THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL ADVANCE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT
Self-efficacy and Locus of control are believed to affect learners' academic achievement. This effect has scarcely been researched in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. This correlational study explored the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, Locus of control and reading comprehension level of Iranian EFL advance learners. In this study, Michigan reading comprehension test, a Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire and an Internal Control Index were administered to eighty one advance EFL students. The results of Pearson Correlation coefficient, descriptive statistics, and independent t-test indicated that a) there were significant strong positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control, between self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension, and also between Locus of Control and reading comprehension b) in addition there was a significant difference between internalizers’ and externalizers’ reading comprehension ability. The findings of this study indicate that encouraging students, to improve their self-efficacy and Locus of Control can be quite helpful for them to achieve higher scores in the reading comprehension. Since most researches on Self_efficacy and Locus of Control have been conducted in the field of psychology and little research in this regard has been done in the field of second/foreign language acquisition especially in the context of Iran, the researchers aimed to focus on Self_efficacy and Locus of Control in this study.

KEYWORDS: self-efficacy, Locus of Control, EFL reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION
Reading is a complex cognitive activity essential for sufficient functioning and for obtaining information in modern society (Alfassi, 2004). It is not exaggeration to say that reading is an important skill in ELT among the four well-known ones through which one acquires most of his/her knowledge (Aliakbari & Mashhadialvar, 2001).

Early decades of studies on ID§ labeled learners as good or bad, intelligence or dull, motivated or unmotivated ones (Horwitz, 2000). Recently more research has concentrated on considering why
some learners are more successful than others (Fatemi & Elahi, 2010). It is certificated that the beliefs people hold about their capability to succeed in their attempts are vital factors in their success or failures in these attempts (Bandura, 1986; Pajars, 2000). Self-efficacy provides the foundation for motivation in all areas of life and influence language learning and achievement.

According to Bandura (1986) self-efficacy is learners’ beliefs in their capability to succeed and acquire new information or complete a task or activity to an appointed level of performance. This affective variable, affect our decision, behaviors and attempts when facing challenges. Later on, Pajars (2000) extended this definition by adding features to Banduras ‘definition which connects to the way students’ judges their academic competence. He believes that self – efficacy beliefs affects every aspect of people’s lives, whether they think productivity, self – debilitating, pessimistically or optimistically, how much effort they expend on an activity and how well they motivated themselves. Bandura believed that there is difference between students with high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy in which high self efficacious learners feel confident about solving a problem because they have developed an approach to problem solving that has worked in the past. They assign their success to their own efforts and strategies, believe that their own abilities will improve as they learn more, and recognize that errors are a part of learning, but students with low self-efficacy believe that they have innate low ability, choose less demanding tasks on which they will make few errors, and don’t try hard because they believe that any effort will reveal their own lack of ability (1992).

Furthermore, the sense of control that individuals believe they have over their academic performance is a crucial factor to take into consideration when working towards improving academic achievement. It can be considered as a bipolar continuum spanning from internal to external and refers to people's generalized expectations for control over reinforcements (Matricardi, 2006). Locus of control is a concept that has a significant effect on our daily lives. Individuals with an internal locus of control view events as resulting from their own action whereas those with an external locus of control believe that their own actions do not influence future outcomes (Wise, 1999). Internalizers mostly believe in their own abilities and deficiencies. So, the responsibility for whether or not they get reinforced ultimately lies with themselves they don’t rely on powerful others as the source of the outcomes (Bolig, Brown, & Kuo, 1992). External locus of control orientation which relates to more depression and anxiety (Gomez, 1998), internal one relates to self-esteem and coping with stress (Bolig, Brown, and Kuo, 1992). According to Rotter (1966) those with external loci attribute success and failure to some extraneous factors. They believe that reinforces in life are controlled by luck, chance, or powerful others. Locus of control proved to have a significant relationship to reading achievement.

In spite of this fact, the available literature on affective variables indicates the deficiency of research on the effect of self-efficacy and Locus of Control on EFL learners’ reading comprehension. This is the motivation behind this study to focus attention on examining the effect of self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.
Although much of the research on foreign or second language learning has focused on reading performance between skilled and unskilled readers, a limited amount of research has examined the effects of reading self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control when reading academic text. It is true that some studies have been conducted in other countries about reading self-efficacy beliefs, Locus of Control and their impact on reading comprehension, but the relationship between these beliefs, Locus of Control and reading performance of Iranian English learners has not been fully examined.

The present study is going to provide insights about the effectiveness of self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control on reading proficiency as a way of improving reading comprehension among Iranian English learners. These learners need self-efficacy Locus of Control to apply in all kinds of reading situations to help them get the most out of text. Many novice readers decode the words and move on; they are unaware of any connections they make between the text they are reading and other aspects of their lives. The lack of connections is what leads to lifelong comprehension problems. Overall purpose of this study is to explore relationships between Iranian EFL learners reading self-efficacy, Locus of Control and reading comprehension.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), reading, listening, speaking and writing have been identified as the four basic skills in language learning. Reading is considered especially valuable under the foreign language context because it is one major source for students to obtain language input (Ediger, 2001), therefore it is crucial that students become proficient in the reading process. Alfassi (2004) stated that students should “understand the meaning of text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content, and apply the new-found knowledge flexibly” (p. 171).

Self-efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy is a topic that first was introduced by Bandura (1977) with the publication of Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. Then, Bandura (1986) located the construct within a social cognitive theory of human behavior that deviated from the common cognitivism of the day and embedded cognitive development within a socio-structural network of influences. This theory assumes that people are capable of reflecting on their own actions and regulate them and that they can shape their environments instead of just passively reacting to them. Social cognitive theory also assumes that most human behavior is purposive or goal-oriented and is guided by forethought. It also assumes a meta-cognitive activity, which implies that people are self-reflective and capable of analyzing their own behavior and experiences. They are also capable of self-regulation and thus exercise direct control over their behavior by selecting or controlling conditions in their environment.

Bandura stated self-efficacy beliefs are "people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." (1986, p. 391). Furthermore, he viewed self-efficacy as people’s beliefs about their abilities to exercise control over events that are likely to affect their lives, and their beliefs in their capabilities to put together the motivation, cognitive resources, and other action needed to control task demands (Bandura, 1989). In addition, Bandura advanced the idea that ‘what people think, believe, and feel, affects how they behave” (p. 25). Therefore, self-efficacy is a relatively new construct in academic research (Schunk, 1994).

**Effects of Self-efficacy Beliefs**

As pajars argue Self-efficacy beliefs, influence motivational and self-regulatory processes in several ways.

**Choices:** Self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make and the courses of action they follow. Most people take part in tasks in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not.

**Effort:** they also help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity,

**Persevere:** how long they will persist when dealing with obstacles and failures

**Resilient:** and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations--the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience.

**Stress and anxiety:** Efficacy beliefs also influence the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience as they engage in a task and the level of accomplishment they realize (Pajares, 1996).

**Sources for Self-efficacy**

Bandura (1994) posits that four major sources of information are primary in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. First, mastery experiences or “enactive attainment” (Zimmerman, 2000), that is the most effective way of creating high level of efficacy, and refers to the way people evaluate their own personal attainment in a given domain. It covers prior task achievements and plays a central role in establishing a sense of self-efficacy. Second, the vicarious (observational) experiences which is provided by social models, is another way for creating and strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy.

Third, social persuasion is a third way of strengthening people’s beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed; and ultimately, reducing people’s stress reactions and altering their negative emotional proclivities and misinterpretations of their physical states is the last source of modifying self-beliefs.

**Locus of control**

Locus of control is a construct developed by Rotter (1966) from his larger personality theory referred to as the social learning theory. The social learning theory states that one’s personality is a result of the individual’s interaction with his or her environment. Behavior cannot be viewed as an automatic response to stimuli, but it can be seen as an interaction of the individual’s personal experiences and the environment. Rotter defined locus of control as a “generalized expectancy of
internal versus external control over behavior outcomes. Locus of control was viewed as a cognitive expectancy which defined the individual’s view of fundamental factors related to these outcomes” (as cited in Nunn, 1995, p.421). According to Jarvis (2005; cited in Ghabanchi and Golparvar, 2011) locus of control refers to a person's beliefs about control over what happens to him or her. Individuals with an internal locus of control view events as resulting from their own actions. Persons with an external locus of control view events as being under the control of external factors such as luck (Marsh & Weary, 1995). In some situations, people think that, they are between these two extremes, but it is clear that, finally, they are involved in one of this continuum. As cited in Badakhshan (2009) in other studies by Lefcourt and Siegel (1970), lefcourt and Telegdi (1971), lefcourt, Gronnerud, and Mcdonald (1973), it is concluded that learners own internal locus of control are more deliberate, sensitive, active, exclusive in intrusive thoughts and concentration, verbally fluent and more flexible, but less rigid, and on the other study, according to Haanstand (1978), learners with external locus of control are willing to put more value on any trait that resulted in more influence by them on their environments. Totally, internalizers and externalizers’ reaction toward success and failure is different. So, it means that when the result is satisfactory, internalizers feel pride but when the result is not as it was expected to be, they feel shame and experience less strong feelings (Ghonsooly and Moharer, 2012). Bender (1995) maintains if a student tries hard at school tasks and yet continually fails to get good grades, this will lead to an external locus of control. Internalizers are likely to consider a bright future for them, whereas externalizers are not likely to do this (Anderman & Mindgly, 1997).

Related Researches
Bandura believed that efficacy will be raised by successes and it will be lowered by failure, but when a strong sense of efficacy is developed, a failure may not have much impact (Bandura, 1986). Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) argue that research of findings from several academic domains have demonstrated that students’ judgments of their own academic capabilities, or self-efficacy beliefs, influence their academic behaviors and performances.

There are several researchers who examined the relationship between self-efficacy and language skills. To investigate the links between self-efficacy beliefs and language skills, Rahimi and Abedini, (2009) surveyed the role of EFL learner’s self-efficacy regarding listening comprehension in their listening test performance. The results of statistical analyses indicated that listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly related to listening proficiency.

Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) studied the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and French proficiency in reading and listening. Results showed that Students’ reading self-efficacy in French was positively related to reading proficiency, whereas reading anxiety was not related. Listening self-efficacy was positively associated with listening proficiency only for the female participants, and listening anxiety was positively related to the listening proficiency of both males and females. Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011) surveyed the relationship between EFL learners’ self-efficacy in reading comprehension and their reading anxiety, also the relationship between EFL learners’ self-efficacy and their reading achievement. The results showed that high self-efficacious participants achieved higher scores in reading comprehension course than
Chen (2007, as cited in Rahimi & Abedini, 2009) examined the relationship between EFL learners’ self-efficacy beliefs and English listening achievement at two large universities in Taiwan. Results indicated that there was a significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and listening achievement. The results also showed that students self-efficacy beliefs were much stronger predictors of students’ achievement in the field of listening.

Phares (1976) has examined the relation between LOC and achievement among children. He used the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility (IAR) Scale as LOC measure and grades or standardized test scores as indexes of academic achievement in most of his studies. The result of study showed that internalizers were more successful than externalizers and had a better performance.

Smith (1986) in his research on 430 high school sophomore and senior students regarding locus of control found out that, this factor can be considered as a major predictor of reading achievements and grade point average. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) performed a study to investigate the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement. As a result they found a significant relationship between these two variables. High achieving seventh grade males were more internally controlled than their lower achieving classmates.

Anderman and Midgley (1997) in a survey understand that students who find their poor performance caused by factors out of their control are unlikely to hope for improvement. In contrast, students who attribute their poor performance to a lack of skills or poor study habits are more likely to try harder in the future. Students having an external locus of control are more likely to give up hope and not try any harder in the face of failure, while those with an internal locus of control may try harder to improve in the face of failure.

Culver, Victor, Morgan, and Raymond (1997) in a study investigated the relationship of locus of control with reading achievement. The Rotter I-E scale produced no significant relationships to any measure of reading achievement. The result of study showed that 1) Levenson’s internal scale produced a significant positive relationship with reading comprehension scores 2) Significant negative Correlation was demonstrated between Levenson’s chance scale and total reading scores .It was concluded that internal—versus-external locus of control is a significant variable related to achievement and should be considered in developing strategies for reading instruction.

Park and Kim (1998) in another study compared university top students with those students who were not much successful. Then they analyzed the students’ behavior patterns and their locus of control. The results of study revealed that top students showed higher internalized LOC and lower externalized locus of control.

In another study Kernis (1984) examine the way Locus of control influence an individual responds to success. Participants were guided to make either internal or external attributions for
their success at a certain task. Those who made internal attributions had a better performance on the same task than on a different task when tested again, whereas those who made an external attribution had a better performance on a different task than on the same task. Therefore, internalizers are more likely to continue working at a task that they have performed well at, while externalizers may stop working on the successful task and focus their efforts on a different task.

Anderson, Hattie, and Hamilton (2005) investigated the relationship between generalized locus of control and academic achievement and related behavior within an action–theoretical model in three different types of school. 215 students (121 were female and 94 were male) participated in this study. They were selected from three schools which were considered by expert judges to differ on the possibilities of structure, co-cooperativeness, and competitiveness Sample Selection Process. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between schools for motivation and achievement and also a mediating effect between locus of control and school type, proposed that interactional models are essential in investigations of motivation and achievement.

Akina (2011) examined the possible links between academic locus of control and self-handicapping. Participants were 382 university students from Sakarya University. The Academic Locus of Control Scale and the Self-handicapping Scale were used as measures. Findings of research showed that self-handicapping correlated positively with internal academic locus of control. According to the results, self-handicapping was predicted positively by internal academic locus of control and external academic locus of control.

Important areas influencing locus of control and self-esteem of people were surveyed in many studies, for instance culture, self-handicapping and etc. Many psychologists believe that deaf people should be considered as bicultural communities, so with this point of view, Sabery (2005) in her research examined locus of control, self-esteem and relationship between them in deaf and hearing girls. These effects of locus of control on self-esteem were tested on a sample of 40 deaf students and 140 hearing students (girl) in Tehran. Their mean age was 15 years. Both two groups educated separately in different schools. The result of study showed no significant difference in self-esteem and locus of control in deaf and hearing students.

Ghasemzadeh, and Saadat (2011) studied locus of control and its determined link to educational achievement of college students. Considering the results obtained from study Internal locus of control had a direct and positive relationship with the educational achievement of students. Akca and Yamana (2010) designed a study to determine whether the teachers are internally controlled or externally controlled. The results of study showed that the teachers generally have internal locus of control.

Saadat, Ghasemzadeh, Karami, and Soleimani (2011) studied the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control of university students. Results of the study shows that all self-esteem components have a positive and meaningful relationship with internal locus of control, while this relationship becomes negative while talking about external and chance kinds.
As cited in Wang (1983) people with high internality or internal locus of control show a great deal of persistence and willingness to delay rewards in order to maximize them, and they are completely eager to find information for solving different problems. On the other hand, those possess external locus of control are more passive, compliant and inattentive.

Schunk, (1990) in a study focused on the self-regulated learning processes of goal setting and perceived self-efficacy. Students enter learning activities with goals and self-efficacy for goal attainment. As learners worked on tasks, they observed their own performances and evaluated their own goal progress. Self-efficacy and goal setting were affected by self observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. When students perceived satisfactory goal progress, they feel capable of improving their skills; goal attainment, combined with high self-efficacy, leads students to set new challenging goals.

Ghonsooly and Moharer (2012) in a study investigated the effect of Locus of Control (LOC) on translation students’ achievement. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that students’ Locus of Control has a significant and positive relationship with their translation achievement. Also Fateme and Elahi (2010) in a study surveyed the possible connection between Locus of Control (LOC) and L2 learners' reading achievement and use of language learning strategies. The results of this study demonstrated a positive relationship between LOC and L2 reading achievement. It also showed a positive relationship between EFL learners' locus of control and their use of language learning strategies. Also, the result of study reviled that EFL learners identified with internal LOC (internalizers) used metacognitive strategies more frequently than those with external LOC (externalizers).

Ghabanchi and Golparvar (2011) in a survey investigated the association between students' LOC and their religious orientation. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant positive association between LOC and religious orientation. Ghabanchi and Golparvar (2011) in another study investigated the differences in General English (GE) achievement in the university entrance exam among students of humanities, sciences, and engineering. They also explored the effect of locus of control (LOC) on GE achievement in the entrance exam among these three groups of students. The results of study showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between student's LOC and their GE achievement in the entrance exam and, there are significant differences in GE achievement in the university entrance exam across the three groups of student which took part in this study.

Badakhshan (2009) in another survey evaluated the possible relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control among Iranian EFL learners. The results of study indicated that there was a negative correlation between external locus of control and reading anxiety. Also, it was demonstrated that, there was a negative correlation between internal locus of control and reading anxiety, but this correlation was not so strength and meaningful. Finally, it was revealed that, gender did not have any effect on the degree of relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control.
Lahey (1987) conducted a study to investigate the possibility of raising the comprehension scores through the use of attribution theory in moving the student's locus of control, concept work, and imaging. The result of study showed that there was a positive relationship between using attribution theory, increasing locus of control and raising scores. The above-mentioned review and results make it clear that self-efficacy theory is of high importance for explaining many aspects of student achievements. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the relationships between reading self-efficacy beliefs, reading strategies use and reading comprehension level of Iranian EFL learners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS
The present study focuses on the following research questions:

1) Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' reading self-efficacy and their LOC?
2) Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability?
3) Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners’ LOC and their reading comprehension ability?
4) Is there a significant difference between internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners’ self-efficacy and their LOC.
H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' self-efficacy and their reading comprehension ability.
H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ LOC and their reading comprehension ability?
H₀₄: There is no significant difference between internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

METHODOLOGY
Participants
Participants of this study were drawn from the pool of college advance English major students participating in classes during the second semester of the 2013 academic year at University of Neishbour (a north-eastern city in Iran). Eighty-one English students participated in this study (63 females and 18 males). All participants were English students who spoke Persian as their first language; they were informed that participation in this study was voluntary. The participants were selected from four classes.

Instruments
Michigan reading comprehension test, Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire and Internal Control Index (ICT)Questionnaire were three main instruments used in this study.
Michigan Test

Michigan Test, as a test of English language proficiency, consists of one–hundred questions which are implemented to test students’ knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. In order to determine students’ reading comprehension level, the reading comprehension part of Michigan Test which contains twenty reading comprehension multiple-choice tests was implemented in this study. This part of the test includes four reading comprehension passages each followed by five questions. The obtained information from this test that ranges from zero to 20 shows students’ reading comprehension levels.

Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire

In order to assess the participants’ self-efficacy in reading comprehension we used a new scale for assessing EFL learners reading self-efficacy based on these three related questionnaires:

1) The Persian Adaptation of General Self-efficacy Scale developed by Nezami, Schwarzer, and Jerusalem (1996); 2) Morgan-Links Student Efficacy Scale (MLSES) constructed by Jinks and Morgan (1999); 3) Beliefs about Language Learning (BALL) designed by Horwitz (1988). This new questionnaire was developed by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011); this scale includes 14-5-point Likert type items ranging from “strongly disagree“ to “strongly agree” based on the items of the previous Questionnaire and some added by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011). Three items were deleted based on their low factor loading and commonalities after factor analysis. A value of 1 is assigned to strongly disagree, and 5 to strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine the reliability of the scale, and a principle component analysis was used to analyze its construct validity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.78. This scale was also translated into Persian, and the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for it was 0.81.

Internal Control Index questioner (ICI)

For the purpose of this study, the Internal Control Index, ICI, (Duttweiler, 1984) was used to measure the participants' LOC. The original study of the ICI was developed and tested with several samples of junior college, university undergraduate and continuing education students. The main sample chosen included 1365 respondents of both sexes. Means were broken down by age, group, sex, race, educational and socioeconomic levels and range from 99.3 to 120.8.

Based on ICI questionnaire, the items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from A (rarely) to E (usually). Half of the items are worded so that the high internally oriented respondents are expected to answer half at the "usually" end of the scale and the other half at the "rarely" end of the scale. The "rarely" response is scored as 5 points on items 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27. For the rest of the items, the response "usually" is scored as 5 points. A range of scores from 28 to 140 would be produced with higher scores reflecting higher internal locus of control. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.77. For the sake of clarity and simplicity the scale was translated into Persian by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010). Three experts commented on sequencing the format, the formulations of questions, and the language. Thus, the questionnaire was edited to ensure that the content and the physical appearance of the questionnaire were appropriate. Cronbach’s alpha was used to check the reliability of the translated version and resulted in a coefficient of 0.82.
**Procedure**

In a study like this, data on different variables are collected within a fairly short time. The participants took part in this study during their regularly-scheduled class period. At first, the reading comprehension test was administered. After that, the Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire was administered, and based on the statements covered in this questionnaire, the participants were asked to choose one of the five choices. After completing the Self–Efficacy Questionnaire the LOC Questioner was administered. Later, the researcher calculated the participants' scores. One set of scores showed the participants' scores in the Michigan Reading Comprehension Test, the next showed their scores in the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, and the last one showed their scores in the Locus of Control Questionnaire.

**Data Analysis**

In this study, reading self-efficacy and Locus of control were considered as the dependent variables while students’ reading comprehension level was independent variables. By using descriptive and inferential statistics, the data were analyzed. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17) was manipulated in analyzing and estimating correlations and the differences between variables.

To estimate the correlation coefficient between variables, based on the nature of students’ scores, the Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted. For interpreting correlation coefficients between variables, they were converted into variance overlap or covariance. And to see whether the difference between internalizers and externalizers in terms of reading scores is significant, an independent t-test was run.

In order to investigate more results from this study, along examining the four main research questions, the mean differences between the reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension level and the mean differences between reading self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of control and finally mean difference between the Locus of control and reading comprehension were also computed. Since the sample size was small, for comparing the means of students’ scores in different variables, t-test procedures were conducted. When three sets of scores were obtained from the same subjects, the Dependent-Sample t-test or Matched-sample t-test was used and where scores came from two independent groups, the Independent-Sample t-test was manipulated.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research question 1**

The first research question concerned the relationship between participants ‘reading self –efficacy and their LOC. Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire and ICI were administered and the Pearsons' correlational coefficient was used to answer the question.
As table 1 shows, the correlation between the participants’ reading self-efficacy level and their reading comprehension is .54 \((r =.54)\). Therefore, as the results show, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a significant, correlation between self – efficacy and internal LOC in general. Result of this study support findings in the literature. Waller and Bates 2009; Bandura, 1986; Wise, 1999.

**Research question 2**
The second research question explored the relationship between the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability. The Michigan reading test and Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionaire were administered and the Pearsons’ correlational coefficient was used to answer the question.

As Table 2 shows, the correlation between the participants’ reading self-efficacy level and their reading comprehension is .84 \((r =.84)\). A much more useful way of interpreting a correlation coefficient is to convert it into variance overlap between the two measures. This helps us to see how much variance in one measure can be accounted for by the other. To obtain the common variance between two tests, we simply square the correlation coefficient. Since the shared variance is usually stated as a percentage, the squared correlation is multiplied by 100. Therefore, the shared variance is computed through: \(r^2 \times 100\). To the degree that the two tests correlate, they share variance. Since our correlation is .84, the shared variance is: 70% \((.84^2 \times 100 =70 \%)\). This overlap tells us that the two measures are providing approximately similar information. The .70 is the amount of the variation of reading level variable which is accounted for by the variation in the reading self-efficacy variable.
As Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.84, and the level of significant is 0.000 \([r = 0.84, p = 0.00]\). As can be seen, \(r\) value is positive, and it is significant. Therefore as the results show, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is significant relationship between Iranian advance EFL university students’ reading self-efficacy beliefs and their reading proficiency. There are several researchers who have examined the relationship between self-efficacy and language skills which result of this study support their findings. For example, Rahimi and Abedini (2009); Mills, Pajares ; Herron (2006); Ghonsooly and Ellahi (2011) ; Chen (2007); Wigfield (1994).

**Research question 3**
The third research question explored the relationship between participants' LOC and their reading comprehension ability. A Pearson' correlation coefficient was calculated to estimate the strength of the relationship between these two variables. The results are shown in Table 3.

As Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.96, and the level of significant is 0.000 \([r = 0.96, p = 0.00]\). As can be seen, \(r\) value is positive, and it is significant. Therefore as the results show, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is significant relationship between Iranian advance EFL university students’ r LOC and their reading proficiency.
Research question 4

The fourth research question aimed to explore the difference between the internalizers and externalizers’ reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

In order to see whether the difference between internalizers and externalizers in terms of reading scores is significant, an independent t-test was run. First of all, the descriptive analysis of the participants' performance is presented to see whether there is any difference with regard to the two groups' reading scores. The sample includes 81 subjects that were categorized as internalizers (40) and externalizers (41). It is worth mentioning that the median of the LOC scores was used to determine internalizers and externalizers. Therefore, students with scores above 98 were grouped as internalizers and those with scores below 98 were considered as externalizers. Table 4 shows the results.

**Table 4: A Comparison of Externalizers' and Internalizers' Mean Scores in Reading Proficiency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOC</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Internalizers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Externalizers</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above table, internalizers proved to have the mean score of 11.60 and standard deviation of 7.84 while the mean reading score of the externalizers turned out to be 8.30 with the standard deviation of 12.88. In order to see whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not an independent t-test was run. The result is presented in table 5. As Table 5 shows, the difference between the two mean scores is significant at p<.01 and internalizers have higher scores in reading than externalizers. In other words, internalizers are better L2 reading achievers than externalizers.

**Table 5: Independence T-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOC</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>7.84</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.83</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>externalizers</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>12.88</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

The results of the 2 last research questions illustrated that L2 learners who believe they can
influence their own learning are more likely to succeed in their L2 reading. This can be interpreted with regard to the previous research findings mentioned in the literature section (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Bender, 1995; Phares, 1979; Kernis, 1984; Lonky & Reiman, 1980; Wang, 1983). Internalizers’ high achievements in L2 reading may be due to their higher persistence, assertion, attempt, and exploration than externalizers.

CONCLUSION
The present study was done to explore the relationship between the Iranian EFL advance learners’ reading self-efficacy beliefs and their LOC, the relationship between the reading self-efficacy beliefs and the reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL advance learners, to find out the relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners’ LOC and their reading comprehension ability and, finally, discover the difference between internalizers and externalizers’ reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

First, regarding the relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and LOC, a positive relationship was observed between perceived self-efficacy beliefs and internal LOC. The results of a correlation analysis in this study provide empirical support for a strong relationship between these two constructs recommended in the literature (e.g. Wise, 1999). Indicative of this fact that whether or not people will undertake a particular activity, attempt to do a particular task, or try to meet a particular goal depends on whether or not they believe we will be efficacious in performing that action (Bundura, 1986). Result of this study support findings in the literature. Waller KV and Bates RC (2009) studied health locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, and lifestyle of 57 healthy elderly subjects. As hypothesized, positive relationships were found among these variables, individuals with an internal health locus of control and high generalized self-efficacy are more likely to benefit from a health education program than those with an external locus of control and low self-efficacy. Locus of control has a significant impact on Bandura’s self-efficacy theories, and how individuals’ expectations shape the goals they set for themselves. If individuals believe they have control over future events, then they will attempt to apply that control in order to achieve a positive outcome (Bandura, 1986). It does not matter whether an outcome is or is not achievable; the perception of control determines if one will try to get it (Wise, 1999).

Second according to the results, it can be concluded that there is a meaningful positive relation between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability. Iranian EFL advance learners with high reading self-efficacy level obtained better scores than those with low reading self-efficacy level. Third regarding the relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners’ LOC and their reading comprehension ability a strong positive relationship was observed between their internal LOC and reading comprehension ability. The results of a correlation analysis in this study provide empirical support for a strong relationship between these two constructs proposed in the literature (e.g. Fatemi & Elahi, 2010). And finally, as the result of study shows internalizers has higher scores in reading than externalizers. In other words, internalizers are better L2 reading achievers than externalizers. It was concluded that internal – versus-external locus of control is a significant variable related to achievement and should be
considered in developing strategies for reading instruction (Culver, Victor, Morgan, and Raymond, 1997).

Limitations/ delimitations of the study

The present study, like any other studies, endures some limitations and delimitations that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study. Here some of them are mentioned.

The first limitation deals with the sample size and the characteristics of the subjects included in the sample. Because the study targeted a few Iranian EFL learners at Neyshabour University, the behavior of other types of participants with different backgrounds and fields might prove somewhat different from the participants of the present study.

The second limitation relates to the restricted set of variables that were included in this study. Reading comprehension, reading self-efficacy, locus of control were the only factors that were examined in this study. While these components have been found to be extremely relevant for second language reading comprehension, a more in-depth study of actual foreign language reading behaviors, processes, cultural background, cultural orientation and effective factors like self-esteem and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations could provide a more complete picture of foreign language reading comprehension processes.

The third limitation is that because this study only focuses on investigating students’ comprehension performance on the Michigan test, more studies with different types of tests should be conducted in the future to examine the major barriers in reading English texts. The investigation of the variables mentioned above is outside the scope of this study.

The fourth limitation is that this study only covers advance students; therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to freshmen and sophomores.

The fifth limitation is that self-efficacy and locus of control, being an internal attitude, is difficult to isolate and study exhaustively and objectively. It may be confused with some other constructs such as motivation and self-esteem.

REFERENCES


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