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The Relationship between Iranian English Teachers' Sense of efficacy and their Classroom Management Strategy Use

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Abstract

The present study was a quantitative study of correlational type. It was also a non-experimental type of study. In fact, it was a survey in which the researcher attempted to explore some teachers' ideas to examine the relationship of their sense of efficacy and classroom management strategy use. The participants of the study were 60 male and female English teachers of various age and years of teaching experience. 30 of the participants were public school teachers and 30 others came from private language institutes. To conduct the study, the researcher used two types of questionnaires: an efficacy questionnaire and a strategy use questionnaire. The researcher, in fact, aimed at investigating the relationship of teachers' sense of efficacy and their classroom management strategy use as a whole. Additionally, the researcher made use of some inferential statistical analyses to find out any probable difference between teachers' classroom management strategy use in public schools and private institutes and also any difference between teachers' sense of efficacy in these two settings. However, at the end of the study it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management strategy use. The results showed that there was not a significant difference of classroom management strategy use by teachers in public schools and private institutes. In contrary, the outcomes indicated that there was a significant difference of teachers' self-efficacy in public schools and private institutes.

Keywords: self-efficacy, Classroom management strategy use

Teachers' Self-efficacy:

Self-efficacy is the belief that teachers have about themselves, their abilities and their potentialities. In fact it is interplay between the external, the internal, the past and the current behavior. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). In pedagogy the term "teachers' sense of efficacy" is said to be a teacher's sense of competence, not some objective measure of actual competence. However, from a practical viewpoint, there are two essential questions related to this theoretical construct that must first be answered before getting to the heart of the matter: How does a teacher's sense of efficacy affect his or her teaching? And does it, via its impact on teaching, affect student achievement?

During the years, since the notion of teachers' sense of efficacy was developed, experts have attempted to answers both questions from different perspectives. For instance, Jerald (2007) concentrated on some teacher behaviors and found them to be related to a teacher's sense of efficacy. It was discovered that teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization in their professional career, they revealed to be more open to new ideas and also more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students. Language teachers' with the a higher level of self-efficacy proved to be more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly, and they also showed to be less critical of students when they made errors and mistakes.

Shaughnessy (2004) asserted that teachers who set high goals and standards, persist in their attempt to convey meanings, and easily try another strategy when one is not successful, would be regarded as teachers who have a high sense of efficacy and they are more likely to have students who really learn. Such attempts to identify the concept of teachers' self-efficacy have helped researchers interested in the topic to get a broader view of the term. Now, it is widely accepted that there are two types of beliefs that comprise the construct of efficacy. The first belief relates to a teacher's own feeling of confidence in regard to her teaching abilities. And the second belief appears to reflect a general belief about the power of teaching to reach difficult children (Hoy, 2000). Therefore, it may be possible to claim that a teacher may have faith generally in the ability of teachers to reach difficult children, while lacking confidence her personal teaching.

Teachers' Classroom Management Strategy Use:

Evertson and Weinstein (2006) defined classroom management as "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning" (pp. 4-5). This definition concentrates on the responsibility of the teacher and relates the use of classroom management strategies to multiple learning goals for students. It is obvious that poor classroom management increases the stress levels for both the teacher and students, disrupts the flow of lessons and conflicts with both learning objectives and the processes of learning.

Poor classroom management strategies hired by a teacher also alter the classroom dynamic as the focus of attention and changes the academic tasks to the distractions provided by students' disruptive behaviors. Obviously, there are some students who are identifiable as 'problems' in each class and sometimes they act in ways that compound management difficulties by inciting each other and, possibly, others in the class into disruptive activities.

The typical feedback of the teacher in such situations is to identify the students who cause 'the problem' and to focus on them as a source of 'trouble' and then they devise strategies specifically to deal with their inappropriate behavior. However, it must be mentioned that a classroom is an environment with its own ecology. It includes teacher, students, their

Inter-relationships, the equipment, books and a wide variety of activities which all these items interact together to influence the behavior of the individuals. Things become more complicated when both teacher and students enter the class with experiences and issues from the wider ecological systems in which they live and function such as the school community, home, family community and the wider world.
In fact, focusing the attention on problematic individuals may lead the teacher to ignore the investigation of the systemic problems in teacher-learner relations, the management strategies and teaching styles, the curriculum and the skills required by students to access it, the order in which activities are scheduled, and the total host of other aspects of the classroom and wider school ecology. It must also be considered that learners bring all sorts of concerns, distresses, reactions and patterns of behavior into the classroom. Thus, targeting a learner as 'the problem' may divert a teacher's attention from a careful examination of the classroom ecology or that of the wider school and the family and community environments within which the school is embedded.
On the other hand, students learn to discriminate the behaviors required in a variety of
Settings, and thus may learn to behave differently if appropriate and desired behaviors are highlighted, encouraged and supported in any given settings. It is surprising that to specify classroom problems, teachers rated their classroom mismanagement as 'sometimes' or 'very often' a cause of problematic classroom behavior of the students (Johansen, Little & Akin-Little, 2011).

Research Questions:

Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management?

Is there any significant difference between classroom management strategies that teachers employ in public schools and private institutes?

Is there any significant difference between teachers' efficacy in public schools and private institutes?

Review of the Related Literature:

1. The growing body of research on teacher self-efficacy suggests that it may account for individual differences in teacher effectiveness. On the other hand, teacher self-efficacy has been found to be consistently related to positive classroom management and strong pupil achievement, pupils learn more from teachers who have high self-efficacy, and highly self-efficacious teachers are more likely to use open-ended questions, inquiry methods, or small group learning activities for students. They are also are more persistent at a task, take more "risks" and are more likely to use innovative elements in their teaching.

2. Teachers with high self-efficacy also are more open to new ideas, more willing to adopt innovations, are less likely to experience burn-out, support pupils' autonomy to a greater extent, and are more attentive to low ability students (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003; Henson, 2001; Ross & Bruce, 2007). Teachers with high self-efficacy exhibit greater enthusiasm for teaching, have greater commitment for teaching, and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Although teachers' self-efficacy is a widespread notion that has been long investigated by the researchers but it seems that still little experimental or long-term intervention research has been conducted in this area. As Ross (1994) noted, "In the absence of interventions it is difficult to tell whether teacher efficacy

is a cause or a consequence of the adoption of more powerful teaching techniques" (p. 382). The limited number of studies in this area does suggest that teacher efficacy can be impacted by meaningful, active interventions (see e.g., Henson, in press; Ross, 1994). Bandura (1997) cautioned that positive changes in self-efficacy only come through "compelling feedback that forcefully disrupts the preexisting disbelief in one's capabilities" (p. 82). Although there is consistent evidence that efficacy is most malleable in the pre service year's efficacy tends to be resistant to change for experienced teachers (cf. Anderson et al., 1988; Ohmart, 1992; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Ross (1994), for example, found that general teaching efficacy increased after an eight month training on cooperative learning. Personal teaching efficacy, however, was stable across time. These professional development opportunities come in many forms. However, one particularly promising approach is via participatory teacher research, which has been suggested as one means of fostering meaningful professional development for teachers (Noffke, 1997). Participatory teacher research is a collaborative process by which teachers themselves critically examine their classrooms, develop and implement educational interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions (Knight & Boudah, 1998). These activities allow teachers to actively participate in the development of practical knowledge about teaching.

Teacher research models capitalize on critical thought and data-based action; social cognitive theory upholds such human agency as foundational to self-efficacy growth (Bandura, 1997). In an academic-year long teacher researcher initiative in an alternative school, Henson (in press) reported large effects for personal and general teaching efficacy gains from pre to posttest (56.69% and 28.79%, respectively). Furthermore, collaboration was predictive of change in general teaching efficacy, which deals with teachers' perceptions of the whether teachers, in general, can overcome external barriers. As Henson explained, "The collaborative nature of teacher research may have provided otherwise unknown feedback concerning the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of other teachers."

Teacher efficacy research must grapple with the issue of efficacy change. Again, experimental studies are desperately needed. Longitudinal designs are also warranted. Current evidence suggests that teacher efficacy is indeed malleable, but that change will likely occur only via engaging and meaningful professional development opportunities, particularly activities such as teacher research initiatives that capitalize on teachers' critical thought and human agency.

Research Methodology

Research Design:

The study is actually a quantitative study because the researcher used both numerical data collection and analysis in her study. In fact, this study is a type of surveys since the researcher used questionnaires to collect the data. The study is a non-experimental one due to the fact that there were no manipulations of the independent data. Thus, this is a non-experimental, survey, quantitative study.

Participants:

The participants of the study were selected by the researcher with the use of the convenience sampling method. Since the study intended to examine both self-efficacy and classroom management strategy use in both high schools and language institutes, therefore, the participants were selected from both settings. Actually, the researcher needed to ask teachers of high schools and language institutes to attend the study.

She decided to have 60 teachers to attend the study, 30 English teachers of high schools and 30 English teachers working in language institutes.

Research Tools

Self-efficacy Questionnaire:

She firstly used a teachers' self-efficacy questionnaire to examine the level of teachers' self-efficacy. The Teachers' Self-efficacy Questionnaire includes 12 questions and it has been designed and developed by Moran and Woolfolk (2001). The reliability of the questionnaire was determined and was included in the next chapter.

Teachers' classroom management Questionnaire:

Then, the researcher made use of a teachers' classroom management questionnaire. This way the researcher made it clear if there was a relationship between the self-efficacy and classroom management. Teachers' Classroom Management Strategy Questionnaire was a questionnaire consisting of 14 questions in Likert type, designed and developed by Yeliz Temli-Durmuş ٢٠١٦. The reliability was measured and shown in the next chapter.

Data Collection Procedures:

In conducting the present study, the researcher firstly, selects the participants. She goes to different high schools and language institutes to ask language teachers to attend her study. She goes to different schools and institutes to randomly select the participants to ensure the generalizability of the findings. After the selection of the participants the researcher uses a self-efficacy questionnaire developed by Moran and Woolfolk (2001) and also a classroom management strategy use questionnaire developed by Temli-Durmus (2016). The questionnaires are validated through expert analysis method.

Then the researcher goes to the schools and institutes to sort out the questionnaires to the selected teachers. She keeps in contact with all the teachers to motivate them to fill in the forms and return them in time. Then, the researcher devotes a great time to coding the collected data. She tries to analyze the data to find out if there is a significant relationship between the teachers' level of self-efficacy and their classroom management strategy use. However, through the analysis of the data the difference between the male and females' self-efficacy and classroom management strategy use is shown.

Data Analysis Procedures:

The researcher made use of descriptive analyses of the data. She used Pearson-correlation and Cronbach-alpha for the analyses of the data. Each type of these methods was used to show a correlation coefficient of the findings. Then, Multiple Regression Tests were also used to make a comparison between the different variables of the study.

Findings of the study

Inferential statistics with respect to research question one:

As stated before, the main purpose of the study was to examine teachers' sense of efficacy and their classroom management strategy use to discover if there was any significant relationship between these two concepts. The following Table (Table 1) showed that there was a significant relationship between these two variables. $P < .05$, $r = .643$. That is, these two variables are positively correlated with no regard to any other variables and an increase of one leads to the increase of the other. In general, in order to determine if there was a relationship between self-efficacy and classroom management, Pearson correlation test was used. This table showed that there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and classroom management strategy use and the three sub- components of classroom management (people management, behavior management, and instructional management).

Table 1: correlation of teacher sense of efficacy and classroom management

		Sense of Efficacy Scale	Teachers Classroom Management	people	behavior	instructional
Sense of Efficacy Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.643**	.542**	.378**	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.003	.000
	N	60	60	60	60	60
Teachers Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.643**	1	.846**	.765**	.776**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60	60
People Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.542**	.846**	1	.600**	.459**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60	60
Behavior Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.378**	.765**	.600**	1	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.000		.001
	N	60	60	60	60	60
Instructional Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.628**	.776**	.459**	.432**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	
	N	60	60	60	60	60

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Inferential statistics with respect to research question two and three:

It was asserted previously that one of the other fundamental aims of this study was to examine the difference between classroom management strategy use of teachers in public schools and private institutes. In addition, it was also intended to reveal any difference between teachers' self-efficacy in public schools and private institutes. Table 2 and 3 answered these two questions.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the mean score of the variables

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sense of Efficacy Scale	1	30	4.0614	.48980	.08943
	2	30	4.3334	.33278	.06076
Teachers Classroom Management	1	30	3.7582	.69751	.12735
	2	30	3.9260	.50748	.09265

The above Table presented information about the mean score of the participants on both variables in public schools and private institutes. It showed that the mean score of teachers' sense of self-efficacy in public schools was 4.06 and it was 4.33 in private institutes. These two mean scores did not statistically differ. On the other hand, teachers' mean score on classroom management in public schools was 3.75 and it was 3.92 in private institutes. These two mean scores were similar too. Hence, the following table answered the second and the third research questions.

Table 3: the difference between teacher efficacy in public schools and private institutes

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Sense of Efficacy Scale	Equal variances assumed	3.654	.061	58	.015
	Equal variances not assumed			51.070	.015
Teachers Classroom Management	Equal variances assumed	2.942	.092	58	.291
	Equal variances not assumed			52.982	.291

The Table above (3) showed that there were statistically significant difference between teachers' self-efficacy in public schools and private institutes with respect to the fact that the significance was .015 and less than .05. On the other hand, it was also shown that there were not any significant differences between teachers' classroom management strategy use in public schools and private institutes since the significance was .291 and above .05.

Conclusion:

After the study was conducted and the statistical data were analyzed the following results were obtained. The results of the statistical analyses proved that there was a significant relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and their classroom management strategy generally. It means that, in general, there was a significant relationship ($r=.64$, $p<.o1$) between teachers' sense of efficacy and their classroom management strategy use with no regard to their working setting.

Then, the results of the study also revealed that there was not a significant difference between teachers' classroom management strategy use in public schools and private institutes. Thus, it can be claimed that classroom management strategy use does not differ in public schools and private institutes.

Hence, comparing the results of the study, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference

between teachers' sense of efficacy in public schools and private language institutes.

Pedagogical Implications:

First: According to the results of the study, it is advised that both public schools and private language institutes must help teachers to get familiar with the most effective classroom management strategies. Being familiar with these strategies and being able to implement these strategies in the classroom may increase teachers' sense of efficacy which may help teachers to teach more effectively.

Second: Teacher's sense of efficacy is a determinant issue in the area of pedagogy which has a direct relationship with many other issues. During the past years, a great body of research has been done on this issue and has proved its direct relation with other issues, although the results did not prove this fact in this study. However, it is a wise advice for the principals of schools and managers of private language institutes to find ways through which they can help teachers enhance their sense of efficacy.

Third: The conduct of this study in both public schools and private institutes and the outcomes of the study showed that teachers' sense of efficacy and classroom management strategy use related to each other in these two main setting where language is taught. Anyway, the emphasis on helping teachers to enhance these two variables must not be neglected.

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