



Empowering Future Educators: Understanding Pre-service Teachers’ Self-efficacy in Instruction and Classroom Management

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author AG performed the Methodology, prepared the original draft, did data visualization and investigation. Author GY conceptualized the study, wrote, reviewed and edited the manuscript and supervised the study. Author GAM wrote and reviewed and edited the manuscript, did software analysis and data validation. Author VAM reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Classroom management decision difficulty is consistently reported among the top reasons given by both novice and experienced teachers in the teaching profession. To achieve positive learning, we must understand the issues related to teacher self-efficacy that may influence classroom management decisions.

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Aim: This study investigated pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in making classroom management decisions as they progressed through the professional development sequence.

Methodology: Quantitative descriptive research methodology was employed. The Proportional stratified sampling technique was used to select 225 students across colleges and programs. Questionnaires were administered for data collection in this study. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data.

Findings: Findings indicated that pre-service teachers have higher levels of classroom management decision self-efficacy and instructional self-efficacy.

Conclusion: The practical implication is that this study highlights the importance of building and maintaining self-efficacy through teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development in Ghana's educational institutions, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching and ultimately benefiting students' academic experiences.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher; classroom management; self-efficacy; decision; teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching, by its very nature, is a process laden with complex, dynamic, and non-linear challenges. It often necessitates the resolution of ill-defined problems, a task that demands not only pedagogical skill but a strong sense of personal agency. The concept of individual agency, defined as a teacher's capacity to be self-organizing, self-reflective, self-regulating, and proactive, plays a crucial role in determining overall classroom effectiveness. The core of personal agency is the teacher's self-efficacy or confidence in achieving desired results. This conviction extends beyond basic skills to encompass the teacher's ability to establish objectives, employ effective tactics, and envision success. It also comprises the ability to reflect on personal experiences and make well-informed decisions about future activities. The association between a teacher's firsthand knowledge and their ability to navigate the multifaceted arena of education purposefully exemplifies the interplay between individual responsibility and self-efficacy (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Understanding this dynamic relationship is crucial to not only developing better teaching methods but also for creating an environment where educators are empowered to tackle challenges with confidence and creativity.

Teacher preparation is a multifaceted component of the broader scope of teacher education. This vital stage requires pre-service teachers to develop a range of skills essential to the profession. Skills such as teaching methodologies, classroom management, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving are central to this preparation (Slater & Main, 2020; Bandura, 2000). These capabilities are not just mechanical or procedural; they also

encompass cognitive functions, task management abilities, and the agility to seek solutions in complex situations (Bandura, 2000). Surprisingly, the concept of "self-efficacy," so integral to successful teaching, is often neglected in collaboration with cooperating teachers, university supervisors, or internship conferences (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). Modern teacher education programmes seek to address this shortcoming by employing a comprehensive approach. In the view of Nguyen, Walkinshaw, and Pham (2017), these programmes aim to educate undergraduate students by blending pedagogical and topic knowledge and tailoring the curriculum to the students' academic needs. Nonetheless, specific challenges persist. For example, Kukari and Honan (2010) discovered that potential teachers typically perceive teaching as a one-way flow of knowledge from educators to learners. To counteract this limited perspective, teacher education programmes take proactive attempts to engage pre-service teachers in a variety of contacts that go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. These experiences include classroom management training viewed as a decision-making process (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016), interventions aimed at increasing self-efficacy perception (Slater & Main, 2020), and mastery of teaching, classroom management, a deep understanding of subject matter, and the provision of constructive criticism during instruction. All of these characteristics are related to competence and are considered skills that can be developed in the professional educational context (Kim & Buric, 2020).

The duration of pre-service teaching influences characteristics such as anxiety levels (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016), instructional effectiveness, and enthusiasm (Maphosa, Bhebhe, & Shumba, 2014). These expanded interests and

concentrations are rooted in a more comprehensive knowledge and experiential basis established during the internship, which includes self-efficacy—a term indicating one's ability to achieve goals (Austin, 2010). Scholars have investigated various elements of teacher efficacy that influence teaching practice (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and found that teacher efficacy is predictive of student outcomes, including achievement, enthusiasm, and participation (Bandura, 1997). Teacher efficacy is fundamental to teacher productivity (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003) and has a substantial impact on teachers' decision-making, including referral and placement decisions. Research has shown that teacher efficacy is crucial in these domains and in determining the acceptability of conventional school placements. In a similar vein, pre-service teachers' self-efficacy remains a topic of discussion due to its impact on classroom administration and decision-making processes. Building on these fundamentals, we can delve deeper into the complex subject matter of teacher education, which encompasses preparation, hands-on instruction, and the development of critical capabilities that contribute to the creation of successful learning environments in the professional teaching arena (Kim & Buric, 2020). This expanded area of interest and concentration may result from a more substantial knowledge and experiential basis acquired during the internship.

Some research studies (Kwarteng & Sappor, 2021; Colson, Sparks, Berridge, Frimming & Willis, 2017; Giles & Kent, 2016) have emphasised the importance of self-efficacy in both practicing and prospective teachers. For instance, a study conducted by Kwarteng and Sappor (2021) found that pre-service accounting teachers displayed a high level of self-confidence in classroom management. According to Colson, Sparks, Berridge, Frimming, and Willis (2017), pre-service teacher candidates placed in year-long assignments were more satisfied with student involvement and classroom behaviour management than those placed in standard one-semester placements. Also, Giles and Kent (2016) discovered significant levels of self-efficacy in instructional components among pre-service educators. An astonishing 93% of participants effectively incorporated technological resources into their teaching, and 68% expressed strong confidence in their ability to select and utilize technology for educational purposes. While previous research has made significant advances in understanding self-

efficacy among experienced educators, there is a clear need for additional study into the subject matter of self-efficacy among pre-service teachers in Ghana. The deep links between self-efficacy, managing a learning environment, the decision-making process, and the critical role of mentors and supervisors warrant a closer examination. Exploration of these interrelationships will help create more effective teacher instruction and preparation programmes as the field of education evolve. Moreover, taken together, findings from existing studies improve our understanding of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, with a focus on instructional delivery, decision-making processes, and classroom management. The ever-changing nature of research highlights the critical need for a critical examination of the intricacies related to pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decisions. Bearing this in mind, this study aims to shed light on the following questions: 1. What is the level of classroom management efficacy self-awareness among pre-service teachers? 2. What is the level of classroom instruction efficacy-self of the pre-service teachers?

The rest of the study is structured as follows: the second section highlights a review of the literature; the third section provides the method employed in the study. The fourth section presents the findings and discussion, and the fifth section provides the practical implications and conclusion of the study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory has served as a major foundation for teacher self-efficacy research during the previous thirty years. "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" is what Bandura (1986, 391) claimed self-efficacy reflects. One of the two components of teachers' efficacy, personal teachers' effectiveness, was formerly thought to be synonymous with instructors' self-efficacy beliefs. According to Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998), the second component does not reflect instructors' self-efficacy; instead, it refers to how teachers generally evaluate instructional efficacy. High correlations have been found in the literature between self-efficacy and other pertinent variables, including job satisfaction (Høigaard, Giske & Sundsli 2012), teacher commitment

(Evans & Tribble, 1986; Coladarci, 1992), classroom teacher behaviour (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk & Randhawa, 1988), and student achievement (Caprara et al., 2006). According to Bandura (1986), sources of self-efficacy encompass a collection of unique experiences that influence one's sense of self-efficacy. Consequently, attribution analysis and the perception of one's sources of self-efficacy are the main determinants of efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy 1998).

2.2 Pre-service Teachers and Self-Efficacy

Teacher burnout is a common outcome of the demanding nature of the teaching profession (Prilleltensky, et al. 2016). In light of this, it is reasonable that pre-service teachers might feel stressed out by a cooperating teacher they have never met and a school culture they are unfamiliar with. Feelings of recurring accomplishment were found to help pre-service teachers manage stress related to teaching in Bandura's seminal 1997 study. Even though pre-service teachers' experiences with student teaching are mostly pleasant (Hascher & Wepf, 2007; Mogapi, et al. 2018).), anxiety, trepidation, and worry are nevertheless common (Hascher & Hagenauer, 2016, p. 22). Research has indicated that student teaching plays a crucial role in teacher retention, as well as in preparing pre-service teachers for their future roles in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, et al. 2010; Colson et al., 2017). According to Ryel, Bernsauzen, and van Tassell (2001), pre-service teachers need to feel connected to the teaching community and have a sense of self-efficacy. Pre-service teachers' self-perceptions seem to be significantly influenced by their sense of self-efficacy (Tümekaya & Miller, 2020). According to Moulding, Stewart, and Dunmeyer (2014, p. 61), self-efficacy refers to a teacher's confidence in their ability to carry out their duties as an educator. Furthermore, research indicates a correlation between self-efficacy and student accomplishment (Shoulders & Krei, 2015; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Guo, Piasta, Justice & Kaderavek, 2010). Teachers who have a high sense of efficacy, according to Hoy and Spero (2005), are more eager, receptive to new ideas, and willing to employ sophisticated techniques (as cited in Moulding, Stewart & Dunmeyer, 2014, p. 61). The same study discovered a relationship between student achievement and teachers' self-efficacy.

2.3 Classroom Management Self-efficacy

Arguments have been made for the protective role of self-efficacy against burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shannahan, 2014; Schwerdtfeger, Konermann, & Schönhofen, 2008). It has been discovered that burnout levels are correlated with teachers' judgments of their ability in discipline and classroom management, with higher perceived competence being associated with lower burnout levels (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Different from other aspects of teaching self-efficacy, self-efficacy for classroom management is defined as a teacher's perceived ability to create and maintain an environment that is conducive to learning and to serving students who display challenging behaviours (Emmer & Hickman 1991). Apart from certain similarities with overall personal teaching efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), scholars have identified two distinct aspects of self-efficacy related to classroom management: discipline and external influences (Emmer & Hickman, 1991). The classroom management and discipline component represents perceived competence in the areas of discipline and management. The external influences dimension, according to Emmer and Hickman, represents the idea that factors outside of a teacher's sphere of influence shape students' behaviours and outcomes. Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy for classroom management were found to have lower burnout rates in a multivariate meta-analysis examining the evidence linking self-efficacy for classroom management to burnout (Aloe & Thompson, 2013). Similarly, it has been found that emotional weariness impacts one's perception of their ability to lead a classroom (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

3. METHODS

3.1 Design and Sample

To display the true nature of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decisions, this investigation was conducted as a survey using a quantitative descriptive research methodology. With the help of a survey model, researchers can describe a current or previous situation, event, or phenomenon in its existing context and conditions (Creswell, 2014; Gyamfi, Loganathan, & Acquaye, 2023). Thus, this particular research bears the characteristics of a descriptive survey aimed at drawing an accurate picture of the variables being indicated.

Table 1. Distribution of the population across colleges and Programs

College	Primary	JHS	Total
St. Louis College of Education (SLCoE)	65	178	243
Wesley College of Education (WESCO)	54	223	277
Total	119	401	520

The study population includes all final-year students at Wesley College of Education (WESCO) and St. Louis College of Education (SLCoE) who enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Programme in 2018/2019 academic year. The year group was selected because it was the first batch of degree program. Primary and JHS students. The distribution of the population across colleges and Programs is presented in Table 1.

For descriptive studies, it is recommended that 10% or more of the target population is sufficient for the entire study. Therefore, the researchers used Slovincs' formula to sample 520 of the estimated final-year students at Wesley College of Education (WESCO) and St. Louis College of Education (SLCoE) who enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Programme in 2018/2019 academic year. Mathematically, the sample was calculated using the Slovincs method for calculation.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; n= sample size
 N= Total population
 e = degree of error expected = (0.05)
 k= Constant = 1
 Total Population, N = 520

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{520}{(1 + (520)(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{520}{1 + (520)(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{520}{1 + 1.3}$$

$$n = \frac{520}{2.3}$$

$$n = 225$$

Therefore, sample size for the study was 225

The Proportional stratified sampling technique was used to select students across colleges and programs. The result of the sample selection is presented in Table 2.

3.2 Instrumentation

Questionnaires were administered for data collection in this study. The self-developed questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A, which measured the demographic data of the respondents; and Sections B and C, which respectively elicited information on classroom management decision self-efficacy and instructional self-efficacy. Responses were gathered using a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The instrument underwent expert evaluation to ensure its construct validity. The questionnaire's reliability was evaluated using SPSS, with Cronbach's Alpha used to gauge internal consistency among data scores (Diedenhofen & Musch, 2016; Gyamfi, Yeboah, Ntoaduro, Langee, & Yeboah, 2023). Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to be 0.83, which exceeded the normal threshold value of 0.70. This result confirms the questionnaire's validity and reliability, ensuring its suitability for assessing participants' self-efficacy in classroom management and instructional decision-making.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data from this study were analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 22 software. During the examinations, descriptive analyses were used to assess the levels of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decisions. This study employed descriptive statistical methods to analyze the collected data, presenting the findings using simple percentages and tables. Additionally, the mean and standard deviation were utilized to provide more detailed insights into the distribution and central tendencies of the data. These statistical measures helped to interpret the research questions, specifically regarding pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management and instructional decision-making, providing a nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

Table 2. Summary of sample selection

College	Primary		JHS		Total	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
St. Louis College of Education (SLCoE)	65	28	178	78	243	106
Wesley College of Education (WESCO)	54	23	223	96	277	119
Total	119	51	401	174	520	225

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The following section presents the findings of the data analysis process of this survey. Table 3 below represents the demographic information of respondents who were involved in the study.

Table 3 displays the demographic information of respondents. Some of the demographic information includes program, gender, entry behaviour, whether respondents have taught before, the years respondents have taught, the subject taught by respondents, and the level at which respondents taught. Considering the respondents' programme, it is observed that most of them, 174 (77.3%), completed the JHS program, while 51 (22.7%) completed primary education. Furthermore, the female respondents were more numerous, 159 (70.8%), than their male counterparts, 66 (29.2%). It is also noted that most respondents, 171 representing 76.1%, have not taught before. Only 54, representing 23.9%, have some teaching experience. Among those who taught, the majority, 44, representing 81.5%, have taught for only one year, and a few, 10, representing 7.4%, have taught for two years. Finally, of those who taught, the majority, 44, representing 81.5%, taught at the primary level, while a few, 10, representing 7.4%, taught at the JHS level.

3.2 Research Question One

The aim of this research question was to determine the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy regarding classroom management decisions. In relation to this aim, mean and standard deviation

values, along with the minimum and maximum scores of pre-service teachers' classroom management and decision self-efficacy, were examined through descriptive analysis. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 displays the mean rank of the efficacy in influencing decision-making. The results indicate that, generally, preservice teachers tend to have higher self-efficacy in classroom management decisions. This is because the mean of means is 3.80, which is greater than the cut-off point of 3.00. These include preventing distracting behaviour during the teaching and learning process (M = 4.52; SD = 1.029), the extent of getting children to follow classroom instructions (M = 4.24; SD = 1.049), and the extent of controlling distracting behaviour exhibited in the classroom (M = 4.16; SD = 0.912). The mean ranks were derived according to the mean values. Preventing distractive behaviour during the teaching and learning process was highly considered in terms of decision-making influence, followed by the extent of getting children to follow classroom instructions; next is the importance of controlling distracting behaviour exhibited in the classroom, through to the least influence in decision making which is how much of influencing decisions that are made in school.

3.3 Research Question Two

The research question aimed to investigate the classroom management and decision-making self-efficacy of preservice teachers. Means and standard deviation with mean ranks were used to analyse the data. The result is presented in Table 5

Table 3. Demographic information of respondents

Demographic information	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Program (N = 225):		
Primary	51	22.7
JHS	174	77.3
Gender (N = 225):		
Male	66	29.2
Female	159	70.8
Have taught before (N = 225):		
Yes	54	23.9
No	171	76.1
Years taught (N =54):		
One year	44	81.5
Two years	10	7.4
Level taught (N = 54):		
Primary	44	81.5
JHS	10	7.4

Table 4. Mean rank of classroom management and decision self-efficacy

Efficacies	Mean	Mean ranks	Standard deviation
Preventing distracting behaviour during the teaching and learning process	4.52	1 st	1.029
The extent to which children follow classroom instructions	4.24	2 nd	1.049
Extent of controlling distracting behaviour exhibited in the classroom	4.16	3 rd	0.912
How much does it cost to prevent problem behaviour on school grounds	3.58	4 th	1.059
Expressing views freely on important matters in school	3.32	5 th	0.957
How much influence do decisions made in school have?	2.95	6 th	0.864
Mean of means	3.80		0.984

Table 5. Mean ranks of instructional self-efficacy

Instructional self-efficacies	Means	Mean ranks	Standard deviation
The extent of consulting reference books to prepare lesson notes	4.32	1 st	0.947
What to do to get children to do their homework	4.27	2 nd	0.916
Extending the presentation improves pupils' learning outcomes	4.18	3 rd	0.956
Extend to motivate students in lessons	4.08	4 th	0.898
The extent to which the teaching methods selected are used in the delivery of lessons	4.00	5 th	0.982
The extent of varying the teaching method selected to improve the lesson presentation	3.98	6 th	0.991
How much to do to increase students' memory of what they have been taught	3.97	7 th	1.073
Extensively well-versed in the selection of appropriate teaching methods for delivering lessons	3.95	8 th	1.125
Extremely versed in the subjects I am going to handle	3.87	9 th	1.130
What can be done to enhance learning when there's a lack of support from a mentor?	3.83	10 th	1.109
Extend to keeping students on task during teaching and learning	3.73	11 th	0.856
Getting children to do their homework	3.28	12 th	1.191
How much does it cost to acquire the instructional materials and equipment needed for teaching?	3.24	13 th	1.023
Mean of means	3.90		0.976

Table 5 displays the mean ranks of instructional self-efficacies. The results show that, generally, the pre-service teachers have higher instructional self-efficacy. This is because the mean of means, 3.90, is greater than the cut-off point of 3.00. The results showed that pre-service had higher efficacies to influence some instructional decisions than others. The means of those activities were greater than the mean of means of 3.90. These activities include extent of consulting reference books to prepare lesson notes ($M = 4.32$; $SD = 0.947$), what to do to get children to do their homework ($M = 4.27$; $SD = 0.916$), extent of presentation to improve pupils learning outcome ($M = 4.18$; $SD = 0.956$) and extent to motivate students in lessons ($M = 4.08$; $SD = 0.898$). Other activities include extension of using teaching methods selected in the delivery of lessons ($M = 4.00$; $SD = 0.982$), extent of varying the chosen teaching method to improve in the lesson presentation ($M = 3.98$; $SD = 0.991$), how much to do to increase students' memory on what they have been taught ($M = 3.97$; $SD = 1.073$) and extent of well versed in the selection of appropriate teaching method in the delivery lesson ($M = 3.95$; $SD = 1.125$). With the instructional self-efficacies, consulting reference books to prepare lesson notes was ranked first with a mean value of 4.32, indicating approximately quite a bit, followed by getting children to do their homework, extent of presentation to improve pupils learning outcome and the least instructional efficacies was how much to do to get instructional materials and equipment needed in teaching.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decision

The results of this study highlighted a general trend among pre-service teachers, demonstrating elevated self-efficacy in both classroom management and decision-making. This research found a relationship between classroom management among pre-service teachers and their perception of autonomy in decision-making, managing challenging behaviours, and coherent demands for action, echoing the findings of Ag-Ahmad, Mohamed, and Bakar (2023). Furthermore, the study emphasised the importance of pre-service teachers receiving clear and concise guidance from their mentors and supervisors during field experiences. Positive self-efficacy in classroom management

was a prevalent trait among the pre-service teachers examined. This aligns with the findings of Gaudreau et al., suggesting that such self-efficacy can be linked to the specialised training they received in their respective colleges. Similarly, research by Patterson and Farmer (2018) demonstrated an increase in perceptions of self-efficacy among pre-service teachers throughout their student teaching experience, a trend that this study corroborated. While these studies varied in their geographical context and educational setting, their converging findings reveal a general link between the instruction student teachers receive and their positive self-efficacy. This conclusion is further supported by the studies of Lazarides, Watt, and Richardson (2020) and Kwarteng and Sappor (2021). The latter explicitly contrasted pre-service accounting teachers' efficacy in managing classrooms concerning student engagement and pedagogical practices and discovered a higher efficacy in management, which is also represented in this study. These findings highlight the critical role that training and education play in shaping pre-service teachers' confidence and competence in classroom management.

3.2.2 Pre-Service teachers' instructional self-efficacy

This study's findings highlight a prevalent tendency among pre-service teachers, indicating a heightened sense of self-efficacy in teaching. This finding is consistent with the findings of Giles and Kent (2016), who discovered a comparable high level of confidence among pre-service teachers, in particular when it comes to integrating technology into their education. Although Giles and Kent's study focused exclusively on technology use in courses, an overwhelming majority of participants in this study demonstrated strong confidence in selecting and utilizing technology. Colson et al. (2017) conducted research that is consistent with the findings of this study. Their findings revealed that pre-service teacher candidates who participated in year-long student teaching assignments were more satisfied with their ability to supervise classroom behaviour and engage pupils than those who participated in typical one-semester placements. This highlights the beneficial effect that teaching practice duration can have on the instructional efficacy of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, Kwarteng and Sappor (2021) found that pre-service accounting teachers were exceptionally proficient in teaching

cost accounting, which aligns with the findings of this study. Overall, these findings suggest a growing consensus on the value of hands-on experience and specialized training in enhancing pre-service teachers' instructional self-efficacy across various educational contexts and subjects.

4. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

This study reinforces the core tenets of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory by demonstrating that pre-service teachers' self-efficacy is a critical determinant of their future teaching competence. The findings support the role of reciprocal determinism, highlighting how personal belief systems, behavior, and teacher education environments interact to shape self-efficacy. Moreover, the results expand SCT by affirming the role of culturally grounded and context-specific experiences in efficacy development, thereby underscoring the theory's relevance to teacher preparation in diverse settings such as Ghana.

As part of the study's practical implications, pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in teaching and classroom management is favorably correlated with the specialized training they received in their respective colleges. This emphasizes the importance of Ghana having well-planned teacher preparation programmes that equip aspiring teachers with the skills and confidence they need to manage classrooms effectively and deliver high-quality education. During their field experiences, pre-service teachers in Ghana could gain clear and precise guidance from their mentors and supervisors. This demonstrates the importance of mentoring and assistance in helping pre-service teachers develop their sense of self-efficacy. It emphasizes the importance of having a planned and encouraging mentorship programme in the Ghanaian educational system. Extended teaching practice assignments, such as one-year placements, have a positive effect on the instructional self-efficacy of pre-service teachers. This suggests that to provide pre-service teachers with more comprehensive practical experience and potentially increase their confidence and competence, the Ghanaian education system may benefit from expanding the duration of teaching practice. In various educational contexts and courses, there is widespread agreement on the importance of practical experience and specialized training in enhancing the self-efficacy of pre-service

teachers. This unanimity reaffirms the importance of these elements in Ghanaian teacher preparation programs.

Despite the scope of this study, the research also has some conceptual and methodological limitations. First, conceptually, there is a limited number of studies of this nature conducted among students of Colleges of Education in Ghana, thus, the findings were primarily discussed about the results obtained from the field. Considering the educational environment and developmental differences among students, it is worth noting that teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decisions may vary. There are also methodological limitations. The study sample consisted of 225 pre-service teachers from Wesley College and St Louis Training College in Ghana. Teachers' classroom management decisions are believed to be influenced by the school environment in which they teach.

For future studies, it is essential to work with a larger sample in other parts of Ghana to confirm the findings of the current study. Because of the selection process from the population to examine the study sample, future studies may have the opportunity to generalize their results back to the population from which they were selected. Another methodological limitation is the use of quantitative research. Teachers filled the scales according to their own opinions. In the future, more in-depth studies using both qualitative and quantitative research methods can be conducted to further confirm the findings.

Additionally, research on how the perceptions of self-efficacy, belief, and classroom management decisions of teachers whose beliefs and skills have been identified are reflected in classroom practices is necessary. More investigation is needed to determine if a year-long student teaching placement cultivates highly efficacious teachers. It is particularly important to qualitatively explore the differences between placements in primary schools and those in secondary schools, as well as to understand why there is a disparity in their efficacy.

In conclusion, while vicarious experiences are beneficial to the development of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management decisions, they would undoubtedly be aided by the addition of mastery experiences. By listening to the requests and concerns that pre-service teachers have about classroom management decisions, teacher educators can better meet

their needs, aiming to produce teachers who are confident and capable of making informed, progressive decisions in the classroom environment.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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