

An Investigation into Psychological Safety and Productivity of Teacher Educators

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Abstract.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of teacher educators' psychological safety on their productivity. A quantitative research approach was employed. A total of 1,040 teacher educators from three education universities and eighteen education degree colleges participated in the study, and a simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants. The findings revealed that the teacher educators' level of psychological safety was above average. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were significant differences in psychological safety based on teaching experience and academic qualification. The findings also indicated that the teacher educators' productivity was high. The independent-samples t-test revealed that teacher educators' research experience was significantly related to their productivity, with teacher educators who have research experience have higher productivity than teacher educators who don't have research experience. Moreover, the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were significant differences in productivity based on teaching experience and academic qualification. Furthermore, the results of the correlation analysis showed that teacher educators' psychological safety was positively associated with their productivity. Multiple regression analysis further revealed that psychological safety was a significant predictor of teacher educators' productivity, accounting for 11.8% of the variance in productivity.

Keywords: Psychological safety, Productivity and Teacher educator.

I. INTRODUCTION

The national development depends on the system of education imparted to its youth and children. In order to adjust with the era, it becomes essential that education system should be changed accordingly. If a nation wants quality education, it must have qualified teacher educators. The strength of an educational system largely depends on the quality of its teacher educators. In our educational society, teacher educators are essential members (Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, universities of education and education degree colleges are the most important places to produce qualified teachers who have knowledgeable and skillful to promote the quality of education. Social support system is important in these environments. For teacher educators, colleagues are important in educational organization. Teacher educators should have trust among them. A lack of trust among teacher educators can result in lower productivity which impedes the development of the educational organization (Almahri & Wahab, 2023). Trust is the perception that an individual within a team is supported and feels safe to take interpersonal risks, voice opinions, and share ideas, is vital for organizational effectiveness. This feeling of safety in work teams is known as psychological safety (Bowerman, 2023).

Psychological safety is one of the most important conditions for team learning and has also been tied to improved organizational outcomes. When there is a safe psychological climate, teacher educators put more focus and resources to improve their performance. In a psychologically safe climate teacher educators also report more job resources and more endurable job demands, which lead to a high level of work performance (Bowerman, 2023). Work environment is the most important factor that have an impact on productivity. Teacher educator's productivity and psychological safety are closely related because they provide an atmosphere where teacher educators may take chances, share ideas, and give their all without worrying about being judged or facing consequences. This feeling of security and trust promotes open dialogue, teamwork, and invention, which boosts creativity and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, psychological safety at work can contribute to higher teacher educator's productivity. Therefore, maintaining psychological safety is essential for workplaces, especially those where learning, knowledge sharing, error reporting and innovation are essential parts of everyday business, like schools, colleges and universities. In today's organization, much work is accomplished collaboratively which involves integrating perspectives, sharing ideas and information and coordinating tasks. Continuous improvements by innovation and learning are very importance in success

of any organization as there is a lot of space for cooperating, experimenting and speaking up at organization levels (Edmondson, 1999).

Psychological safety perception in organization field originated in psychological climate (as cited in Ran et al., 2015). When teachers see working environment be help for their own well-being, it can be said as psychological safety. Psychological safety is defined as teachers do not worry about self-image, position and negative impact of work, truly express themselves and show the different egos of different contexts (Kahn, 1990). Then, Edmondson (1999) introduced psychological safety from the individual level to the group level, called as group psychological safety. Psychological safety is becoming increasingly relevant in literature on organizational work teams. As such that more work in today's organizations is accomplished in a team structure, involving sharing information and ideas, integrating perspectives, and coordinating tasks. According to Edmondson, psychological safety is individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment. Psychological safety is the extent to which people feel comfortable taking interpersonal risks (such as sharing a new idea, or admitting they do not understand something). The term refers to the idea that a team or organization provides an environment where employees feel free to express themselves and take risks. Psychological safety can be defined as the shared belief held by members of a team that they can bring their full personality to work, share their ideas and opinions, without fear of humiliation or fear of consequences, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking (Edmondson, 2014).

According to Edmondson's psychological safety theory, psychological safety is high when: (1) organizational members can speak one's mind freely; (2) the organization encouraged and allowed risk-taking; (3) organizational members trust and respect each other; (4) organization members have the same beliefs and opinions for things. An organization is viewed as psychologically safe when team members believe that taking an interpersonal risk, like asking for feedback or help, or admitting an error will not have any negative personal consequences (Edmondson, 2004). When psychological safety is present in the workplace, it creates a more innovative, stronger community, job satisfaction and eventually higher productivity (Paramasivam, 2023). In an educational organization, teacher educators' productivity is imperative for the achievement of the educational goals. Teacher educators are the hubs on which the education system rests upon. So, the productivity of the teacher educators is now highly valued in the workplace. On the other hand, teacher educators' productivity is a vital component in promoting quality education, which pushes intensified effort in studying on how to improve it (Anisah, 2020). If teacher educators possess high productivity, it will produce qualified teachers and have quality education system.

Productivity is the measure of the efficiency of the organization or the individual performance to achieve given set of objectives. Productivity in an organization is an important thing that must be attached to each individual. This is because productivity has a close influence on the goals. In education, productivity is the rate at which educational objectives are achieved. Teacher educators are more important than any other factor which contributes to the quality of education at any level of educational system (Nakopdia, 2001). According to Productivity Theory of Taylor, teacher educators' productivity refers to effective teaching, lesson note preparation, effective use of scheme of work, effective supervision, monitoring of student teachers' work and disciplinary ability which teacher educators should uphold effectively in the school system. Frederick Winslow Taylor's productivity theory, also known as Taylorism. Taylor's theory focused on optimizing efficiency through standardization and task analysis. The approach led to curriculum changes, emphasizing practical skills over classical subjects. It also impacted teacher training, focusing on classroom management and adherence to standardized curricula. Basic premise of Taylor's theory is "one best way" to do a job, should be discovered and put into practice. The belief is that the typical teacher educators can simultaneously achieve high or at least above-average levels of productivity as related to teaching performance and work values (as cited in Janubas, 2022).

In Myanmar, some changes were made in the important sectors of nation's development including education according to the era of transformation and globalization. Education needs to change with the demands and aspirations of the society. In order to ensure the changes in education, teacher educators are essential members to make it possible. In Myanmar, government has recognized the improvement in quality of teachers is essential to quality education. Therefore, government has also prioritized teacher education in its education reform and teacher educators are fostered to proficient in profession, keep knowledge up with the times and strive to promote education. The organizational climate within Myanmar's education plays a pivotal role. In an environment where psychological safety is nurtured, teacher educators are more likely to maintain their productivity and commitment to shaping the country's future teaching force. Nowadays, psychological safety has become an existing topic with enormous implications for many areas. Moreover,

psychological safety of teacher educators and its impact on their productivity are considered as an urgent need. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate psychological safety and productivity among teacher educators. The results from this study may further help the administrators to implement support systems such as flexible working arrangements or peer-support programs that enhance the productivity and overall quality of teacher educators.

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of teacher educators' psychological safety on their productivity. The specific aims of the present study are:

1. To examine the psychological safety of teacher educators
2. To explore the strength of teacher educators' psychological safety by designation and academic qualification
3. To examine the productivity of teacher educators
4. To explore the strength of teacher educators' productivity by research experience, designation and academic qualification
5. To explore the relationship between psychological safety and productivity of teacher educators

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was descriptive research design and a simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants. Before data collection, the expert review and pilot study were carried out to get content validity and face validity. After modifying the survey questionnaires, the actual data collection was done and analyzed these data by using SPSS software. The participants for this study were selected from seven regions and five states, Yangon Region, Mandalay Region, Sagaing Region, Ayeyawaddy Region, Bago Region, Magway Region, Tanintharyi Region, Shan State, Mon State, Kayah State, Kayah State and Chin State were selected. The total of 1040 teacher educators from three education universities and eighteen education colleges participated in the study. Psychological Safety Scale and Teacher Educators' Productivity Scale were used to measure teacher educators' psychological safety and productivity in quantitative study.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teacher educators' psychological safety was measured by Psychological Safety Scale. As the results of descriptive statistic of the psychological safety, it can be seen that teacher educators in this study have high level of psychological safety in their workplace. It can be concluded that teacher educators feel safe taking interpersonal risks in their local work environment. They may have openly and freely interaction with colleagues who engage in constructive feedback and mutual assistance. They may have equitable workloads and express opinions openly without any fear of negative repercussions regarding their profession. Moreover, teacher educators may also possess high self-efficacy and personal resilience. They believe their professional competence and are comfortable taking personal initiatives within their instructional environment.

In universities of education and education degree colleges, psychological safety plays the important part in ongoing mandate for academic research, curricular revision, and innovation. The high level of psychological safety among Myanmar teacher educators may be attributed to enable teacher educators to voice suggestions and exercise professional autonomy without the apprehension of errors or scholarly criticism. When teacher educators feel more psychologically safe and has a stronger feeling of a sharing atmosphere, it is more likely that they will try to seek knowledge within the team's boundaries, where access is easy. Encouragement from leader towards the teacher educators to speak up by providing the time and space to do it enhances their psychological safety (Khan et al. 2020).

If teacher educators have mutual trust and support among colleagues, the fear of being judged or criticized from testing new pedagogical approaches or discussing research ideas will diminishes. Psychologically safe environment allows teacher educators to collaborate, take pedagogical risks, and share feedback without fear of judgment. This reduces burnout and improve overall well-being. When an institution holds diverse perspectives and respects differences, teacher educators will not fear making mistakes or facing marginalization, which enhances their psychological safety. Environments that encourage open communication during crises, and allow errors to be shared transparently for collective, constructive problem-solving, cultivate deeper mutual trust among teacher educators, thereby significantly elevating their psychological safety (Edmondson, 2014).

The findings are also consistent with the view that psychological safety is an important psychological factor for educators. Individuals with high psychological safety may also possess high self-

efficacy and personal resilience. They have confidence on their professional competence and are comfortable taking personal initiatives in their workplace. These qualities can improve effective teaching, mentoring and professional collaboration. This result suggest that Myanmar teacher educators possess high psychological safety that can positively influence their performance and the quality of teacher education.

Observing psychological safety in teaching experience and academic qualification were analyzed. The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were significant differences in psychological safety based on teaching experience. According to the Tukey HSD results, the mean score of teacher educators with above 20 years old teaching experiences was significantly higher than that of teacher educators with 1-5 years old teaching experiences and teacher educators with 6-10 years old teaching experiences. This is due to the fact that teacher educators who have above 20 years teaching experience possess greater self-confidence, occupational resilience and social capital within the institution, leading to higher psychological safety. Teacher educators with above 20 years teaching experiences experience higher institutional status, positional authority and job security than teacher educators with 1-5 teaching experience. Having attained career stability, these educators face minimal apprehension regarding job loss, disciplinary actions, or adverse professional repercussions. This condition enables them to express their opinions with freedom and confidence. Furthermore, teacher educators with above 20 years teaching experiences are generally less vulnerable to criticism during meetings or scholarly discussions; their perspectives are often accorded greater deference and respect by colleagues and administrators. Consequently, this elevated level of social recognition and institutional standing enhances the higher level of psychological safety. In contrast, novice educators (1–5 years teaching experience) may experience lower safety due to the pressures of professional adaptation and a higher sensitivity to organizational evaluation. Similarly, teacher educators with less than 10 years of experience may still be navigating the complexities of institutional norms and evaluation. This leads to lower psychological safety.

Moreover, the result of ANOVA indicated that there was significant difference by academic qualification in psychological safety. The mean score of teacher educators with MEd was higher than that of teacher educators with BEd; the mean scores of teacher educators with PhD (Education) and PhD was higher than those of teacher educators with MEd, MA/MSc and BA/BSc. This can be said that teacher educators with high degree exhibit higher professional confidence due to their extensive expertise and mastery within their field. Having attained the higher level of academic qualification, these educators often possess a more profound understanding of institutional systems and policies and this may improve psychological safety.

The findings of this study indicate that Myanmar teacher educators demonstrated a high level of productivity. This suggests that teacher educators in Myanmar are highly proficient in using available job resources to perform their professional responsibilities. By effectively utilizing available resources, Myanmar teacher educators not only fulfill their pedagogical duties with precision but also maintain high productivity in teaching, scholarly research, and institutional service. Their research productivity remains at a satisfactory level. Moreover, Myanmar teacher educators are interesting in their work. When teacher educators possess a sustained individual interest in their respective teaching subjects and ongoing research endeavors, they tend to engage in deep cognitive processing rather than superficial execution. Consequently, this enhances the quality of both their instruction and research activities, thereby driving higher productivity. Furthermore, even when they faced with occupational challenges or workplace stressors, their intrinsic interest in the task fosters resilience and prompts them to persist rather than surrender easily (Asmarani et al., 2021).

Myanmar teacher educators may have job satisfaction in their work. A teacher educator's job satisfaction is one of the main factors in increasing productivity because teacher educator is responsible for providing satisfying educational and learning services to student teachers (Anisha, 2020). Job satisfaction will refer to good feelings about teaching as a job that boosts the morale of teacher educators and maintain their need to stay in the profession; their commitment to the job and the pride they have in being teacher educators (Ogochi et al., 2014). The more fulfilled the teacher educators job satisfaction, the higher the work productivity of the teacher educators produced. Teacher educators who are satisfied with their work are more enthusiastic and interested in devoting more energy and time to enhance student teachers' achievements. Job satisfaction has the highest impact on teacher educators' commitment and productivity (Dixit et al., 2012). A teacher educator who was satisfied with his work would work productively (Usop, 2013). Aspects of job satisfaction must be met such as school policy, supervision, payment, interpersonal relationships, opportunities for promotion and growth, working conditions, work itself, achievement, recognition, and responsibility. Moreover, if teacher educators are satisfied with their work, in addition to being productive

they will also develop themselves and provide high performance, thus creating highly competitive teacher educators (Kemal et al., 2019).

The results of the independent samples *t*-test indicated a statistically significant difference in Myanmar teacher educators' productivity by research experience, with teacher educators who have research experience have better productivity than teacher educators who don't have research experience. This finding suggests that research experience may be associated with differences in how teacher educators proficiently perform their professional responsibilities within teacher education institutions. In Myanmar, teacher educators with research experience have obtained systematic thinking, investigative mindset and technical expertise from research activities. This may serve as a vital catalyst in enhancing their professional performance. Furthermore, the acquired skills significantly benefit and enrich their teaching, planning lessons, mentoring student teachers, assessing learning outcomes, and participating in institutional activities. This finding is consistent with the study of Abramo et al., (2011) who revealed that as individuals obtain research experiences, they develop competencies which lead to higher levels of productivity.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant difference in productivity among Myanmar teacher educators across designation. This finding indicates that teacher educators with above 20 years old teaching experiences and teacher educators with 11-15 years old teaching experiences have better productivity than teacher educators with 6-10 years and 1-5 years old teaching experiences. This can be concluded that when teacher educators have professional experience, they develop greater workplace competence, which enables them to utilize job resources more effectively and then lead to better productivity.

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that there was statistically significant difference in productivity among Myanmar teacher educators across academic qualification. This finding suggests that teacher educators with MEd have better productivity than teacher educators with MA/MSc. Moreover, productivity of teacher educators with PhD (Education) in this study was higher than that of teacher educators with BEd, MEd, BA/BSc, MA/MSc. In addition, productivity of teacher educators with PhD in this study was higher than that of teacher educators with BEd, BA/BSc and MA/MSc. The results can be reasonably interpreted that teacher educators who have obtained PhD (Education), PhD and MEd attained the high level of academic qualification and often possess a more profound understanding of institutional systems. Then, they have higher professional confidence and perform their responsibilities better than other teacher educators. This finding is consistent with the study of Okiki (2013) who showed that productivity of teacher educators with PhD was higher than others.

The findings of this study revealed a positive relationship between psychological safety and productivity among Myanmar teacher educators. This indicates that teacher educators with higher levels of psychological safety tend to demonstrate better productivity. In the context of Myanmar teacher education, this finding highlights the importance of psychological safety in workplace to improve the teacher educators' productivity. Teacher educators' productivity is the most important organizational aspect to achieve the goals of the institution. If teacher educators experience psychologically safe workplace, they fully have interest and value to work and then it affects their teaching performance and productivity (Comighud, et. al., 2021). In actuality, psychological safety is a primary indicator of teacher educators' performance concerning teaching and other routine responsibilities. When psychological safety is fulfilled, teacher educators' work productivity can increase and it is expected that this will also have an impact on the willingness of teachers who are happy to make effective work, in order to improve student teachers' learning and quality of education (Utami & Harini, 2019).

The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that psychological safety was a moderate predictor of productivity among Myanmar teacher educators. This finding indicates that psychological safety makes a meaningful contribution to explaining variations in teacher educators' productivity. Teacher educators with higher levels of psychological safety are more likely to perform their professional responsibilities effectively. However, the moderate predictive effect also suggests that teacher educators' productivity is influenced by a combination of psychological safety and other individual and organizational factors. This finding demonstrate that psychological safety is a significant and meaningful predictor of productivity among Myanmar teacher educators. It plays an important role in enhancing teaching quality, mentoring student teachers and institutional participation. These results highlight the importance of fostering psychologically safe environments in Myanmar educational society to strengthen the productivity of Myanmar's teacher educators.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Myanmar teacher educators possess high level of psychological safety and productivity. Their psychologically safe work environment reflects their performance in teaching, mentoring, supervision, doing research and participation in institutional activities. Maintaining and further enhancing psychological safety in their workplace may contribute to improve professional responsibilities and better learning outcomes for future teachers.

The results showed that teaching experience and academic qualification significantly influence teacher educators' psychological safety, indicating that teacher educators with above 20 years old teaching experiences experience higher psychological safety than teacher educators with 1-5 years old teaching experiences and teacher educators with 6-10 years old teaching experiences. Moreover, academic qualification difference was found in psychological safety, with teacher educators with MEd experience higher psychological safety than teacher educators with BEd. Furthermore, teacher educators with PhD (Education) and PhD experience higher psychological safety than teacher educators with MEd, MA/MSc and BA/BSc.

Regarding productivity, the findings revealed that there were significant differences by research experience, teaching experience and academic qualification. Myanmar teacher educators who have research experience have higher productivity than teacher educators who don't have research experience. Teacher educators get knowledge from doing research and can effectively apply them into professional responsibilities to ensure professional success. Moreover, productivity of teacher educators with above 20 years old teaching experiences and teacher educators with 11-15 years old teaching experiences is higher than that of teacher educators with 6-10 years and 1-5 years old teaching experiences. In addition, teacher educators with MEd have higher productivity than teacher educators with MA/MSc. Productivity of teacher educators with PhD and PhD (Education) was higher than that of teacher educators with BEd, MEd, BA/BSc, MA/MSc.

Furthermore, the study found a positive relationship between psychological safety and productivity. Regression analysis also demonstrated that psychological safety was a moderate predictor of productivity among Myanmar teacher educators. These findings confirm that psychological safety is a factor that contributes to strengthen the productivity of teacher educators. Within the institutional environment, poor departmental relationships, a lack of mutual trust, and insufficient administrative support serve as critical stressors that exacerbate perceived stress and directly impede productivity. Specifically, when teacher educators encounter interpersonal conflicts, fractionalization, or strained relationships with department heads, they will receive stress. Ultimately, this dynamic culminates in compromised productivity, which severely threatens the overall quality of education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021).

Overall, the study concludes that developing psychological safety in Myanmar educational society can contribute to enhancing productivity of teacher educators and improving the quality of teacher education. Therefore, educational organizations and administrators focusing on improvement of quality education should be strengthened to provide psychologically safe work environment to teacher educators in performing their roles effectively. Furthermore, the findings highlight the essential role of institutional leadership and administrative structures in sustaining a psychologically safe environment. Administrators and head of department must actively cultivate an organizational culture that values open dialogue, shared decision-making, and constructive feedback. When administrators demonstrate empathy, recognize professional efforts, and address interpersonal frictions proactively, teacher educators are less likely to experience burnout or emotional strain. Providing mentorship initiatives, collaborative peer networks, and clear policy guidelines can reduce workplace stress. By transforming administrative oversight into a relational and supportive framework, educational institutions can minimize task ambiguity, foster personal resilience, and ensure that teacher educators feel secure enough to innovate in their pedagogical practices. Since novice educators and those with lower academic qualifications reported lower levels of psychological safety and productivity, tailored onboarding programs and ongoing skill-building workshops are crucial. Professional growth opportunities should not only focus on instructional methodologies and research skills but also on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and stress management. Furthermore, higher education authorities should optimize the distribution of instructional resources, research support, and equitable workload assignments. Finally, this research provides a strong foundation for future inquiries into the institutional dynamics of teacher education in Myanmar.

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