



ISSN: 2091-2889 (online)
2091-2412 (print)

Received: 08 Aug 2025
Accepted: 10 Dec 2025
Published: 31 Dec 2025

DOI: [10.54530/jcmc.1806](https://doi.org/10.54530/jcmc.1806)



Association between mental well-being and sense of self-efficacy among faculties in Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences: A cross-sectional study

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Peer reviewed

Abstract

Introduction: Mental well-being is an increasing public health concern and is crucial for professionals working in high-stress environments, such as medical educators. Teaching in medical institutions presents unique challenges that can impact educators' mental well-being, potentially influencing their sense of self-efficacy. Despite existing research on self-efficacy and mental well-being in other professions, there have been limited studies exploring this relationship among medical faculty in Nepal. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between mental well-being and self-efficacy among faculty members at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences.

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 136 faculty members from different departments at Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences from 10 May 2024 to 12 Mar 2025. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale and the Faculty's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale were used to assess mental well-being and self-efficacy, respectively. SPSS version 25 was used for data analysis, and associations were examined using Fisher's exact test.

Result: The majority of participants (74.3%) reported moderate mental well-being, while 14.7% experienced low, and 11.0% reported high well-being. Self-efficacy levels were predominantly sufficient (73.5%), while 26.5% had moderate self-efficacy. Mental well-being was significantly associated with self-efficacy ($p=0.002$), faculty designation ($p=0.003$), and self-efficacy with teaching experience ($p=0.008$). Faculty members with better mental health were more likely to have higher self-efficacy.

Conclusion: The findings highlight a strong association between mental well-being and self-efficacy among medical faculty. Institutions should prioritize faculty mental health support and professional development programs.

How to cite

Adhikari U, K.C.P, Shrestha R. Association between mental well-being and sense of self-efficacy among faculties in Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Chitwan Medical College*. 2025;15(56):22-8.

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Introduction

Mental well-being, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state that enables individuals to manage life's stresses, realize their abilities, work productively, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.¹

Globally, mental health problems are a rising public health concern, contributing to 30% of the non-fatal disease burden and 10% of the overall disease burden.² In Nepal, mental health disorders account for 18% of the disease burden caused by non-communicable diseases and 7% of the total disease burden.³ A nationwide survey reported that the prevalence of mental disorders is 10% among adults and 5.2% among adolescents, highlighting the urgency of addressing mental health issues.⁴ Mental well-being often declines in high-stress jobs due to conditions like anxiety and depression.

Additionally, teaching is known to be a very stressful and challenging job, putting educators at a heightened risk for poor mental health due to the pressures and demands they face.^{5,6} Medical faculties serve as clinical practitioners, educators, researchers, and trainers, simultaneously putting them at risk for poor mental health.⁷ A key factor that influences how faculties cope with these challenges is self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes.⁸ Self-efficacy can play a crucial role in shaping faculty members' instructional behaviours, motivation, and resilience.^{9,10}

Despite the established link between self-efficacy and mental well-being in various professional settings, limited research has been conducted among medical faculties, particularly in Nepal. Therefore, this study aims to find the association between these factors among medical faculties in Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS).

Method

This cross-sectional study was conducted from 10 May 2024 to 12 Mar 2025, among faculty members at KUSMS, Dhulikhel. The study

population comprised faculty members from various departments, including Medical, Nursing/Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Dental, Public Health, and Preclinical Sciences.

The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for finite populations, resulting in a sample size of 136 out of a total faculty population of 210. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was applied to ensure adequate representation from different departments. Within each department, convenience sampling was used to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria required faculty members to be aged between 25 and 70 years, have at least six months of teaching experience, and provide informed consent. Faculty members with less than six months of teaching experience or those unwilling to participate were excluded from study.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) at KUSMS, ref. 198/24. Permissions were granted by the Dean of KUSMS and relevant department heads.

Faculty members were approached in person, provided with detailed study information, and asked to sign an informed consent form before completing the questionnaire. Faculty members were asked an outcome-specific questionnaire on the same day of approach. Data collection was conducted using validated self-administered questionnaires, including the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) and the short form Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) for mental well-being and self-efficacy, respectively. Both instruments have been previously validated in multiple studies and demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.91 for WEMWBS and 0.90 for TSES.

The WEMWBS consists of 14 items assessing mental well-being, with responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time). The scores range from 14 to 70, categorized as high well-being (60–70), moderate well-being (42–59), and low well-being (14–41).¹¹

The TSES short form consists of 12 items assessing self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. It is measured on a 9-point Likert scale from 1 (Nothing) to 9 (A great deal). The mean scores are categorized as insufficient (1.00–3.67), moderately sufficient (3.68–6.34), and sufficient (6.35–9.00).⁹

Data were entered, coded and analysed using SPSS version 25. Normality test of the data set was done using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which revealed the dataset was normally distributed. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages and means, were used to summarize participant characteristics.

Fisher's exact test (instead of Chi-square as some cell counts were <5) was carried out for categorical variables (well-being/efficacy categories).

Result

A total of 136 faculty members from KUSMS participated in the study. The age of participants ranged from 26 to 58 years, with a mean age of 38.65. Among them, 43.4% were

male, and 56.6% were female. Regarding teaching experience, majority of faculty members had teaching experience of 6 to 10 years (31.6%), followed by faculty members with teaching experience of 6 months to 5 years (27.2%), 11 to 15 years (22.8%), 16 to 20 years (13.2%) and more than 20 years (5.1%). Faculty members were from various departments, with 43.4% from the Medical department, 20.6% from Preclinical, 14% from Dental and Nursing/Midwifery, 5.9% from Physiotherapy, and 2.2% from Public Health. In terms of designation, 64(47.1%) were Lecturers, 44(32.4%) were Assistant Professors, 17(12.5%) were Associate Professors, and 11(8.1%) were Professors. Socio-demographic characteristics of participants are illustrated in Table 1.

Among the faculty members, 20(14.7%) had low mental well-being, 101(74.3%) had moderate mental well-being, and 15(11.0%) had high mental well-being. Regarding self-efficacy, 36(26.5%) reported moderately sufficient self-efficacy, while 100(73.5%) reported sufficient self-efficacy. No faculty members reported insufficient self-efficacy.

Table 1. Socio-demographics of KUSMS faculties surveyed for mental well-being and sense of self efficacy n=136

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	59	43.4
	Female	77	56.6
Teaching Experience	6 months-5 years	37	27.2
	6-10 years	43	31.6
	11-15 years	31	22.8
	16-20 years	18	13.2
	Above 20 years	7	5.1
Departments	Dental	19	14.0
	Medical	59	43.4
	Nursing/Midwifery	19	14.0
	Physiotherapy	8	5.9
	Preclinical	28	20.6
	Public Health	3	2.2
Designation	Professor	11	8.1
	Associate Professor	17	12.5
	Assistant Professor	44	32.4
	Lecturer	64	47.1

KUSMS: Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences

The level of mental well-being and sense of self-efficacy is shown in Table 2.

A significant association was found between mental well-being and faculty members' self-efficacy ($p = 0.002$), indicating that faculty members with better mental well-being were more likely to report higher self-efficacy. It is illustrated in Table 3.

Mental well-being showed a significant association with the faculty's designation ($p=0.003$). Similarly, faculties' sense of self-efficacy showed a significant association with the teaching experience ($p=0.008$). However, no significant association was found between other variables. The association is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 2. Level of mental well-being and sense of self-efficacy of faculties of KUSMS, n= 136

Levels	Frequency	Percent
Mental well-being		
Low	20	14.7
Moderate	101	74.3
High	15	11.0
Sense of self-efficacy		
Insufficient	-	-
Moderately sufficient	36	26.5
Sufficient	100	73.5

Table 3. Association between mental well-being and self-efficacy among faculties of KUSMS n=136

Mental well-being	TSES n(%)	p-value (Fisher)	
		Moderately sufficient	sufficient
Low well-being	10(50)	10(50)	0.002
Moderate well-being	26(26)	75(74)	
High well-being	0	15(100)	

TSES: Teacher's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale, p value <0.005: significant association

Table 4. Association between mental well-being and self-efficacy with experience and designation of faculties of KUSMS, n= 136

Variables	p value, Fisher's exact test
Mental well-being	0.501
Teaching experience	0.643
Designation	0.003
Faculties self-efficacy	0.388
Teaching Experience	0.008
Designation	0.239

p value <0.005: significant association

Discussion

There is a significant relationship between mental well-being and self-efficacy of the faculty members. The study's findings provide valuable insights into the mental health status

and self-efficacy levels of medical educators and their association.

Level of Mental well-being, revealed that majority of the faculty members reported a moderate level of mental well-being (74.3%),

14.7% reported that they had low mental well-being, whereas a low percentage reported high well-being (11.0%). The relatively high proportion of faculty members with moderate mental well-being suggests that although they are not significantly distressed, they are also not reaching their optimal mental health. Given the demanding nature of academic responsibilities, faculty members may face stressors such as workload management, administrative duties, and student interactions, which could impact their psychological well-being.^{9, 12} The finding was similar to previous studies that medical educators experience high work-related stress, which, if not managed effectively, may lead to burnout and reduced job satisfaction.^{13, 20}

Level of self-efficacy were much higher, with 73.5% of the faculty members reporting sufficient self-efficacy; 26.5% reported moderate self-efficacy, and none reported an insufficient level of self-efficacy. The high percentage of faculty members reporting sufficient self-efficacy indicates that, despite numerous challenges in their work environment, they maintain confidence in their teaching abilities.

However, the presence of faculty members with only moderate self-efficacy (26.5%) suggests that targeted professional development programs may be necessary to further enhance their teaching confidence and effectiveness. Faculty members with lower self-efficacy may struggle with classroom management, student engagement, and instructional delivery, which could have long-term implications for both educators and students.

Mental well-being and self-efficacy revealed a significant association between mental well-being and faculty members' self-efficacy ($p = 0.002$), indicating that faculty members with better mental well-being tend to exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize the impact of mental health on self-belief and professional performance. It has been found that faculties with higher self-efficacy reported better mental health outcomes, including positive emotions, job satisfaction, commitment, and personal

accomplishment.^{14, 15} Faculties with lower self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to suffer from emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Faculty members who have a high sense of their own efficacy are more enthusiastic, open to new ideas, and willing to apply a variety of teaching techniques and different assessment strategies.^{8, 16} Therefore, self-efficacy of faculties can ultimately enhance students' self-esteem, motivation and engagement in their learning.¹⁷ Conversely, mental distress, including stress and burnout, has been shown to erode self-efficacy beliefs, leading to decreased motivation and job satisfaction.^{14, 15}

Association between mental well-being revealed a statistically significant association with ranks ($p=0.003$). This suggests that professional rank may influence the mental well-being of educators, possibly due to varying responsibilities, workloads, and administrative pressures associated with different positions. Similar findings have been noted in previous studies that reported increased administrative stress among senior faculty, which may impact their well-being. However, lower-ranked faculty members may experience stress due to job insecurity or lack of autonomy, leading to varied effects on their mental health.¹⁸

However, no significant association was found between mental well-being and teaching experience ($p=0.643$) or departmental affiliation ($p = 0.501$). This suggests that mental well-being is not significantly impacted by the number of years in teaching or the department of employment, which contrasts with some literature suggesting that job tenure may contribute to psychological resilience or burnout.¹⁹

Self-efficacy and teaching experience had significant association ($p=0.008$). Faculty members with more teaching experience exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy, supporting the notion that prolonged engagement in teaching cultivates confidence and mastery in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. This aligns with previous research indicating that educators with more years in

service develop adaptive strategies to handle challenges and enhance their teaching.^{9,14} However, no significant association was found between self-efficacy and faculty designation ($p = 0.239$) or departmental affiliation ($p = 0.388$). This indicates that while teaching experience strengthens self-efficacy, professional rank and department do not play a substantial role in shaping educators' beliefs in their teaching capabilities. These findings suggest that self-efficacy is more likely to be developed through practical teaching exposure rather than hierarchical advancement or subject specialization.

Implications of the study has importance for fostering mental well-being in self-efficacy among faculty members. Institutions should consider implementing strategies to enhance faculty mental health, such as counselling services, stress management programs, and workload adjustments.²² Additionally, professional development initiatives that focus on enhancing self-efficacy, particularly for early-career educators, could be beneficial for enhancement of teachers', as well as students', performance.^{17, 21}

Limitations of this study include being conducted within a single institution, which may limit generalizability. Convenience sampling may have selection bias. Additionally, the study employed self-reported measures, which are subject to response bias. Future research should consider a longitudinal approach to explore the causal relationship between mental well-being and self-efficacy over time. Future research should use cut-offs validated in the Nepali population, as the current study relied on UK-validated thresholds. Comparative studies across multiple institutions could also provide a broader perspective on the factors influencing faculty mental well-being and self-efficacy.

Conclusion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the mental health status and self-efficacy levels of medical faculty and their association. The study demonstrated that there is a

significant relationship between mental well-being and self-efficacy among the faculty members. Teaching experience emerged as a significant factor in self-efficacy; however, designation and department were not. The study emphasizes the need for institutional support systems to enable faculty well-being and thereby create a more effective teaching atmosphere. Future research should continue to explore interventions that support faculty in sustaining both their mental health and professional effectiveness.

Author contribution

Conception, design: All; Data acquisition: UA, PKC; Data analysis, interpretation: All; Drafting: All; Revision: UA, RS; Final approval of the version to be published: All; Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work: All.

Acknowledgment

I sincerely express my gratitude to Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS) for providing the opportunity to conduct this study. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the faculty members who participated in this study and to the Institutional Review Committee (IRC), KUSMS, for their ethical approval.

Conflict of interest

None

Funding

None

Supplementary material

Data and supplementary material that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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