



Exploring the Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Burnout: The Case of Iranian EFL Teachers

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Abstract. Despite the high impact of new technologies, teachers play the most important role in educational settings, since it is believed that their different aspects, such as teacher efficacy, burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence, have received great attention. Therefore the study of teacher burnout is of great importance to the productivity of teachers and subsequent student learning. This study was designed to explore possible relationships among English language teachers' sense of efficacy, burnout with respect to their demographic variables. The data were gathered through the application of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson 1981, 1986) and a TEBS-Self (Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs System- Self) (Dellinger, Bobbett, Oliver, & Ellett, 2008). These Data was collected from 55 English language teachers. They were from both genders and different age groups. After obtaining the raw data, the SPSS software (version 2020) was used to change the data into numerical interpretable form, using correlational analysis to determine any significant relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' burnout. The result showed that enhancing burnout tends to have a negative influence on diminishing teachers' self-efficacy. In addition, a significant relationship was observed between teachers' age, gender, years of experiences and reports of burnout.

Keywords: Burnout, Self-Efficacy, ELT Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

In Iran, like, other modern societies, with an increasing number of teachers with different aspects, there are receiving more notice in the studies done in educational research today. Teachers are one of the most powerful elements for the success of any educational system. Therefore their difference with different characteristics, such as teacher efficacy, burnout has received great attention. Despite a substantial number of studies in the area of teacher burnout, the problem persists (Mukundan & Khandehroo, 2009, 2010). Thus, it is essential to do more research on different variables related to them. Teachers as practitioners of educational principles and theories are heavily involved in different teaching and learning processes, so, understanding teachers' perceptions and beliefs is important (Jia, Eslami & Burlbaw, 2006). Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as peoples' beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Efficacy beliefs have been shown to affect teacher activity and productivity (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teacher stress continues to feature as an important topic in educational research today.

Burnout is known as an influential factor in any job and life success, and defined as teacher stress has increasingly been recognized as a widespread problem in different educational settings (e.g., Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Dick & Wagner, 2001; Kyriacou, 2001). Many teachers around the world may experience stress in their work (Jennett et al., 2003). Burnout phenomenon is considered to be most prevalent among human service professionals whose primary role is to help and interact with others in emotionally demanding contexts over time (Maslach, 1982). Then, knowing teachers and their characteristics has become important and necessary for better teacher

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education and pedagogical success improvement research. More research on different variables related to the teachers is one of the best ways to take notice of English language teachers. The current study, therefore, seeks to investigate relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout were examined with regard to demographic factors, including gender, age, years of experience and marital status.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewing the previous literature revealed that a variety of studies (e.g., Kokkinos, 2007; Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Ramsey, 2008; Travers & Cooper, 1996) have been conducted to identify the causes associated with stress and burnout among teachers.

Teachers' self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is a vital factor and a worthy variable in educational research (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Teacher efficacy is defined as "the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 22).

Henson (2001) stated that teacher efficacy has been found to be one of the important variables consistently related to positive teaching behavior and student outcomes. Efficacy beliefs have also been associated with various important aspects of the teaching occupation. It has been consistently demonstrated that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are more enthusiastic and satisfied with their job (Allinder, 1994; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006), experience lower levels of burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Friedman, 2003; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008), exhibit greater commitment to their profession (Coladarci, 1992; Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995), and are more likely to continue teaching (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982). The results of many studies in the literature have proved the effects of teacher efficacy on different aspects of teacher performance, as well. For example the findings of the studies conducted by Brouwers and Tomic (2000) and Fires, Humman, and Olivarez (2007) confirmed that teacher efficacy is related to teacher burnout.

Moreover, Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among 89 EFL teachers from several private language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. Their findings showed that there was a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional intelligence.

In another study, Akbari and Moradkhani (2010) studied relationship between teaching experience, academic degree and teacher efficacy among 447 Iranian EFL teachers. The results of data analysis revealed that experienced teachers (with more than three years of teaching experience) had a significantly higher level of efficacy, efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for student engagement, and efficacy for instructional strategies compared to their novice counterparts.

Also, Karimvand (2011) explored the nexus between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy, teaching experience and gender among 180 EFL teachers from some private language schools in Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan, Iran. She was found that while experience and gender had no significant interaction effect on the participants' efficacy beliefs, G2 had significantly more positive efficacy perceptions than G1. Also, except for two components of TEBS-Self, the female teachers were found to have significantly higher self-efficacy than the male participants on the whole questionnaire and two components of it.

Further, Vaezi and Fallah (2011) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety in a sample of Iranian EFL teachers in private language institutes. The results showed an important negative correlation between self-efficacy and stress.

Finally, Alavinia and Kurosh (2012) studied the would-be bonds between emotional intelligence and Self-efficacy in sample of Iranian EFL University Professors. The results of data analysis revealed that a significant correlation between the participants' responses to these two questionnaires. Yet, the participants' ages and years of teaching experience were not found to be of significant role with respect to the relationship between the participants' performance on the said scales.

Teachers' burnout

As cited in Chaplain, 2008; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008 teaching is among those occupations with the highest levels of job stress.

Burnout phenomenon is considered to be most dominant among human service professionals whose primary role is to help and interact with others in emotionally demanding contexts over time (Maslach, 1982). Given that teachers are the main provider of emotionally challenging and intensively interactive human service work in schools, it is not unusual that teachers have been a popular subject pool in the burnout literature (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Teacher burnout has been defined in a variety of ways throughout the history of the phenomenon (Gold, 1984). Although there is yet to be universally accepted definition for the term, researchers have often chosen to describe and operationalize teacher burnout in the same manner meant by Maslach and other scholars (e.g., Gold, 1996; Russell, Altmaier, & Van Velzen, 1987; Schwab, Jackson & Schuler, 1986). That is, the three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment are generally used as the basis for any discussion on teacher burnout, along with the MBI, or its more recent teacher-specific version (MBI-ES) as the standard measurement tool (see Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Moreover, there has been some research carried out to investigate teachers' EI, especially that of EFL teachers.

Moafian and Ghanizadeh's (2009) study investigated the relationship between perceived EI and self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers in private institutes. Findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between EI and self-efficacy, also three subscales of emotional intelligence - emotional self-awareness, interpersonal-relationship, and problem solving - were found to be potent predictors of teacher self-efficacy.

In another study, Akbari and Moradkhani (2010) explored relationship between teaching experience, and teacher efficacy among 447 Iranian EFL teachers.

The results showed that experienced teachers experienced a significantly higher level efficacy. Additionally, Motalebzadeh, Ashraf & Tabatabaee (2013) studied the correlation between Burnout and self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers. The result showed that the participants' self-efficacy has a reverse relationship with their burnout. In addition, a significant relationship was observed between teachers' age, gender, years of experiences and reports of burnout.

3. PURPOSE of the STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and teacher burnout by assessing a sample of Ilam teachers using TEBS-Self (Teacher Efficacy Beliefs Scale-Self) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBIES). Demographic factors, including gender, age, marital status and years of experience in the classroom and at their current school were also examined to determine if they were causal factors.

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4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Consequently, the current research attempts to investigate these underpinning questions:

- 1) Is there any statistically significant relationship between burnout and teacher efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers?
- (2) Does gender have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?
- (3) Do years of teaching experience have any significant interaction effect on Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?
- (4) Does age have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?
- (5) Does marital status have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout?

5. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The study was done with 55 English teachers (27 males, 28 females) teaching at high schools in three cities of Ilam, Iran, namely Abdanan, Darashar, Ilam. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 3 to 22 years and aged between 20 and +45 years old. The study was carried out in October 2014. The participants took the questionnaires home, filled them in and submitted it to the researchers within a week. To receive reliable data, all subjects were informed of the purpose of the study; the researchers assured them that their information would be confidential. Finally, in order to answer the research inquiry, the responses obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed.

B. Instruments

The following instruments were used in the present study:

First: Teacher's burnout scale

Second: Teacher's self-efficacy scale

Two questionnaires measuring EFL teachers' self-efficacy and stress along with a subject fact form enquiring about teachers' demographics, namely, age, gender, teaching experience and marital status served as the research tools in the present study. They are applied in some projects done in this area and they proved to be valid and reliable.

1. Teacher's burnout scale

As stated above, teacher burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson 1981, 1986). It has 22 items which was used in this study. The questionnaire consisted of three sub-subscales; emotional exhaustion sub- subscales (EE, 9 items, maximum score – 54), desensitization sub-dimension (D, 5 items, maximum score – 30), and personal accomplishment sub subscales (PA, 8 items, maximum score – 48). High scores on the EE and DP subscales and low scores on the PA subscale are features of burnout. Prior research confirmed the validity, reliability of this questionnaire (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981; Gold, 1985). Additionally, reliabilities for data gathered from each of the three scales ranged from .76 to .90

(Iwanicki& Schwab, 1981) and .72 to .88 (Gold, 1985). Reliabilities for data in the present study were similar and acceptable (EE: .89, DP: .71, PA: .71).

2. *Teacher's self-efficacy scale*

The questionnaire which was utilized in the present study is called TEBS-Self (Teacher Efficacy Beliefs Scale-Self) includes 31 items that are assessed along a four-point Likert Scale (1=Weak, 2=Moderate, 3=Strong, 4=Very strong) which develop by Dellinger et al. (2008).

C. Data Collection Procedure

As stated earlier, the current study was carried out with 55 English teachers (27 males, 28 females) teaching at high schools in three cities of Ilam, Iran, namely Abdanan, Darashar, Ilam The needed data were obtained from the participants during the year 2014, using the said instruments. The data were gathered through the application of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach& Jackson 1981, 1986) and a TEBS-Self (Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs System- Self) (Dellinger, Bobbett, Oliver, &Ellett, 2008).

D. Data Analysis

As mentioned before, gathering data was summarized by the use of SPSS software (Version 20). The data were subjected to analysis through descriptive statistics. Then, the correlation between these two variables was calculated. To analyze the data further, linear regression analysis was conducted to find out to what extent self-efficacy might have predictive power in teachers' overall burnout.

The data thus collected were then analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation in order to determine the relationship between the participants' burnout and self-efficacy. To find out the potential significant differences among EFL teachers with different ages and years of teaching experience, independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were run for both male and female groups.

6. RESULT

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive results of the two instruments, i.e. Burnout and self-efficacy questionnaires used in this study. The analysis showed that the mean score burnout was (M= 68.5667) and Std. Deviation was (SD=11.16856) and mean score for self-efficacy was (M=88.4000) with Std. Deviation (SD=11.92390.)

To analyze the data, Regression Analysis was conducted. The results indicated that teachers' total score of self-efficacy was a negative predictor of the dependent variable (teacher burnout).

Table 1. Summarizes the descriptive results of the two instruments.

Statistics	
Total b	
Total e	
N	Valid
	55
	Missing
	0
Mean	
68.5667	
88.4000	
Std. Deviation	
11.16856	
11.92390	

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The results of correlation revealed that there is significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout ($r = -.361$, $p < 0.01$). (See Table 2 for additional elucidation of the gained result).

Table 2. The results of correlation.

THE RESULTS OF CORRELATION

	Pearson Correlation
	1
	-.361*
	Sig. (2-tailed)
	.050
	N
	55
	55
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).	

In addition, as table 3 revealed all sub-scales of teacher self-efficacy were negatively correlated with teachers' burnout.

Table 3. Correlation between teachers' self_efficacy and burnout.

totalb	PCC	AID	MFI	MLR
Pearson Correlation	-.283	-.031	-.114	-.339*
totalb Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.871	.547	.047
N	55	55	55	55
55				

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Analyze sub-scales of teacher's burnout, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Reduced Personal Accomplishment with teachers' self-efficacy shows that Emotional Exhaustion is positively correlated with teachers' self-efficacy ($r = -.378^*$, $p < 0.01$). other sub-scales namely Depersonalization ($r = -.231$, $p < 0.01$), and Reduced Personal Accomplishment ($r = -.322$, $p < 0.01$) were negatively associated with teachers' self-efficacy. (see Table 4).

Table 4.

Correlations				
	RPA	EE	DP	totale
totale Pearson Correlation	-.322	-.378*	-.231	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.039	.220	
N	55	55	55	55

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To determine whether there were any age-induced significant differences among EFL teachers concerning their burnout and self-efficacy, one-way ANOVA was run. The results showed that there was no significant difference among EFL teachers with regard to their age (see Table5)

Table 5.

Correlations				
		totalb	totale	age
age	Pearson Correlation	-.012	-.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.948	.560	
	N	55	55	55

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Next, in order to examine whether there were any significant differences among EFL teachers with different teaching experiences regarding their burnout and self-efficacy, one-way ANOVA was applied.

The results revealed that there was no significant difference among EFL teachers regarding their burnout and self-efficacy. In other words, teaching experience of EFL teachers was not found to have any significant effect on their performance on the scales of burnout and self-efficacy (Tables 6 and 7 shows this part of finding).

Table 6:

Correlations			
		totalb	experience
totalb	Pearson Correlation	1	-.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.605
	N	55	55

Table 7.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
totalb	Between Groups	12.237	1	12.237	.095	.760
	Within Groups	3605.129	28	128.755		
	Total	3617.367	29			
totale	Between Groups	285.525	1	285.525	2.083	.160
	Within Groups	3837.675	28	137.060		
	Total	4123.200	29			

To investigate the relationship between burnout and teachers' gender, independent sample T test was used. The mean score female teachers was ($M=69.9000$) and the mean score male teachers was ($M=67.9000$). So according to mean differences between male and female teachers, result showed that burnout among female teachers is higher than among male teachers. This finding is in accordance with Motalebzadeh, Ashraf & Tabatabaee (2013). The finding is also in accordance with Anderson and Iwanicki's (1984) but in contrast with that of Borgand Riding (1991) result which revealed significantly higher levels of burnout among male teachers. In this regard, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that male teachers reported more frequency and intense feeling of depersonalization towards their students compared to female teachers.

Additionally, the result revealed no significant differences between male and female teachers regarding self-efficacy. The mean score female teachers was ($M=88.7000$) and the mean score male teachers was ($M=88.2500$). Then, according to mean differences between male and female teachers regarding self-efficacy to say that no significant differences between male and female teachers regarding self-efficacy. (see Table 8)

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Table 8.

Group Statistics					
	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
totalb	male	27	67.9000	12.36676	2.76529
	female	28	69.9000	8.72353	2.75862
totale	male	27	88.2500	13.60679	3.04257
	female	28	88.7000	8.19282	2.59080

In order to determine whether there were any significant differences among EFL teachers marital status regarding their burnout and self-efficacy, one-way ANOVA was employed. The results of the analysis show that there was no significant difference among burnout and EFL teachers with regard to marital status. The results showed that teachers who are married have the same feelings with those who are single. On the other hand, Table 9 illustrates that there is no main effect of being married or single on the teachers' performance and their levels of burnout ($F = .095, p > .05$).

Moreover, the results of the analysis show that there was no significant difference among self-efficacy and EFL teachers with regard to marital status. ($F = 2.083, p > .05$).

Table 9.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
totalb	Between Groups	12.237	1	12.237	.095	.760
	Within Groups	3605.129	28	128.755		
	Total	3617.367	29			
totale	Between Groups	285.525	1	285.525	2.083	.160
	Within Groups	3837.675	28	137.060		
	Total	4123.200	29			

Table 10:

Group Statistics					
	statu	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
totalb	single	26	67.7273	15.86248	4.78272
	mrid	29	69.0526	7.77799	1.78439
totale	single	26	92.4545	13.90945	4.19386
	mrid	29	86.0526	10.28199	2.35885

7. DISCUSSION

This study was an effort to investigate the would-be association between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout phenomenon among a group of Iranian EFL teachers in high schools. Furthermore, differences in teachers' self-efficacy and burnout scores were examined with respect to demographic variables namely, teacher age, years of teaching experience, gender and marital status.

The findings indicated that there was a negative significant correlation between burnout and self-efficacy among EFL teachers. The findings are in line with those reported by Tabatabaee Yazdi, Motalebzadeh and Ashraf (2013) that revealed significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout. Also Vaezi and Fallah (2011) discovered a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and job stress among a sample of EFL teachers in private language institutes of Iran. This piece of finding is also consistent with that gained by Humman and Olivarez (2007) confirmed that teacher efficacy is related to teacher burnout. The yielded results of the current

study lead to the conclusion that enhancing burnout tends to have a negative influence on diminishing teachers' self- efficacy.

The size of this correlation indicated that the higher the teachers' self-efficacy, the less likely they were to experience burnout in their work. This may have suggestions for teachers' well-being, motivation and teaching efficiency and accordingly emphasize the value of setting up some courses for EFL teachers to increase efficacy.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout with demographic variables –the results indicated that there was no significant difference among EFL teachers regarding their burnout and self-efficacy and years of teaching experience, as well as age. In other words, age and teaching experience of EFL teachers was not found to have any significant effect on their performance on the scales of burnout and self-efficacy teachers'. This is contrast with previous research that indicated a significant relationship was observed between teachers' age, gender, years of experiences and reports of burnout (Motallebzadeh, Ashraf & Tabatabaee, 2013).

With reference to the influence of gender on teachers' self-efficacy, it was found that there was no significant difference between teachers' self-efficacy of male and female teachers. These findings confirmed the results reported by Cheung (2006) and Parisa Naseri Karimvand (2011), the female teachers seem to be more self-efficacious than the male teachers .

Further, findings of the present study indicated that there were significant burnout differences among EFL teachers with respect to gender. In other words, female teachers' burnout level among female teachers is higher than that of male teachers. This finding is in accordance with Motallebzadeh, Ashraf & Tabatabaee (2013). This finding is in accordance with Anderson and Iwanicki's (1984) but in contrast with that of Borgand Riding (1991) result which revealed significantly higher levels of burnout among male teachers. In this regard, Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that male teachers reported more frequency and intense feeling of depersonalization towards their students compared to female teachers.

Finally, the results of the present study showed that there was no significant difference among burnout and EFL teachers with regard to marital status. The results showed that teachers who are married have the same feelings with those who are single. In other words, there is no main effect of being married or single on the teachers' performance and their levels of burnout. These findings are in accordance with Azadeh Asgari (2014) findings which indicated there is no significant difference between married and single teachers in terms of their levels of burnout and also this finding is in accordance with the findings of Al-Qaryooti and Al-Khadeeb (2006) also who reported that being married and unmarried does not influence on the level of burnout among Arab teachers even though the study involved teachers teaching handicapped students.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major conclusion derived from the current study demonstrates the fact that findings show that there exists no significant difference among EFL teachers with different age ranges and years of teaching experience regarding their self-efficacy. In other words, EFL teachers with different age ranges and also with different years of teaching experience are responsible to be successful in their teaching profession, provided that they are familiarized with ways in which they can augment their sense of self-efficacy. Moreover, the results of the present study showed that there was no significant difference among burnout and EFL teachers with regard to marital status. With reference to the influence of gender on teachers' self-efficacy, it was found that there was no significant difference between teachers' self-efficacy of male and female teachers. Thus, school managers should be concerned with teachers' job burnout since increasing demands may have negative effect on their health, and thus on the well-being of their students. The administrators in schools and language centers should take into consideration their teachers' mental health. They can form meetings, seminars, workshops, professional development courses, and other activities

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to help teachers cope with and even prevent burnout. On the other hand, there are some basic stages that teachers themselves can take to improve their physical and mental circumstances. Indeed, teacher burnout must be viewed as one of the key issues that teachers encounter in the schools and classrooms. Consequently, it is hoped that teacher educators do their best to make teachers familiar with the concept of self-efficacy and the importance of their perceptions and beliefs in their professional life.

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