9. Limitations of the Study and Future Research Directions

This study has certain acknowledgeable limitations. The analysis done for this study has been based on cross-sectional data of students’ perceptions of teachers’ effectiveness on certain items at a single point in time. To overcome this limitation to a large extent, data has been collected at two different time points, with a gap of six months, yet, longitudinal data regarding value added by a teacher in terms of student learning has the possibility of increasing the scope of analysis. But a major problem with the ‘value-addition’ approach is the difficulty of segregating the value added by the same teacher, and cumulative effects of other teachers and stakeholders like tutors, parents, peers etc. on student learning. Hence, a student may be not performing well in a particular subject at one point, and may feel that the teacher is ineffective. However, at a later point in time, with the help of a tutor or parents teaching at home, the same child may be able to grasp the content better in class and may feel that the same teacher who was ineffective earlier is effective now. Therefore, it is very difficult to segregate these effects.

Also, rather than taking teacher effectiveness data from only students as in this case, effectiveness ratings can also be corroborated by capturing data regarding teacher effectiveness from Heads of the Department, Principals and even parents. This may give a more holistic view regarding teacher effectiveness. However, at present, data of this sort is not readily available in India. Also, there is dearth of studies and instruments which capture and report data of this sort. Moreover, even if available, most part of this data will be very qualitative in nature for e.g. confidential reports of teachers, which may be hard to compare in absolute sense across different schools.

A student’s own level of intelligence, learning ability, parents’ background etc. are also some of the factors that play an important role in forming his/her perceptions about the teacher.
It is impossible to control for all these factors, but a large random sample of 6020 students, helps in overcoming any interfering effects of this sort.

Data for this study has been mainly collected from privately managed schools in three states of India. These types of schools get better input in terms of students who come from slightly privileged economic and social background over others. These schools are also comparatively well off in terms of infrastructure. A study of the present kind in Government run schools may give totally different results. Majority of the teacher respondents for this study are female, which is not by design but by mere presence of women in school teaching in urban India in large numbers. Future studies with more heterogeneous samples can further test for any deviance from the results obtained in this study.

Taking cues from Bandura’s ‘Self-efficacy’ theory (1977) and ‘Social Cognitive Theory’ (1986; 1989;1997), this study has brought forth two factors which enhance teacher self-efficacy at the school level viz. collaboration and principal leadership. It is possible that through other theoretical frameworks, or through a field level exploratory study in some different context, some more factors influencing teacher self-efficacy may emerge. While this study has verified the relationship of collaboration and principal leadership with teacher self-efficacy, future studies can explore the most effective means of collaboration which have the potential to increase teacher-efficacy, or the type of support provided by the principal (physical resources like infrastructure or moral support or intellectual guidance etc.) that impacts teacher self-efficacy the maximum.

In the current study, the moderating role of big five personality traits on the relationship of principal leadership and collaboration with teacher self-efficacy has been explored. It is possible that a combination of two traits (for e.g. a teacher who is high on emotional stability and
conscientiousness) may yield higher predictive efficiency. Such kind of relationships can be tested in future.

In the present study, the ‘Five Factor Model’ (FFM) of personality has been used for capturing the personality of the teachers. The personality evaluation scale obtained from ‘International Personality Item Pool’ (IPIP) was used due to its high discriminant validity across occupations (Mc Crae & Costa, 1990), and its ready availability. Also, it is one of the instruments which does not require the researcher to be a trained psychologist. However, there are other personality instruments like Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which can possibly yield more personality types than FFM. Researchers trained in the use of MBTI can study these relationships and compare and contrast the results obtained with that of the present study.