Examining the Relationship among Sense of Self-efficacy, Teaching Experience and Beliefs about Classroom Management: A case of Iranian EFL Teachers

Sima Safa

Department of English, Torbat-e-Heydarieh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

Behzad Ghonsooly *

Professor, Department of English, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

Abstract

The present study aims to examine the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management style. This study investigated whether or not English teachers are different in classroom management styles and sense of self-efficacy. Participants included 100 EFL teachers who took part in this study. The study was limited to teachers who work in private institutes with the master's degree. The findings revealed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between instructors' self-efficacy and their management styles. Moreover, their experience was associated with their levels of self-efficacy. Concerning the influence of being efficacious as a teacher, the results of this study will be beneficial for both the teachers and learners because of the fact that having enough experience leads to effective class management too.

Keywords: teachers' self-efficacy, classroom management, teaching experience

INTRODUCTION

Successful teaching seems to be a multi-factorial achievement, depends namely on self-efficacy and classroom management. These two determinants are inextricably linked with each other in terms of dynamics, interaction and mutual effects. Yet, there are conceptual disparate notions as to the way they contribute or diminish teaching success, which, in turn, seem to be a loosely-defined state, urging a clear-cut and ship-shaped definition. According to Hoy and Spero, (2005) efficacy is chiefly regarded as a judgmental forward-looking concept towards what one may suppose he can do rather than what he is truly capable of. This attitude is of paramount significance as individuals naturally tend to over/underestimate their capabilities. They believe this way of thinking, in turn, enormously impacts on the professional practices adopted and implemented through their career life.

Teachers play various roles in a typical classroom, but surely one of the most important is that of classroom manager. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. If students are disorder and disrespect, and no apparent

---

rules and procedures guide behavior, chaos becomes the norm. In these situations, both teachers and students suffer. Teachers struggle to teach, and students most likely learn much less than they should. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. But a well-managed classroom does not just appear out of nowhere. It takes a good deal of effort to create and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the teacher.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-efficacy

As Long and Frye (1981) note, it is a myth to believe that effective teachers can prevent all discipline problems by keeping students interested in learning through the use of exciting classroom materials and activities. The potential for problems exists beyond academics. Students experience difficulties at home which spill over into the classroom; students experience problems with peers during class breaks and in the classroom which often involve the teacher; and students experience mood changes which can generate problems, to name just a few.

According to Bandura(1986), social cognitive theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes.

Bandura and Schunk (1981) define self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainment" (p. 31). Individuals who feel that they will be successful on a given task are more likely to have self- efficacy, because they adopt challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite setbacks, and develop coping mechanisms for managing their emotional states. Individuals, who believe they fail, avoid expending effort because failure after trying hard threatens self-esteem. Self-efficacy is situationally specific; it is not a generalized expectancy. It develops from a subject's appraisal of past experience with the task or with activities similar to it, although perceptions of efficacy can be modified by other sources of information such as observing the performances of others. They mentioned the chief sources of perceived self-efficacy as enactive self-mastery, vicarious experience, social/verbal persuasion and arousal, physiological and emotional states. Vicarious experience is defined as a deleterious effect on the perception of one's competence, particularly when observing those at a similar rate of skill and knowledge failing to perform a given task.

Classroom Management

Teachers play various roles in a typical classroom, but surely one of the most important roles is that of a classroom manager. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. If students are disorder and disrespect, and no apparent rules and procedures guide behavior, chaos becomes the norm. In these

situations, both teachers and students suffer. Teachers struggle to teach, and students most likely learn much less than they should. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. But a well-managed classroom does not just appear out of nowhere. It takes a good deal of effort to create and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the teacher.

Berliner (1988) shows that the time a teacher has to take to correct misbehavior caused by poor classroom management skills results in a lower rate of academic engagement in the classroom. From the student's perspective, effective classroom management involves clear communication of behavioral and academic expectations as well as a cooperative learning environment.

Although the effect the classroom teacher can have on student's achievement is clear, the dynamics of how a teacher produces such an effect are not simple. Rather, the effective teacher performs many functions. These functions can be organized into three major roles:

(1) making wise choices about the most effective instructional strategies to employ,

(2) designing classroom curriculum to facilitate student learning, and

(3) making effective use of classroom management techniques.

The first role deals with instructional strategies and their use. Effective teachers have a wide array of instructional strategies at their disposal. They are skilled in the use of cooperative learning and graphic organizers; they know how best they can use homework and how to use questions and advance organizers, and so on. Additionally, they know when these strategies should be used with specific students and specific content. Although cooperative learning might be highly effective in one lesson, a different approach might be better in another lesson. Some general strategies that have a good research "track record" in terms of enhancing student's achievement have been detailed in Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

The Effects of Years of Experience

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2002; 2007) found that experienced teachers (>3 years of experience) have a stronger sense of self-efficacy and desire for instructional strategies in comparison with the novice. This might be correlated to the source whereby they gain efficacy. On the other hand, the self-efficacy of novice teachers, who are struggling to find their voice as they enter the profession, are wehemently dependent on the support they receive from their colleagues. In other words, the most remarkable source of efficacy they resort to is verbal persuasion. On the contrary, experienced teachers use the strongest source of efficacy, mastery experience as an example, which they have accumulated over years. These successful experiences strongly contribute to reinforcing the teachers' sense of efficacy through a cyclical nature, thus, when they achieve in accomplishing a task, they gain greater efficacy, leading to greater efforts and persistence. This enhances teachers' performance and boosts efficacy. Given the fact that mastery experience is more powerful than verbal persuasion, the experienced have

higher levels of self-efficacy compared to the novice. The other underlying cause for the on-going trend is as the novice begin the teaching, they have the difficulty overcoming reality shock (Veenman, 1984), the result of which is that their efficacy diminishes at the primary stages of their career (Hoy & Spero, 2005) and they need more time to form a firm-level stability for the sense of their efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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

METHOD

Participants

100 EFL teachers who were teaching in some institutes of Mashhad, Iran (Shokooh Danesh Toos, Khorasan, Mehre Sajad and Mahan) were selected through convenience sampling. There were 45 females and 55 males. The age of these participants ranged from 25 to 45 and their educational degree were MA in English teaching. Due to the significance of gender in relevant research both males and females were asked to take part in this study.

Instruments

Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control (ABCC)

In order to measure participants' classroom management orientations, this inventory developed by Martin, Yin and Baldwin,(1998, as cited in Sokal, Smith, & Mowat, 2003)was employed by the researcher. The ABCC inventory consists of three subscales with 48 items underlying the proposed classroom management dimensions including instructional management (14 items), people management (8 items), and behavior management (4 items) (Cerit, 2011). A four category response scale for each item ranges from ' describes me very well' to 'describe me not at all'. Cronbach's alpha of the whole instrument was 0.75. Reliability coefficients of the Instructional Management subscale and the People Management subscale were found to be 0.74 and 0.78, respectively.

Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)

In addition to the ABCC-R Inventory, participants also completed the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990, adopted from Nietfeld & Enders(2003), in order to measure both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. The questionnaire employed in this study includes 24 multiple-choice items.

The items for this scale were developed by Gibson and Dembo (1984) and were chosen partly by Nietfeld and Enders (2003) since they showed enough reliability coefficients in their study. The items were also chosen because Gibson, Dembo (1984), Woolfolk and

Hoy (1990) have suggested through factor analysis that the items produce two independent factors known as Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) and General Teaching Efficacy (GTE). The PTE factor shows one's efficacy as a teacher to put positive effects on learning process. The GTE factor indicates one's efficacy for the teaching profession as a whole to influence learning. Of the 20 items, twelve were included in the PTE factor and eight were included for the GTE factor. The items were responded based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'nothing' to ' a great deal'.

RESULTS

From a total of 100 teachers selected ranging between 25 and 45 in age, there were 45 females and 55males. Demographic data is presented in Table 1. All the collated data was fed into SPSS (version 19, IBM, US). Initially they were assessed using Kolmogrov-Smirnov test, subsequent to which statistical analysis regarding variable dependence was carried out. Any P-value in excess of 0.05 was calculated to be significant.

Teachers were asked to indicate their experience in teaching profession. Their responses were summarized using descriptive statistics for presentation in Table 1. The length of time as a teacher ranged from 5 to 22 for study sample. The mean number of years as a teacher was 10.11 (SD= 2.45).

Table 1. Demographic Teachers' data

Variables	Mean (SD)	Maximum	Minimum
Age	34.76 (5.24)	45	25
Year of teaching experience	10.11 (2.45)	22	5

Table 2 presents data regarding TES and ABCC test results, with the latter coming up with an average of 39.77±6.27 IM.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of teachers' SE, PE, IM, BM, Total ABCC

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
SE	82	74.00	208.00	153.1566	26.36816	-.034	.264	-.267	.523
PM	82	10.00	33.00	17.9560	3.94944	.937	.253	1.338	.500
IM	82	29.00	59.00	39.7692	6.26871	.738	.272	.979	.538
BM	82	13.00	37.00	21.5366	4.46162	.658	.266	1.133	.526
Total Score-ABCC	82	59.00	125.00	80.2388	13.32472	1.204	.293	1.431	.578

Then, the normal distribution of the all variables was checked using Kolmogorov-Smirnovand Shapiro-Wilk tests. A non-significant value shows that the variables have normal distribution. As Table 3 indicates, both tests show non-significant values for all the variables. Therefore, the variables enjoy normal distribution and are appropriate for further analyses.

Table 3. Tests of normality of teachers' SE, PE, IM, BM, Total ABCC

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SE	.064	79	.089	.986	79	.124
PM	.058	79	.112	.989	79	.297
IM	.032	79	.421	.990	79	.385
BM	.065	79	.085	.986	79	.124
Total score-ABCC	.054	79	.215	.988	79	.159

Here are the two questions:

RQ1: Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their beliefs about classroom management?

In order to answer the first research question, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Formula was used. First, the relation between total ABCC and teachers' self-efficacy was examined. As Table 4 indicates, there is a positive and significant relation between teachers' self-efficacy and the total score of ABCC ($r= .38$, $p<.05$). Therefore, the higher the teachers' self-efficacy, the more positive attitudes about classroom management they have.

Table 4. Correlations between SE and the total score of ABCC

		SE	ABCC (total score)
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	89	89
ABCC	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	89	89

Following this, the relation between self-efficacy and subscales of ABCC was examined. Table 4 shows the relation between teachers' self-efficacy and instructional management.

Table 5. Correlations between SE and IM

		SE	IM
SE	Pearson Correlation	1	.294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	89	89
IM	Pearson Correlation	.294**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	89	89

 As Table 5 indicates, there is a positive and significant relation between teachers' self-efficacy and instructional management ($r= .29$, $p<.05$). Therefore, the higher the teachers' self-efficacy, the better their instructional management.

Table 6 shows the relation between teachers' self-efficacy and people management.

Table 6. Correlations between SE and PM

		SE	PM
	Pearson Correlation	1	.252**
SE	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	89	89
	Pearson Correlation	.252**	1
PM	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	89	89

As Table 6 indicates, there is a positive and significant relation between teachers' self-efficacy and people management ($r= .25$, $p<.05$). Therefore, the higher the teachers' self-efficacy, the better people management.

Table 7. Correlations between SE and BM

		SE	BM
	Pearson Correlation	1	.218**
SE	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	89	89
	Pearson Correlation	.218**	1
BM	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	89	89

As Table 7 indicates, there is a positive and significant relation between teachers' self-efficacy and their behavior management ($r= .21$, $p<.05$). Therefore, the higher teachers' self-efficacy, the better their behavior management.

RQ2. Is there any significant relationship between years of educational experience and their self-efficacy?

In order to answer this research question, one-way ANOVA was used. To this end, teachers were divided into three groups of low (≤5), mid (5-15), and high (≥15) teaching experience groups. Descriptive statistics regarding self-efficacy for these three groups is given in Table 4.8. As Table 4.8 indicates, the mean of self-efficacy in the low experienced group is 145.52, in the mid group is 153.69, and in the high group is 162.63. To see whether these differences are statistically significant, F value was checked.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics teacher self-efficacy by the year of experience

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Low	27	145.5217	19.43490	4.05246	137.1175	153.9260	110.00	193.00
Mid	29	153.6923	21.33223	5.91650	149.8014	175.5832	129.00	195.00
High	26	162.6364	24.31161	7.33023	137.3036	169.9691	139.00	201.00
Total	82	152.1702	21.94887	3.20157	145.7258	158.6146	110.00	201.00

As Table 9 indicates, there is a statistically significant difference in self-efficacy among the three groups (F= 2.96, $p<.05$).

Table 9. ANOVA results for self-efficacy with reference to the year of education

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2479.584	2	1239.792	2.962	.043
Within Groups	19681.054	77	447.297		
Total	22160.638	79			

To find the exact location of difference, post-hoc analysis with Tukey was run. Results can be seen in Table 10. As Table 10 shows, there is only a statistically significant difference between low and high experienced groups with regard to their self-efficacy (mean difference= 17.17, *p<*.05). It means that by increasing the educational experience, teachers' self-efficacy increases.

Table 10. Multiple comparisons by using Tukey HSD

(I) exp.group	(J) exp.group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
low (Dimension 2)	Mid (Dimension 3)	-8. 11462	7.33860	.091	-34.9702	.6291
	High	-17. 17057	7.75313	.032	-26.9197	10.6905
mid	Low	-8. 11462	7.33860	.091	-.6291	34.9702
	High	9.05594	8.66434	.086	-11.9593	30.0711
high	Low	-17. 17057	7.75313	.032	-10.6905	26.9197
	Mid	-9.05594	8.66434	.086	-30.0711	11.9593

DISCUSSION

Behavior management underlines a dynamic interaction between the instructors and tutors. Assignment and homework are modifiable, chiefly based on the feedback obtained in an ongoing style from students. Learners are given free time as incentive for what they had done.

In people management, teacher adopts a far more passive role in the teaching-learning process. In this tutor-centered class, learners actually run the class, from content to duration of every session. The teacher chiefly functions as a moderator, monitoring the active procession on the part of learners. In this study, we investigated the classroom management styles of EFL teachers in Mashhad to specify the potential impacts of their sense of efficacy on their classroom activities with regard to students learning, social interactions, and behaviors.

Although the effect the classroom teacher can have on student achievement is clear, the dynamics of how a teacher produces such an effect are not simple. Rather, the effective teacher performs many functions. These functions can be organized into three major roles:

(1) Making wise choices about the most effective instructional strategies to employ,
(2) Designing classroom curriculum to facilitate student learning, and
(3) Making effective use of classroom management techniques.

The first role deals with instructional strategies and their use. Effective teachers have a wide array of instructional strategies at their disposal. Interestingly, we revealed that teachers'

management styles were positively correlated to their self-efficacy. In other words, teachers with high scores on self-efficacy were more likely interventionist. It can be concluded that teachers may come to believe that it is the way to be effective teachers by maintaining order and strict controlling students' instructional activities, even though they have greater confidence in their abilities to have positive student learning. By the same token, tutors' performance including their classroom management skills are claimed to be mainly influenced by what they think of themselves regarding their competence, skill, knowledge and, experience.

According to Moskowitz and Hayman (1976), once a teacher loses control of his classroom, it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to regain that control. Also, research from Berliner (1988) and Brophy and Good (1986) shows that the time a teacher has to take to correct misbehavior caused by poor classroom management skills results in a lower rate of academic engagement in the classroom. From the student's perspective, effective classroom management involves clear communication of behavioral and academic expectations as well as a cooperative learning environment.

Badiei (2013) showed that Iranian teachers had high scores on instructional management and people management test than teachers in India across all the class sizes, grade levels, and school type. They reported that teachers in their country tend to be more controlling than were their colleagues in India. According to the interventionist approach, student's success and development are yielded as the result of external conditions.

On the part of school-goers, thoughts, feelings, and preferences attract little attention when adults behave in the experienced way in instructional matters and take the responsibility for selecting what seems to be the best for student development, success as well as behavior control. The rules and procedures are developed by teachers commonly without input from students. Similarly, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2002, 2007) found that experienced teachers (>3 years of experience) have a stronger sense of self-efficacy and desire for instructional strategies in comparison with the novice. This might be correlated to the source whereby they gain efficacy. On the other hand, the self-efficacy of novice teachers, who are struggling to find their voice as they enter the profession, are wehemently dependent on the support they receive from their colleagues. In other words, the most remarkable source of efficacy they resort to is verbal persuasion. On the contrary, experienced teachers use the strongest source of efficacy, mastery experience as an example, which they have accumulated over years. These successful experiences strongly contribute to reinforcing the teachers' sense of efficacy through a cyclical nature, thus, when they achieve in accomplishing a task, they gain greater efficacy, leading to greater efforts and persistence. This enhances teachers' performance and boosts efficacy. Given the fact that mastery experience is more powerful than verbal persuasion, the experienced have higher levels of self-efficacy compared to the novice. The other underlying cause for the on-going trend is as the

novice begin the teaching, they have the difficulty overcoming reality shock (Veenman, 1984). The result of which is that their efficacy diminishes at the primary stages of their career (Hoy & Spero, 2005) and they need more time to form a firm-level stability for the sense of their efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

Last but not least, the experienced take the large number of training programmes, which give them more approaches towards the instructions and student engagement in the classroom (Chacón, 2005; Tucker et al., 2005).

Education in Iran focuses predominantly on the development of the academic ability of students and less on the social and emotional aspects of a student's development. It is also known that most of the education systems in Asian context are syllabus bound and task or examination oriented.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study suggest that years of experience significantly impacts teachers' efficacy beliefs. It is usually expected that experienced teachers, older teachers, and teachers with graduate work in education or related experience have more efficacy than novice teachers. As a result, those teachers who amass several years of teaching experience are more likely to have high efficacy beliefs. Understanding high sense of efficacy can help teachers choose the more humanistic style for classroom management, meaning that they care and understand students' condition. Furthermore, It also provides a golden opportunity for their pursuit of every possible strategy that helps in tackling their classroom issues and inducing academic and behavioral change (Soodak & Podell, 1994).

In an effort to maintain order in the classroom, sometimes teachers can actually make the problems worse. Therefore, it is important to consider some of the basic mistakes commonly made when implementing classroom behavior management strategies. Therefore, the result of this study can be helpful for teachers to use appropriate management strategies in the classroom.

According to the findings of the present study, the teachers need to understand that they need to be able to change the ways they do things from year to year, as the children change. Not every approach works for every child. Teachers need to learn to be flexible. The study can be beneficial for teachers to improve their self-efficacy to have suitable class management; consequently, good interaction between teacher and student provides suitable educational setting.

The following recommendations are offered as possible topics for future research based on findings of this study.

1. Using a larger sample with more variables
2. Considering the element of teacher -student interaction
3. Studying students' perception of their teachers' classroom management styles

REFERENCES

Badiei, H. R. (2013). *Classroom management style, teacher efficacy, and big five personality factor among higher primary teachers in India and in Iran: a comparative study.* Ph.D., University of Mysore, Indian ETD Repository. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*: Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A., & Schunk, D. H. (1981). Cultivating competence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest through proximal self-motivation. *The Journal of Personality and Social.*

Berliner, D. C. (1988). The development of expertise in pedagogy. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, LA.*

Cerit, Y. (2011). The relationship between pre-service classroom teachers'self-efficacy beliefs and classroom management orientations. *Buca Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi,30*, 156-174.

Chacón, C. T. (2005). Teachers' perceived efficacy among English as a foreign language teachers in middle schools in Venezuela. *Teaching and teacher education, 21*(3), 257-272.

Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. H. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of educational psychology, 76*(4), 569-582.

Hoy, A. W., & Spero, R. B. (2005). Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and teacher education, 21*(4), 343-356.

Long, J. D., Frye, V. H., & Long, E. W. (1981). *Making it till Friday: A guide to successful classroom management*: Princeton Book Company.

Martin, N. K., Yin, Z., & Baldwin, B. (1998). Classroom management training, class size and graduate study: Do these variables impact teachers' beliefs regarding classroom management style? *(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.ED 420 671).*

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Moskowitz, G., & Hayman Jr, J. L. (1976). Success strategies of inner-city teachers: A year-long study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 283-289.

Nietfeld, J. L., & Enders, C. K. (2003). An examination of student teacher beliefs: Interrelationships between hope, self-efficacy, goal orientations, and beliefs about learning. *Current Issues in Education, 6*(5), 2005.

Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A. W., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of educational research, 68*(2), 202-248.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and teacher education, 23*(6), 944-956.

Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of educational research, 54*(2), 143-178.