Measuring the Factors Affecting Educators' Self-Efficacy in Counteracting Child Abuse in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

Child abuse prevails, demanding strong consideration from parents, caregivers, and other responsible individuals. Children and teenagers spend significant time in educational institutions, providing educators with extensive access to them, particularly in the United Arab Emirates. This research also focused on educators' self-efficacy, presumed to be affected by Child Abuse Awareness Training, Work Experience, Personal Attitude, and Gender (as a mediator). The data was gathered using structured survey questionnaires designed under Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Results showed that most of the respondents agreed that Child Abuse Awareness Training (p<0.000), Work Experience (p<0.000), Personal Attitude (p<0.000), and Gender (p<0.000) significantly affect their self-efficacy. Simply put, educators consider specified training, experience, attitude and Gender as primary factors affecting and strengthening the self-efficacy to identify, report, and counteract child abuse in the country. Thus, with the growing concern about child abuse in the United Arab Emirates, this research highlights the importance of educators' confidence in their ability to be aware of child abuse. This emphasis stems from teachers' crucial role in identifying and reporting potential child abuse cases. As a result, supporting the broader objective of ensuring the safety and welfare of children. Finally, the research implications and limitations are discussed.

Keywords: *Child Abuse; Child Abuse Awareness Training; Self-Efficacy; Work Experience; Personal Attitude; UAE.*

Introduction

Child abuse refers to actions or omissions that pose a risk of detriment to a child. It encompasses different forms of mistreatment, including physical, psychological, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Beyond the evident physical injuries, child abuse can inflict profound emotional wounds on the victims, leading to stringent social issues (Fayaz, 2019). Consequently, there has been a substantial increase in human rights, law, forensic medicine, social sciences, and public health, leading to advanced international awareness of child abuse. However, more awareness is required to address the problem fully (Ali et al., 2021). The Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child have played a critical role in raising awareness among international organizations, governments, and NGOs about child abuse as part of a broader focus on children's rights (Bywaters & Skinner, 2022). In 2002, the World Report on Violence and Health shed light on the public health implications of child

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abuse. It underlined the importance of public health in counteracting such maltreatment and supporting victims. Besides, the World Health Assembly resolution further emphasized the need to implement the Violence and health report recommendations (United Nations Children's Fund, 2022). Many policy research reports, such as the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children, were initiated in response to a request from the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This Study particularly increased awareness at various levels, including global, regional, and national, with the help of regional consultations and government entities (Mehnaz, 2018).

As a result, policymakers and stakeholders emphasized parents, primary caregivers, educators, and social support institutions ensure maximum child protection by using possible means (Gün et al., 2022a). Talking particularly about the role of educators (Ugoji, 2020) stated that children and teenagers spend a substantial amount of time in educational institutions, making educators among the professionals with extensive access to them. In this context, "educator" refers to classroom regulators and other school staff supporting the child's education. Thus, it is assumed that different roles are played by teachers, school counsellors, school nurses, school social workers, special education professionals, administrators, and other school personnel in helping and supporting persecuted children (Sinanan, 2011a). According to (Abbasi et al., 2015), all these roles played by these individuals are crucial in helping children who have experienced maltreatment and encouraging a safe and supportive environment within the educational setting. In this context, (Walsh & Ey, 2023) argued that the most important investments, both intellectually and financially, in expanding the capacity of educators occur before they begin their careers, during their initial training (also known as pre-licensure, pre-qualifying, and preservice education, or initial training and preparation). Initial teacher education aims to improve their efficacy with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed to succeed as new professionals, including their roles in child protection and abuse identification(Tahat et al., 2023) .

Study Gaps and Objectives

Despite child abuse being widely discussed by empirical literature worldwide, it still needs more consideration. Especially, efforts to find the best possible solutions to counteract the relevant issue are the need of the day. This Study is based on two empirical gaps that further magnify its importance in examining educators' self-efficacy in counteracting child abuse in UAE. First, the main focus of existing literature remained on the importance of educators' role in determining child abuse for its prevention (Crosson-Tower, 2019), education policies for child abuse prevention (Bright et al., 2022), and reporting child abuse by educators (Bright et al., 2022) in different geographical regions. Yet the relevant topic in the UAE and MENA region remained underrepresented. Further, most of the studies in the UAE have focused on the role of dentists in recognizing child abuse (Al-Amad et al., 2016), risks factors (S. M. Shah & Dhaheri, 2020) and general measures to prevent child abuse (Al Midfa et al., 2019). While this research focused on the effect of certain factors (Child Abuse Awareness Training, Educator's Work Experience, Educator's Work Attitude, and Educator's Gender) on their self-efficacy towards child abuse identification (including all three basic types of abuse), aiming to fill the existing gaps in the empirical literature. Therefore, this research is guided by three primary research questions:

R1: How does Child Abuse Awareness Training affect Self-Efficacy (towards child abuse identification)?

R2: How does Educator's Work Experience significantly affect Self-Efficacy (towards child abuse identification)?

R3: How does an Educator's Work Attitude significantly affect Self-Efficacy (towards child abuse identification)?

R4: What is the effect of Educators' Gender on Self-Efficacy (towards child abuse identification)?

Child Abuse in UAE

Despite much progress in human development statistics over the past three decades, the UAE still faces challenges regarding under-five child abuse rates, as reported by UNICEF (2015) and WHO (2016). Compared to developed countries like Norway and Australia, the UAE's child abuse rates are considerably higher, emphasizing the need for extensive frameworks to address issues. Creating a safe and protected environment for children is important for their well-being and long-term prosperity (QSI, 2022). Social work in the UAE remains underdeveloped, particularly concerning services for children at risk of abuse (Al Majali & Alsrehan, 2019). The cultural sensitivity in a traditional society affected by Islamic teachings has restricted the development of effective responses to child abuse issues. This lack of suitable training and organized social work practices, coupled with an inefficient legal framework, poses a risk to the welfare of children. Due to the social work climate deficiencies, there are concerns about educators' level of training in child abuse and their self-efficacy in handling such issues. Limited research and population-based data further aggravate the understanding of child abuse prevalence, distribution, and determinants in the UAE (Shah et al., 2021). Child abuse, encompassing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, is a prominent social issue not only in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) but also in different parts of the world. The magnitude of child abuse in the UAE is not well-documented due to little research and reporting, but available studies and reports indicate its severity (AlMatrooshi et al., 2021). Physical abuse in the UAE usually emanates from cultural beliefs about discipline, with corporal punishment being common. According to a 2016 report by the Emirates Foundation for Youth Development, over 75% of UAE children have undergone physical abuse, and a study by the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children found that 86% of analyzed children had faced corporal punishment (S. Shah et al., 2021). Besides, Emotional abuse, such as verbal abuse, neglect, and isolation, is also prevalent in the UAE. A study by (Al-Amad et al., 2016) indicated that 50% of the analyzed children reported experiencing emotional abuse. Thus, child abuse remains a prevalent and concerning issue in the UAE, echoing the global trend. Despite the UAE's progress, examples of child abuse persist, encompassing various forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual maltreatment and neglect. Like the rest of the world, raising awareness about this crucial problem is important in the UAE to ensure the safety and protection of its children. By recognizing child abuse and implementing comprehensive prevention and intervention measures, the UAE can join international efforts to create a nurturing and safe environment for its young population.

Role of Educators' Self-Efficacy

According to (Gün et al., 2022a), educators are critical as they frequently have a long-term and immediate relationship with children, making them well-positioned to identify and prevent such abuse. Research indicates that educators can play an important part in preventing and identifying child abuse cases due to their regular interactions and proper skills and training with children in an educational setting. Hence, alongside their preventive efforts, educators should also be proactive in identifying and reporting cases of abuse to the appropriate authorities. By fulfilling these responsibilities, they contribute to keeping children safe from harm (Goebbels et al., 2008) Induja et al. (2021) necessitate educators as equally liable for addressing and counteracting child abuse as a serious concern. As noted, educators are well-suited to lead and encourage collaborative efforts to curb child abuse. Numerous initiatives involving schools and the wider community have

successfully dealt with challenging and detrimental behaviours due to experiencing child abuse. However, it is only possible when educators and other concerned bodies are skilled in identifying and counteracting child abuse in the best possible way. A study conducted by (Taj et al., 2021) Analyzed the impact of child abuse awareness training on the awareness and self-efficacy of preservice teachers at a women's university in Lahore. The research followed a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design. Before providing the training, both groups were given a pretest, which included a child abuse recognition test and a self-efficacy test for preservice teachers. The training was executed using an activity-based method for the experimental group and a lecture-based approach for the control group. At the end of the training, post-tests were administered to both groups and compared the results with their respective pretest scores. The study showed a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups concerning child-abuse awareness and self-efficacy in handling concerns related to child abuse. Hence, it was found that there was a significant improvement in both groups' scores from the pretest to the post-test after receiving the training. Based on the findings, it is strongly suggested that child abuse awareness training be provided, especially for preservice educators and all staff members. This would help improve their awareness and ability to deal effectively with child abuse-related issues. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Child Abuse Awareness Training significantly affects the educators' Self-Efficacy.

Role of Educators' Work Experience

Educators' work experience significantly influences and improves their self-efficacy in identifying child abuse. Through years of interacting with children in diverse settings, experienced educators develop keen observation skills, enabling them to notice behavioural and physical indicators that might signal potential child abuse or neglect. This improved ability to observe and recognize warning signs is important in early detection and intervention, contributing to children's overall safety and well-being in their care (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). Also, educators' collected knowledge about child development and behaviour is valuable in identifying child abuse. With years of experience, they become well-versed in distinguishing between normal developmental changes and symptoms of abuse. This knowledge allows them to make informed assessments and decisions when reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (Ayling et al., 2020). (Schols et al., 2013) argued that experienced educators with the school environment and their students' routines can aid in identifying abuse. Being attuned to the regular patterns of their students, they are more likely to identify any unusual behaviour or disruptions that might suggest an issue needing investigation (Elareshi et al., 2021). According to (Azar & Wolfe, 2006), long-term relationships between educators and their students also enhance their self-efficacy in identifying child abuse. As trust is established, children may feel more comfortable divulging to experienced educators about problematic situations they might be facing, including incidents of abuse. Such open communication promotes an environment where early detection and intervention are viable (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2007). (Chaffin & Valle, 2003) stated that collaboration with colleagues, school administrators, and social workers plays a role in strengthening educators' ability to address child abuse. With years of experience, they build networks and partnerships to share insights and knowledge about child welfare. Such collaborative efforts contribute to a more comprehensive and practical approach to handling child abuse cases (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Educator's Work Experience significantly affects the educators' Self-Efficacy.

Role of Educators' Personal Attitude

According to (Naeem, 2014), educators play a critical role as their attitude in identifying and preventing child abuse is of great significance. Educators provide formal education and adopt a caring and positive approach to their well-being, health, and development. Educators function as teachers and counsellors, assuring equal Treatment for children

from different social and economic backgrounds and supporting their access to resources provided by parents and society (Induja et al., 2021). Educators play a significant role in recognizing, reporting, and managing possible child abuse and neglect cases. When organizations provide them with training programs on child abuse and neglect, it further improves their responsibility and capability to protect children from risks (Pourrajab, 2014). For example, a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicated that over 56.5% of child abuse and neglect cases were registered by educators. Their attention not only speeded up Child Protective Services (CPS) intervention but also underscored their dedication to ensuring children's well-being (Crosson-Tower, 2003). According to (Scharpf et al., 2021), educators' commitment and efficacy in working for a child's well-being are especially important when parents cannot adequately address such issues. According to (Mathews & Kenny, 2008), teachers and other school staff members are critical in promptly and effectively identifying and responding to child abuse cases. In numerous jurisdictions, they also bear legal and policy obligations to report any instances of known or suspected child abuse. Their active involvement is crucial in ensuring the safety and well-being of the children under their care. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Educator's Work Attitude significantly affects the educators' Self-Efficacy.

Educators' Gender and Self-Efficacy

According to (Sachdeva, 2019), the educator's Gender may affect their efficacy in identifying child abuse due to various factors, including societal norms, communication styles, and subjective biases. However, it is important to note that this is a complicated issue, and individual characteristics and experiences play an effective role in how educators perceive and respond to child abuse cases. Existing research witnessed the role of Gender in identifying child abuse. For instance, a study by (Bright et al., 2022) found that female educators were likelier to identify and report child abuse cases than their male counterparts. This could be attributed to societal expectations and customary gender roles, where women are usually seen as more nurturing and caring, leading to an exacerbated sense of responsibility towards child protection (Habes, 2020).

On the other hand, male educators might face challenges related to cultural and social biases that associate them with aggression or suspicion when reporting child abuse. As a result, hesitancy or reluctance to intercede in suspected cases may happen. Also, male educators might find it challenging to relate to and communicate with children, especially in sensitive situations, which could affect their efficacy in identifying child abuse (Milaniak & Widom, 2015). According to (Sanchez-Rodriguez, 2021), it is important to provide comprehensive training on child abuse awareness and reporting for all educators To address this issue effectively, irrespective of Gender (Elareshi et al., 2022). This training should focus on identifying the signs of abuse, comprehending the legal obligations, and promoting a supportive environment where educators feel motivated to report suspected cases. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H4: The educator's Gender mediates the effect of the Instructor's Work Attitude on Self-Efficacy.

Theoretical Grounds

Albert Bandura, a social cognitive theorist, introduced the notion of self-efficacy in 1977. It refers to an individual's basic beliefs in their capacity to attain a specific level of performance that can affect the outcomes of events in their lives. Self-efficacy is believing in one's ability to make a difference in situations (Bandura & Watts, 1996). Bandura's theory indicates that these self-efficacy beliefs play a major role in shaping human functioning, affecting emotions, thoughts, motivation, and actions. Self-efficacy involves four vital processes: cognitive, motivational, affection, and selection. The cognitive process concerns the mental activities related to obtaining, organizing, and

utilizing knowledge, including, for instance, undergoing child protection training. Motivational processes pertain to an individual's determination and diligence in pursuing a particular behaviour, including responding to child maltreatment (Gün et al., 2022b). Affective processes revolve around how individuals handle their emotional reactions when confronting challenging situations, i.e., distressing proof of child abuse or dealing with a circumstance where their "reasonable suspicion" varies from that of their Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) service director (Ayling, 2019). Self-efficacy is not a fixed trait but a cluster of beliefs tied to specific competence areas. For example, consider an educator who feels confident reacting effectively during a First Aid situation involving a child. In such scenarios, an educator quickly calls emergency services if she identifies that the medical issue is beyond her training level (Goebbels et al., 2008). Secondly, there is the idea that social modelling involves observing someone similar to us and has thrived in a particular area. The third element is social persuasion, which encloses the impact that others exert on our perceived self-efficacy, either through spoken words or non-verbal cues (Ayling, 2019). Finally, there is the facet of physical and emotional states. This factor relates to how we can manage our reactions and sustain effective functioning when faced with challenging situations. It touches upon how people regulate their stress and anxiety levels. These physical and emotional states are intertwined with personal experiences and have a proven impact on how capable we feel in specific circumstances (Ahmed et al., 2021). Thus, based on cited literature and theory, this study proposes the following conceptual framework:
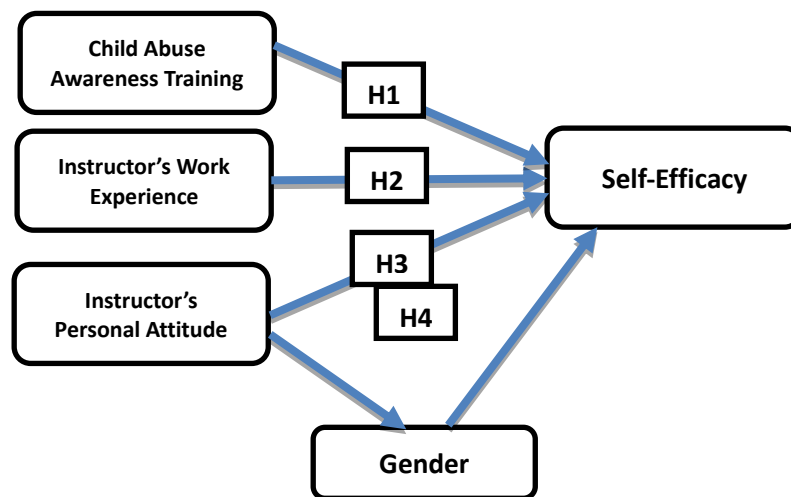

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

This research is based on a quantitative research design(Al-Sarayrah et al., 2021; Habes, Ali, Salloum, et al., 2021; Habes, Elareshi, Ziani, et al., 2022). According to (Apuke, 2017), a quantitative research design focuses on the numerical representation of people's thoughts, behaviours, or emotions within a particular context. This method involves working with considerable sample sizes, accentuating the volume of responses rather than delving into the in-depth and emotional understanding usually sought in qualitative research (Al Adwan et al., 2023; Habes, Elareshi, Salloum, et al., 2022; Habes, Alghizzawi, Ahmad, et al., 2023; Tawafak et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). The data was gathered from quantitative surveys from June 2023 to July 2023. The researcher personally visited the selected institutions and proceeded after getting formal permission from the institutional administration. Further, the respondents were also provided with their informed consent. Data confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured as basic

research ethics (Ermine et al., 2004). The gathered data was evaluated and entered into the SPSS and Smart-PLS for Structural Equation modelling purposes (Elareshi et al., 2023; Habes, Ali, Khalid, et al., 2021; Habes, Elareshi, Mansoori, et al., 2023; Habes, Pasha, Ali, et al., 2023).

Study Population and Sampling

The current study involved a population of educators who directly engage with children in the UAE. This particular group is selected as they represent the most consistent adult figures in students' lives. This constant presence provides them an improved opportunity to actively contribute to children's well-being, extending beyond the duties of parents or legal guardians. Teachers can be seen as secondary caretakers to children, playing a crucial role in their upbringing and development (Sainz et al., 2020). This Study employed a stratified random sampling (SRS) approach due to the diverse subgroups within the larger population. The chosen sample consisted of educators associated with grade school institutions. It is important to note that preschool educators and nurseries were excluded from the sample because they typically lack extensive formal child abuse training programs within the UAE's educational system. Further, recent data shows 41,820 educators currently working in private and public sector educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates (AlMatrooshi et al., 2021). Thus, using the sample estimation criteria by Krejci and Morgan (Krejcie & Morgan 1970), a sample size of 381 respondents was selected.

Measurement Instrument

This Study applied a structured survey questionnaire for data-gathering purposes. The survey tool was designed by adopting measurement items and scales from existing literature. Table 1 indicates the measurement items and their sources. Each variable contained five items to measure and ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument (Habes, Elareshi, Tahat, et al., 2023; Pasha et al., 2023; Sarwar et al., 2023). As this Study involves structural equation modelling, the reliability and validity of the measurement tool were later examined to ensure the generalizability of results.

Table 1- Measurement Items and Sources

Variables	Items	Source(s)
Child Abuse Awareness Training	Tools can effectively prevent and respond to child abuse in school or the workplace.	(Gün et al., 2022c).
	I believe child abuse is a concerning issue in UAE.	
	I think there is more to 'child abuse' than just domestic or verbal abuse.	
	I think there should be more awareness of child abuse in the UAE.	
	I have been thoroughly informed about the recognition and prevention of child abuse.	
Instructor's Work Experience	Years of experience contribute to the ways of dealing with children.	(Khosravan, 2018).
	I am confident in my ability to identify and report child abuse cases.	
	I received training in handling child abuse cases before facing the case.	
	I have experience with types of training on identifying and reporting child abuse cases.	
	I have Contributed to the effectiveness of training in dealing with child abuse cases.	
	Beliefs about child abuse can affect Educators' attitudes about child abuse in UAE.	

Instructor's Personal Attitude	Attitudes can influence their ability to recognize and respond to cases of abuse in the UAE.	(Sinanan, 2011b).
	Even if educators recognize a child abuse case, they may be hesitant to report it if they have negative attitudes about reporting in UAE.	
	Educators' attitudes about their ability to handle child abuse cases can influence their self-efficacy in UAE.	
	Educators who have positive attitudes towards children who experience abuse in UAE.	
	When I make plans, I am certain that I can make them work.	
	When unexpected problems occur, I cannot handle them well.	
Self-Efficacy	I am a self-reliant person.	(Khoury-Kassabri, 2012)
	It took my energy to another level when it was about a specific.	
	I do not give up easily.	

Response Rate

After the data collection process, the surveys were carefully evaluated. It was found that 13 questionnaires contained discrepancies, with respondents either answering only certain questions or selecting multiple options. Consequently, these inaccurately completed questionnaires were removed and set aside for subsequent coding and analysis. Eventually, the total number of valid questionnaires was 368, with an acceptable response rate of 96.5%, surpassing the minimum response rate of 60.0%. Overall, the response rate was satisfactory, and the data was further finalized for analysis.

Analysis and Findings

The current research's data analysis was based on descriptive and inferential statistics. First, the respondents' demographics were calculated, including the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Table 2 provides a summary of respondents' personal profiles. It was found that most of the respondents were females (69.0%), and 31.0% were males (M= 1.30, SD= 0.463). Concerning the age of the respondents, 83.2% were 25 to 35 years old, 10.9% were 36 to 45 years old, 5.2% were 56 years old or above, and 0.8% were 46 to 55 years of age (M=1.27, SD= 0.727). According to the educational level of the respondents, 51.6% had a Master, 34.5% had Bachelor, 10.6% had a Professional Diploma/ Certification, and 3.3 had Doctorate (M= 1.82, SD= 0.743). As this Study involves educators and operationalizes this term into different categories, it was found that 84.5% of respondents were teachers, 12.2% were psychologists, and 3.3% were social workers (social support workers) (M= 2.81, SD= 0.467). Finally, 60.3% of respondents were from Al Ain, 34.0% were from Abu Dhabi, and 5.7% were from Al Dhafra City (M= 1.717, SD= 0.563).

Table 2- Respondents' Personal Profile

Variable	Constructs	f	%	Mean	SD
Gender	Women	254	69.0		
	Man	114	31.0	1.3098	.46303
Age	25-35 years	306	83.2		
	36-45 years	40	10.9		
	46-55 years	3	.8	1.2799	.72738

	56 years or above	19	5.2	
	Bachelor	127	34.5	
Education	Masters	190	51.6	
	Professional Diploma/ Certification	39	10.6	1.8261	.74349
	Doctorate	12	3.3	
	Social Worker	12	3.3	
Job	Psychologist	45	12.2	2.8125	.46707
	Teacher	311	84.5	
	Abu Dhabi	125	34.0	
Location	Al Ain	222	60.3	1.7174	.56368
	Al Dhafra	21	5.7	

The next step for the descriptive analysis was examining the multicollinearity between the predictor variables. As this research contains three predictor variables, examining multicollinearity was important. According to (Alin, 2010), multicollinearity in regression-based studies is an important phenomenon and is considered unfavourable if it exists between the predictors. Thus, the relevant phenomenon was examined using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis (See Table 3). It was found that the VIF value of Child Abuse Training is 1.272, Educators' Experience is 2.504, and Educators' Personal Attitude is 2.169. All the VIF values are lower than the cutoff value 3.0 (Liao & Valliant, 2012).

Table 3- Variance Inflation Factor

Predictors	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Training	0.786	1.272
Experience	0.285	2.504
Attitude	0.316	2.169

Further, the inferential statistics involved Partial least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). For these purposes, first, the inner model was tested to determine the validity and reliability of the measurement tool. Second, the proposed hypotheses were tested, known as structural model testing. Thus, the inner model was assessed by first conducting the convergent validity analysis. According to (Cheung & Wang, 2017), convergent validity helps to determine the extent to which research constructs are internally consistent. Table 3 indicates the results of the convergent validity assessment. It was found that most of the loading values are greater than the threshold value of 0.5. Also, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpass the relevant threshold value (Child Abuse Awareness Training 0.620, Educators, Work Experience 0.567, Educators' Personal Attitude 0.569, and Self-Efficacy 0.521).

Moreover, the Cronbach Alpha (CA) values remained surpassing the threshold value of 0.7 (Child Abuse Awareness Training 0.689, Educators' Work Experience 0.741, Educators' Personal Attitude 0.717, and Self-Efficacy 0.779). Composite Reliability (CR) values also indicate greater than 0.7 (Child Abuse Awareness Training 0.889, Educators' Work Experience 0.794, Educators' Personal Attitude 0.793, and Self-Efficacy 0.843). Table 4 shows the results of the convergent validity assessment.

Table 4- Convergent Validity Testing

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	CR
Child Abuse Awareness Training	CST1	0.813			
	CST2	0.831			
	CST3	0.445	0.620	0.689	0.889
	CST4	0.349			
	CST5	0.678			
Educators' Work Experience	EXP1	0.291			
	EXP2	-0.044			
	EXP3	0.615	0.567	0.741	0.794
	EXP4	0.056			
	EXP5	0.934			
Educators' Personal Attitude	ATT1	0.371			
	ATT2	0.695			
	ATT3	0.625	0.569	0.717	0.793
	ATT4	0.895			
	ATT5	0.497			
Self-Efficacy	EFF1	0.620			
	EFF2	0.767			
	EFF3	0.751	0.521	0.779	0.843
	EFF4	0.643			
	EFF5	0.821			

The goodness of fit was further analyzed to examine how well the observed model fits well into the expected model (Chwialkowski et al., 2018). Notably, the measurement tool contains some items whose loading values could affect the structural model of the Study. Based on his assertion, the values below 0.5 were excluded, and goodness of fit was examined. Table 5 shows the results of goodness of fit. With the Standardized root Mean Square value 0.142 (<0.85), Tucker and Lewis Value 0.995 (>0.900), Not Fit Index value 0.735 (b/w 0-1), and Chi-square value 1.920 (<3.0), the study model indicated a good fit.

Table 5- Goodness of Fit

	Acquired Values	Criteria
SRMR	0.142	<0.85
TLI	.995	>0.900
NFI	0.735	b/w 0-1
Chi-square	1.920	<3.0

Finally, the discriminant validity of the measurement tool was analyzed. According to (Mello & Collins, 2001), the core concept revolves around the idea that when two measuring tools evaluate completely different concepts, the scores acquired from one tool should not show any meaningful connection with the scores acquired from the other tool.

This evaluation generally involves distributing measurement constructs among a sizable group of participants and subsequently computing the correlation between the results derived from the constructs. First, the Fornel-Larcker criterion was executed, indicating a lack of correlation between the constructs and lower correlation values (See Table 6). Further, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio criterion was examined (See Table 7), indicating all the HTMT values are smaller than the threshold value of 0.900. Overall, the discriminant validity of the measurement tool was affirmed.

Table 6- Fornel-Larcker Criterion

	Attitude	Experience	Gender	Self-Efficacy	Training
Attitude					
Experience	0.396				
Gender	-0.039	-0.037			
Self-Efficacy	0.182	0.193	0.151		
Training	0.253	0.253	0.123	0.171	

Table 7- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	Attitude	Experience	Gender	Self-Efficacy	Training
Attitude					
Experience	0.361				
Gender	0.042	0.044			
Self-Efficacy	0.161	0.194	0.157		
Training	0.323	0.414	0.147	0.215	

Finally, the outer model was tested by conducting path analysis, examining the structural relationships proposed in the study hypotheses (Streiner, 2005). However, to begin with, first, the Coefficient of Determination R^2 was calculated to determine the predictive power of predictor variables (Lee et al., 2012) (Child Abuse Awareness Training, Educators, Work Experience, and Educators' Personal Attitude). With the R^2 value 0.386, it was found that the predictor variables are causing 38.6% of the variance in the dependent variables, indicating a moderately strong predictive power of the predictor in the current research study. Further, the path analysis was conducted, providing results of each hypothesis tested in the Study (See Table 8 and Figure 2). Thus, the first hypothesis, "Child Abuse Awareness Training significantly affects the Educators' Self-Efficacy", was tested by conducting path analysis. The relevant hypothesis remained significant with the Beta Coefficient value β= 0.113 and the significance value p<0.000 (t= 15.931).

Further, the second hypothesis, "Educator's Work Experience significantly affects the Educators' Self-Efficacy", was also significant with the Beta Coefficient value β= 1.382 and significance value p<0.000 (t= 13.914). The current research's third hypothesis (H3) proposed a significant effect of Educators' Personal Attitudes on Self-Efficacy. This hypothesis was also approved with the Beta Coefficient value β= -1.217, significance value p<0.000, and t value t= 17.688. Thus, the three directional hypotheses remained significant in the current research. The last hypothesis proposed mediating effect of Gender (educators) in the relationship between Educators' Personal Attitudes and Self-Efficacy. To test this proposed mediation, first, the direct effect of Educators' Personal Attitudes on Gender was tested. It was found that Educators' Personal Attitude has a significant effect on the variable "Gender". Consequently, the mediation of Gender on

Self-Efficacy was tested, and it found that the proposed mediation was significant with the Beta Coefficient value β= 0.305 and significance value p<0.000 (t= 35.685, Indirect Effects= -0.005). The results indicated that all the proposed hypotheses remained validated, supporting the proposed study model overall.

Table 8- Path Analysis (Regression Weights)

Hypothesis	β	M	t	P
Child Abuse Awareness Training -> Self-Efficacy	0.113	-0.020	15.931	0.000
Educators' Work Experience -> Self-Efficacy	1.382	0.143	13.914	0.000
Educators' Personal Attitude -> Self-Efficacy	-1.217	0.026	17.688	0.000
Educators' Personal Attitude -> Gender	-0.018	0.336	9.760	0.000
Educators' Personal Attitude -> Gender -> Self-Efficacy	0.305	0.146	35.685	0.000

Discussion

Bandura's Self-efficacy theory primarily focuses on self-efficacy, while Tschannen-Moran and colleagues in 1998 particularly link this concept to the work-related self-efficacy of educators. This conceptualization refers to educators' belief in their capability to effectively plan and carry out necessary actions to achieve a specific teaching task within a given context. Since the introduction of Bandura's beliefs, extensive research has been conducted to explore how educators' self-efficacy affects various outcomes (Reyhing & Perren, 2021). (Zee & Koomen, 2016) synthesized this research, indicating that educators with higher self-efficacy, especially those with more experience, tend to embrace proactive, student-centred approaches. Beyond its effect on child education, educators' self-efficacy has implications for the overall well-being of young students. This research also adopted a similar approach, notions, and conceptualization to assess how different factors, including Child Abuse Training, Educators' Work Experience, and Educators' Personal Attitudes, affect their self-efficacy. Besides, the proposed mediation of Gender also provided further insights.

Talking particularly about the respondents' answers, a general agreement was found concerning the importance of awareness programs, their experience, attitudes, and Gender regarding self-efficacy. First, the respondents agreed that Child Abuse Awareness and Training could effectively counteract child abuse anywhere, as it is a prevalent phenomenon in the UAE. Further, they indicated agreement that child abuse is more than merely domestic violence or emotional violence, and there should be more awareness regarding child abuse awareness. Finally, they agreed that they had been thoroughly informed (trained) about recognizing and preventing child abuse. These results are consistent with the argumentation by (Taj et al., 2021). Child abuse is a distressingly prevailing issue that requires widespread awareness and action. This concerning phenomenon encompasses different forms of physical, emotional, and sexual mistreatment and neglect, profoundly affecting a child's physical and psychological well-being. By increasing awareness about the signs, effects, and prevention strategies of child abuse, society can cooperate to create a protective environment for children, entrust potential victims to seek help and ensure that caregivers, educators, and authorities are prepared to intervene effectively and facilitate the safety and welfare of children (Taj et al., 2021).
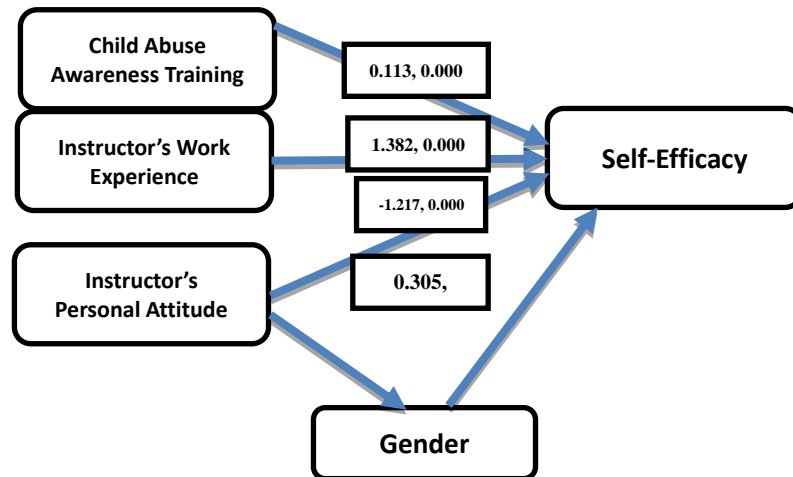
Figure 2- Results of Path Analysis

Further, regarding the effect of educators' work experience on their self-efficacy, the respondents widely agreed that years of experience contribute to dealing with children, and they are confident in the ability to identify and report cases of child abuse. The respondents also revealed that they have experience with types of training on how to identify and report cases of child abuse, and they have also contributed to the effectiveness of training in dealing with child abuse cases, indicating their efficacy in taking contingency measures when identifying and reporting child abuse. (Ayling et al., 2020) As educators collect practical knowledge and interact with diverse students over time, their confidence in identifying potential signs of abuse and responding suitably strengthens. Seasoned educators usually develop an exacerbated sensitivity to behavioural cues, helping them to discern unusual patterns or behaviours that could exhibit maltreatment more accurately. This increased self-efficacy improves their ability to intervene effectively and promotes a proactive approach to protecting children's well-being, eventually contributing to a safer and more protected environment.

Concerning the effect of Educators' Persona Attitudes, the respondents indicated a wider agreement that their beliefs significantly affect their attitudes about Child Abuse in the UAE, which affects their ability to recognize and respond to cases of abuse in the UAE. The respondents also showed a general agreement that even if an educator recognizes a case of child abuse, they may be hesitant to report it if they have negative attitudes about reporting. Notably, they indicated that Educators' attitudes about their ability to handle child abuse cases could influence their self-efficacy. Besides, educators have positive attitudes towards children who experience abuse in UAE. Their Study (Mathews & Kenny, 2008) also witnessed the role of educators as important in identifying and curbing child abuse. As stated, positive and empathetic attitudes towards children's well-being and a willingness to recognize and address the challenging nature of child abuse bolster educators' confidence in recognizing potential signs and taking appropriate actions. A supportive and open-minded mindset, combined with ongoing training and education, can empower educators to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, enabling them to contribute actively to the precluding and intervention efforts critical for assuring the protection of children. Finally, regarding self-efficacy, the respondents agreed that when they make reporting or identification plans, they stay confident about the execution of the plan; however, they sometimes cannot handle unexpected situations to identify Child Abuse effectively. Most of the respondents revealed that they are self-reliant and are naturally enthusiast. Besides, the respondents also indicated that they do not give up easily, indicating the subtle nature of the study respondents as being capable of identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse in the UAE. As noted by (Goebbels et al., 2008), educators' self-efficacy is paramount in identifying, reporting, and preventing child abuse.

An increased self-efficacy instils educators with the confidence and competence to identify subtle indicators of abuse, allowing them to intervene promptly and effectively. Educators with strong self-efficacy are more likely to overpower hesitations, navigate problematic situations, and engage in open conversations with children and pertinent authorities, contributing to early detection and timely reporting of abuse cases. Also, robust self-efficacy enables educators to execute preventive measures, i.e., creating a safe and supportive classroom environment and promoting open lines of communication, thus proactively preventing abuse. Elevated self-efficacy among educators sets a powerful foundation for safeguarding children's well-being and fostering a culture of vigilance against child abuse (Wyatt, 2013).

Implications

This research examined the intricate dynamics of child abuse awareness training, educators' experience, and attitudes concerning self-efficacy within schools across the UAE. Drawing on Albert Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy, this study aimed to uncover the interconnected nature of these facets and their impact on educators' beliefs in their abilities. Child abuse awareness training was a potent catalyst for boosting educators' self-efficacy. By equipping educators with the knowledge and mechanisms to identify, address, and deter child abuse, this training gave them the confidence to manage challenging scenarios adeptly. The alignment with Bandura's theory is evident, as heightened awareness directly contributes to improved efficacy in dealing with critical situations. Current findings reinforce the theory's assumption that educators' experience shapes their self-efficacy. As educators collect practical expertise through exposure to diverse situations, their confidence in their capabilities naturally escalates. This is consistent with Bandura's notion of mastery experiences, where successful handling of challenges supports the idea of one's competence. Therefore, educators' experience is a cornerstone in creating a strong foundation of self-efficacy. As elucidated by the Study, educators' attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping self-efficacy. The relationship between positive attitudes and heightened self-efficacy is compatible with Bandura's view that one's belief in the outcomes of their actions affects motivation and persistence. Educators who harbour positive attitudes towards their role and its effect on students are inherently more prone to exert effort and navigate obstacles, thus strengthening their self-efficacy. The Study's integration of child abuse awareness training, educators' experience, and attitudes highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to enhancing self-efficacy. By acknowledging the cognitive and affective dimensions, educational stakeholders can create educators' self-efficacy holistically. The study further highlights the key role of educators' experience, which bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, strengthening their self-efficacy. Finally, the Study indicated that educators' Gender mediated the relationship between personal attitudes and self-efficacy. This suggests that Gender played a part in shaping how educators' attitudes affected their self-efficacy beliefs.

Conclusion

Child abuse has historically not been a major focal point in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, there has been a noticeable surge in reported child abuse cases, encompassing both physical and sexual abuse incidents, in recent times. Especially in 2015, the reported examples of sexual abuse totalled 59, marking an increase from the 47 cases reported in 2013. Approximately 40% of registered child abuse incidents in these cases involved domestic assistance workers, such as housemaids. Furthermore, about 45% of reported child harassment cases were committed by relatives of the victims. Remarkably, the majority of victims affected by these offences are UAE nationals.

Consequently, the escalating prevalence of child abuse has raised significant concerns within the UAE government. Given the mounting apprehension surrounding child abuse within the United Arab Emirates, this Study emphasized educators' self-efficacy about child abuse awareness. This focus is rooted in teachers' pivotal role in recognizing and reporting instances of child abuse. By strengthening educators' self-efficacy in this domain, the Study underlines the pressing issue of increasing child abuse cases and contributes to the overarching goal of safeguarding children's well-being.

Limitations

Despite this Study highlighting a sensitive issue, it has some primary limitations. First, this study has geographical limitations as the results cannot be generalized in other regions. Future researchers can overcome this limitation by conducting relevant research in other regions to gain further insight. Second, this research has applied a quantitative approach, narrowing its scope. Future researchers can conduct mixed-method studies to nullify the relevant limitations. Finally, the third limitation includes only one demographic variable mediating the effect of personal attitudes on self-efficacy. Future researchers can examine the impact of other different demographic variables to attain further insights.

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