, and also to promote mutual schools and exchanges among teachers, forming a good atmosphere for teaching innovation [19].

Finally, schools should build communication platforms among teachers, such as teaching seminars and teaching experience sharing sessions. Through these platforms, teachers can share their teaching experience and insights, learn from each other and learn from the success of others. Through exchanges, teachers can not only improve their

own teaching level, but also enhance their teamwork spirit and sense of belonging, thus further improving their sense of teaching efficacy.

CONCLUSIONS

This study conducted research based on rural school teachers in three districts of Heilongjiang Province. Based on the research data, the study argued about the impact of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy. This study attempts to investigate whether rural school support affects teachers' sense of efficacy. It can be concluded from this study that rural school support has a significant effect on teachers' sense of efficacy, and the explanatory power of the effect of rural school support on teachers' sense of efficacy reaches 6.5 %. All the different elements of support in rural schools have an influence of 3 % or more on teacher efficacy. Institutional support in rural schools has significant positive predictive power on teachers' sense of efficacy. Teachers play a crucial role in education and teaching, and their hard work and selfless dedication lay a solid foundation for students' growth and development. Therefore, schools should not only ensure that teachers have professional teaching skills and organizational abilities, but also provide them with more support. Schools should provide teachers with a full range of support, such as emotional support, material support, institutional support, professional support, etc., in order to promote teachers to play a greater role in educational activities and contribute more to the growth and development of students. When schools provide support, the institutional and professional support they include has a positive and significant effect on teachers' sense of efficacy.

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Влияние поддержки в сельских школах на чувство эффективности учителей

Чжэнь Ин*[1,2,4], докторант факультета педагогики,
преподаватель Колледжа педагогических наук, научный руководитель магистрантов
Чжао Минь[2,5], магистрант, начальное образование, Колледж педагогических наук
Чэнь Си[3,6], преподаватель Школы марксизма
Чжэн Тинтин[2,7], магистрант, начальное образование, Колледж педагогических наук
[1]*Северо-Восточный педагогический университет, Чанчунь (Китай)*
[2]*Муданьцзянский педагогический университет, Муданьцзян (Китай)*
[3]*Муданьцзянский медицинский университет, Муданьцзян (Китай)*

***E-mail:** 2018023@mdjnu.edu.cn

[4]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1484-8139
[5]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8250-2918
[6]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9800-6364
[7]ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2101-0832

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Аннотация: С целью изучения того, как поддержка в сельских школах влияет на чувство эффективности учителей и есть ли существенные различия во влиянии на него различных ситуаций поддержки, было проведено исследование в сельских школах в регионе провинции Хэйлунцзян. Оно показало, что: (1) существует значительная положительная корреляция между эффективностью учителей и поддержкой в сельских школах; (2) поддержка в сельских школах и ее элементы оказывают значительное независимое влияние на чувство эффективности учителей; (3) разные уровни поддержки в сельских школах оказывают различное воздействие на чувство эффективности учителей, а высокий уровень поддержки в школах оказывает большее влияние на чувство эффективности учителей. Для того чтобы усилить чувство эффективности сельских учителей, сельские школы, во-первых, должны оптимизировать организацию своей поддержки и укрепить структуру коллектива учителей; во-вторых, улучшить институциональную поддержку; в-третьих, обратить внимание на то, как профессиональная поддержка влияет на чувство эффективности учителей. Исходя из этого, повышение качества образования и обеспечение равенства в сфере образования могут быть достигнуты за счет повышения чувства эффективности учителей.

Ключевые слова: чувство эффективности учителей; поддержка школ; сельские школы.

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