

The relationship between teacher's self-efficacy and student's achievement

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, teachers' self-efficacy demonstrated a profound influence on the daily lives of teachers and their students. To gain more insight into this area, this study examined the relationship of EFL teachers' self-efficacy with their students' achievement. For this end, 46 EFL teachers teaching at English institutes were selected. A questionnaire was administered to 46 teachers to determine their level of self-efficacy. The participants were requested to specify the mean scores of the achievement tests they administered to their students in the previous term. The Pearson Product and Point Bi-Serial correlation analyses were performed in order to find the relationship of EFL teachers' self-efficacy with their students' achievement. The results indicated significant positive correlations between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs with their students' achievement. The results showed a significant relationship of self-efficacy with students' achievement. Finding of this study might have great contributions to the field of applied Linguistics in general and teacher education in particular..

INTRODUCTION

In the course of the past few decades, teachers have increasingly become the focus of attention in mainstream education, since they play one of the most significant roles in teaching contexts. According to Wright, Hom, and Sanders (1997, p. 63), "more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor". Nevertheless, this has not been the case in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field, and unfortunately, English language teachers have not received adequate attention even though their significant role has been acknowledged in the field (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001).

One of the best ways to compensate for this lack of attention to English language teachers is doing research on different variables related to them, which influence teachers' behavior or performance in the classroom. Among various teacher variables, some have been studied extensively in mainstream education, such as teacher efficacy (Ashton, Olejnik, Crocker, and McAuliffe, 1982; Chacon, 2005; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2002, 2007). Nowadays more and more people are becoming aware of the fact that the base of all activities, which are done for reforming, should focus on classroom teachers. The most important issue among all successful teachers is their self-efficacy (Ashton, and Webb, 1986). Research on how teachers believe in themselves and its effect on their cognition has been a suitable topic of many educational inquirers over the last four decades. The most important beliefs that seem to have a crucial effect on teacher and student outcomes are teachers' sense of efficacy Chacon, (2005). In recent years, teachers' self-efficacy has been shown to demonstrate a profound influence on the daily lives of teachers and their students (Klassen, Bong, Usher; Chong, Huan, Wongd and Georgiou, 2009). Teachers' sense of efficacy has been defined as "the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplishing a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998, P.1).

Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are more open to new ideas and they are more willing to experiment with new methods at the same time offering students new and different learning opportunities or experience (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Because of the existence of self-efficacy variable in the literature related to teacher studies, the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy with their students' achievement was considered in this study.

Some studies have been conducted on the relationship of EFL teachers' self-efficacy with their students' achievement. What is missing in literature is which component of self-efficacy has more predictive power of students' achievement; that is, which component has a stronger relationship with students' achievement at different levels of instruction. In other words this study attempts to investigate the relationship of self-efficacy with students' achievement of teachers teaching at different levels of instruction including child and adult.

2.1 Related theoretical views

2.1.1 Defining of Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is another independent variable whose contribution to the teachers was investigated in the present work. Primarily, the base of self-efficacy comes from Bandura's theory, which maintains that the belief people have about their capabilities in dealing with difficult situations affects their choices, their wishes, degree of their attempt, perseverance, flexibility in problems, vulnerability to stress and depression and performance outcomes (Bandura, 1997).

Research conducted by Maehr and Pintrich (Eds.) cited in Goleman, 1995, Specifically, efficacy beliefs influence whether people think optimistically or pessimistically, the goals they set for themselves, their commitment to them, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with the environmental demands and the accomplishments they realize (Pajares, 1997), perceived self-efficacy has been defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that confidence that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994).

Since self-efficacy has been shown to predict students 'achievements in class area, it has received much attention in educational researches (Usher, and Pajares, 2008). Teachers with a low level of efficacy are less committed to the teaching profession than those with higher efficacy (Bandura, 1993). Because of their lack of commitment, teachers with a lower sense of efficacy also spend more time on non-academic activities than do highly efficacious teachers. Highly efficacious teachers are more likely to provide assistance to students who have difficulty in learning and praise students for success. In contrast, lower efficacious teachers are more apt to give up on students that do not learn quickly and criticize their failures (Gibson, and Dembo, 1984).

According to Bandura's (1998) theoretical analysis, perceived self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. A strong self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways; people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be measured rather than as threats to be avoided. They approach threatening situation with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishment, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Multon, Brown and Lent, 1991; Pajare, 1996, 1997; Bandura, 2000). In contrast, people who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter, and on all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties; they fall easily to stress and depression. Efficacy beliefs influence the amount of stress and anxiety individual experience as they engage in an activity (Pajare, 1994; Bandura, 1997).

Since (Bandura, 1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy over a quarter century ago, it has been widely tested in varied disciplines and settings and has received support from a growing body of findings from diverse fields. For example, self-efficacy beliefs have been found to be related to clinical problems such as addiction (Marlatt, Baer, and Quigley, 1995); depression (Davis and Yates, 1982); social skills (Moe and Zeiss, 1982), assertiveness (Lee, 1983, 1984), to stress (Jerusalem and Mittag, 1995) to pain control (Manning and Wright, 1983); and to health (O' Leary 1985).

Self-efficacy determines an individual's resiliency to adversity and his/her vulnerability to stress and depression (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino & Pastorelli, 2003). General self-efficacy

aims at a broad and stable sense of personal competence to deal effectively with a variety of stressful situations (Adeyemo, 2008; Schwarzer, 1994). Perhaps for an individual who has low happiness and life satisfaction and high depression, having high self-efficacy will help him/her in displaying appropriate behaviors and positive attitudes as regards his/her academic work.

Several studies have also established that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning, organization, and enthusiasm. They persist when things do not go smoothly and are more resilient in the face of setbacks. They tend to be less critical with students who make errors and “work longer with a student who is struggling” (Ashton and Webb, 1986; Coladarchi, 1992, Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Tschannen–Moran and Woolfolk 2001. Another important aspect that should be considered in relating to student’s achievement is the emotional intelligence of teachers. In *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*, Bandura (1986) proposed a social cognitive theory that emphasizes the role of self-referent phenomena and adopts an agentic view of personality. According to this agentic socio cognitive perspective, the underlying features of personal agency include intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness.

Bandura (2001) describes intention as "representation of a future course of action to be performed" (p. 6), that can originate actions for given purposes. The manifestation of forward looking plans, nevertheless, calls for more than an intentional state. What is needed is the exercise of forethought through which individuals are motivated and their actions are shaped in anticipation of future events. Successful implementation of intentions and plans, of course, entails not only the intentional ability to make choices and action plans, but also the ability to motivate and regulate the implementation of desired actions. According to Bandura, (1986), this metacognitive ability is realized through self-regulatory processes that link thought to action and includes self-monitoring, performance self-guidance via personal standards, and corrective self-reactions. The last distinctive core feature of Bandura’s agentic socio cognitive theory pivots on individuals' capability of reflecting on themselves, their thoughts, and actions. For Bandura, (1997), among the mentioned features, perceived self-efficacy, i.e., "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3), is the most fundamental and ubiquitous mechanism of personal agency. He also asserted how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their own capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing. Individual's beliefs about their efficacy can be developed by four main sources of influence.

Bandura (1997) postulated these sources of efficacy expectations as: mastery experience, also called enactive self-mastery, vicarious experience, also called role-modeling, social or verbal persuasion, and arousal or physiological and emotional states. The most prevailing and powerful influence on efficacy is mastery experience through which successfully performing the behavior increases self-efficacy for that behavior. The perception that a performance has been successful enhances perceived self-efficacy and ensures future proficiency and success. The perception that a performance has been a failure weakens efficacy beliefs and leads to the expectation that future performance will also be inefficient.

Self-mastery, according to Nielson, (2004), is best achieved through breaking down complex task into its constituents that are easier to accomplish, in order to ensure a high level of initial success.

Building self-efficacy via mastery experience or enactive mastery entails organizing situations that will offer individuals rewarding success and avoid their experiencing repeated failure.

The second prominent influence originates from observing other similar people to perform a behavior successfully. It provides people with ideas about successful manner. In contrast, observing people similar to oneself fail lowers the individual's confidence and subsequently undermines their efforts. An application of this source of efficacy in educational and career settings lies in the relative contribution of simulations for enhancing self-efficacy Guskey, (1988). A third source of influence is social or verbal persuasion received from others. Successful persuaders foster people's beliefs in their capabilities, while at the same time, ensure that the visualized success is achievable. Negative persuasion, on the other hand, may tend to defeat and lower self-beliefs. The most contributing effect of social persuasion pivots around initiating the task, attempting new strategies, and trying hard to succeed (Petrides, 2007). Here it is worth mentioning although affirmative feedbacks enhance self-efficacy, attempts at constructing self-efficacy through mere verbal persuasion may simply collapse into vacant sermons unless they are supported by efficacy-affirming experiences such as mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997).

Psychological and affective states, such as stress, anxiety, and excitement also provide information about efficacy perception and boost the feeling of proficiency. Hence, trying to reduce individual's stress and anxiety and to modify negative debilitating states to positive facilitator states plays an influential role in amending perceived self-efficacy beliefs. Another important affective factor, according to Walker, (1995), is attribution. If success is attributed to internal or controllable causes such as ability or effort, efficacy will be hanced. Nevertheless, if success is attributed to external uncontrollable factors such as chance, self-efficacy may be diminished (cited in Woolfolk Hoy and Spero, 2000).

Some studies have demonstrated the role of self-efficacy beliefs in various academic and educational contexts. Academic self-efficacy may be operationalized as one's confidence in his ability to successfully perform pro-academic self-regulatory behaviors– the degree to which students metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally regulate their learning process. Nielson, (2004). A substantial body of literature supports the relationship between students' self-efficacy beliefs for academic tasks and objectives and their academic performance on such diverse academic behaviors as, mathematics-specific self-efficacy (Ross, 1992), computer training (Gist, 1989), exam performance (Yeperen, 2006), essay writing (Johnson, 1996), and language learning (Wong, 2005).

What has emerged from virtually all these studies is in line with Bandura's (1977), argument that those students with a higher degree of self-efficacy tend to exert more effort, persevere in difficult situations, choose course of activities more attentively, and retain more realistic and flexible attributions. While students low in self-efficacy display less persistence and effort expenditure, avoid uncertain and challenging tasks, lack intentionality, and possess attributions that are nonrealistic and maladaptive.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the study

The study employed a survey research design to collect data from the participants to investigate the relationship of EFL teacher's self-efficacy with their student's achievement. In addition,

analysis of teachers' level of teaching was performed through correlation. This research is quantitative in nature. Therefore the design of this study is correlational. Independent variable is self-efficacy and the dependent variable is students' achievement.

3.2 Participants

The total number of the participants who participated in this study was 46, all of whom were Iranian EFL teachers at either BA or MA level. The participants were selected from EFL private institutes. Participants included both male and female teachers who worked in EFL private institutes and were asked to answer the questionnaire. The average age of teachers was about 21-35. The participants included teachers of both levels of instructions, i.e. child and adult.

3.3 Instrumentation

Data were collected through questionnaire. A self-efficacy questionnaire with 24 items were given to 46 EFL teachers. Regarding students' achievement, teachers were required to specify the mean scores of the final achievement tests which they administered to their students last term.

The scales which were used in this study are teacher self-efficacy scale (TES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, (2001), assesses a self-efficacy based on general personality disposition. Participants responded by indicating their extent of agreement with each of the 24 statements using a nine-point scale of 1 (Nothing), to 9 (A great deal). The one who chooses (A great deal) has the greatest level of self-efficacy. Teacher efficacy has three components and each component is measured by 8 items which includes: 1. Efficacy in student engagement: 1- 2-4-6-9-12-14-22. 2. Efficacy in instructional strategies: 7-10-11-17-18-20-23-24. 3. Efficacy in classroom management: 3-5-8-13-15-16-19-21. The questionnaire can be seen in Appendix.

Table 1. Reliability index of teachers' self-efficacy

| | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---------------|------------------|------------|
| Self-efficacy | 0.92 | 24 |

Table 1, shows that the reliability index of teachers' self-efficacy in Cronbach's Alpha is 0.92. Therefore, the value of the self-efficacy is more than 0.7, we can say that the self-efficacy questionnaire is reliable and can be used for this study.

3.4 Data collection procedures

One of the most widely used ways of collecting data in social sciences is through questionnaires (Cohen, 2007), which provide useful information on an event, a belief, or an attitude (Farhady, 1995). Therefore, the instruments which was used for collecting data was self-efficacy questionnaire and students' achievement mean scores. Populations of 46 teachers were randomly chosen from EFL institutes' teachers and students' achievements were considered for a period of one term. EFL teachers completed self- efficacy questionnaire. The scales were personally administered to the participants. The questionnaire, which took on average 10 minutes to complete, were administered

in almost all English language institutes in the first week. While some of the instruments were collected immediately after completion, the rest were retrieved about two weeks later. Teachers were requested to specify the mean scores of the achievement tests which they administrated last term.

3.5 Data analysis

Data were collected through questionnaire. The collected data from questionnaires were analyzed through SPSS. At last in order to examine the relationship of EFL teachers’ self-efficacy with their students’ achievement, Pearson Product and Point Bi-Serial correlation analyses were performed.

4. Findings and Analysis

The data is analyzed through the Pearson Product Correlations, to meet the assumption of normality. As displayed in Table 2 below, the ratios of skewedness and Kurtosis over their respective errors are within the ranges of +/- 1.96 (Filed, 2009).

Table shows that the data collected are normally distributed. The Pearson Product correlation was determined which the results showed that a significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r(44) = .82, P < .05$). There is a relationship between EFL teachers’ self-efficacy and their students’ achievement.

Table 2. Pearson Correlational Between Teachers’ Self-Efficacy and Their Students’ Achievement

| | Achievement | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| Total Self-Efficacy | Pearson Correlation | .826** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 46 |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | |

As it is shown in Table 2, above the Pearson Product correlation was run to probe any significant relationships between the teachers’ self-efficacy and students’ achievement. The results can be seen in ($r(44) = .82, P < .05$) representing a large effect size which indicated that there was a significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation; Level of Instruction with Components of Teachers’ Self-Efficacy

| | Level of Instruction | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Efficacy in Students’ Engagement | Pearson Correlation | .763** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 46 |
| Efficacy in Instructional Strategies | Pearson Correlation | .809** |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 46 |
| Efficacy in Classroom Management | Pearson Correlation | .764** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 46 |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | |

The amounts of correlation between efficacy in students' engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies and efficacy in classroom management with their level of instruction as displayed in Table 3 were significant of .000, which shows in the following parts:

A: Efficacy in Students' Engagement ($r(44) = .76, P < .05$) representing a large effect size i.e. the teachers' level of teaching accounts for 58.2 ($r = .763, r^2 = .582$) percent of variability in their Efficacy in Students' Engagement.

B: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies ($r(44) = .80, P < .05$) representing a large effect size i.e. the teachers' level of teaching accounts for 65.4 ($r = .809, r^2 = .657$) percent of variability in their Efficacy in Instructional Strategies.

C: Efficacy in Classroom Management ($r(44) = .76, P < .05$) representing a large effect size i.e. the teachers' level of teaching accounts for 58.3 ($r = .764, r^2 = .583$) percent of variability in their Efficacy in Classroom Management.

The term Efficacy has a great effect on different parts of our lives and teaching is no exception. Using good teaching skills and strategies help teachers obtain a positive effect when working with students and their coworkers and at the same time feel capable and self-confident that they are able to solve teaching difficulties. Research has shown that beliefs, once established, appear resistant to change: people tend to interpret reality in accordance with beliefs and to recall belief-congruent information Pajares, M.F, (1992).

The study of Wei, Huangful, (2012), showed that college EFL teachers perceived themselves with much higher self-efficacy for instructional strategies than efficacy for classroom management and efficacy for student engagement. Also, the results of descriptive analyses revealed that two most frequently used motivational strategies by teachers in language classroom were strategies for generating students' initial motivation and strategies for maintaining and protecting students' motivation.

5. Conclusion

Teacher's self-efficacy beliefs may influence a student's achievement in several ways. Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely than teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy to implement didactic innovations in the classroom and to use classroom management approaches and adequate teaching methods that encourage students' autonomy and reduce custodial control (Cousins

and Walker, 1995 Guskey, 1988), to take responsibility for students with special learning needs (Allinder, 1994; Jordan, Krcaali-Iftar, and Diamond,1993), to manage classroom problems (Chacon, 2005; Korevaar, 1990), and to keep students on task (Podell and Soodak, 1993).

Teachers should try to select classes in which they will have higher sense of efficacy, Therefore, according to the findings of this study the variable of self-efficacy can predict the students' achievement. It is important for teachers to think of their efficacy when they want to improve their students' achievements and students' engagement in the classroom. Teachers with high self-efficacy can have better results in different aspects of students in the classroom.

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Appendix:

Teacher Efficacy Questionnaire

Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, (2001)

Dear Participants,

The purpose of this survey is to measure teachers' beliefs about they Caching There are 24 questions. Please read each questions. Please read each question carefully and, then, choose the best choice which describes your present situation.

Thank you.

name:

gender:

age:

degree:

major:

experience:

teaching context:

age range of Ss:

level of Ss:

| | | nothing | | Very little | | Some influence | | Quite a bit | | A great deal |
|---|--|---------|---|-------------|---|----------------|---|-------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 2 | How much can you do to help your students think critically? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 3 | How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 4 | How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 5 | To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 6 | How much can you do to get your students to believe they can do well in school work? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 7 | How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 9 | How much can you do to help your students value learning? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 11 | To what extent can you craft good question for your student? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 12 | How much can you do to foster student creativity? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 13 | How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 14 | How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 15 | How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 16 | How much can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 17 | How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 18 | How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 19 | How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire class? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 20 | To what extent can you | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | How well can you respond to defiant students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 22 | How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 23 | How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 24 | How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Self-efficacy components:

1. Efficacy in student engagement
2. Efficacy in instructional strategies
3. Efficacy in classroom management