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The Relationship between Gender and Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management of Iranian EFL Teachers

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***Abstract*—Teachers' self-efficacy is of critical significance for both female and male teachers, and it can affect their job life. In spite of the fact that some scholars have investigated self-efficacy, there are no studies regarding teachers' gender and their subscales of self-efficacy (i.e. student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management). Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the relationship between gender and subscales of self-efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers. So, 34 EFL teachers who were teaching in private English language institutes in Karaj were asked to complete Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) questionnaire. After analyzing the data, it was revealed that males and females did not differ as far as classroom management was considered. However, they differed in terms of student engagement and instructional strategies; male teachers were better at student engagement, while female teachers were better at instructional strategies.**

***Index Terms*—gender, subscales of self-efficacy, EFL teachers**

I. Introduction

One reason that causes the progress of an educational system is employing qualified teachers. These teachers possess some characteristics and having high self-efficacy is one of them (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006). Therefore, teachers with high self-efficacy should be employed to promote education.

Self-efficacy is defined as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994, p. 2).

Although some studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between teachers' gender and their self-efficacy (which the findings are controversial), no study was reviewed by the researchers to examine the relationship between teachers' gender and their subscales of self-efficacy (student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management). Hence, it remains unclear that in which subscales of self-efficacy female teachers are stronger, and in which ones male teachers are better. So, unlike most studies which consider implications of teachers' gender on their self-efficacy as a whole, the present study aims at exploring the relationship between gender and subscales of self-efficacy of EFL teachers.

Besides, as it was mentioned above, existing articles regarding the relationship between teachers' gender and their self-efficacy are controversial: Some of them assert that there is no relationship between teachers' gender and their self-efficacy, and some of them believe that there is a relationship: Female teachers have stronger self-efficacy than males. Hence, shortage of a definite answer adds to the importance of the present research.

This study attempts to answer the following question:

Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and subscales of self-efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers?

II. Literature Review

A. *Teachers' Self-efficacy*

Bandura (1999) explained that self-efficacy operates "by influencing how threats are cognitively processed, by supporting coping actions that alter the threats, by exercising control over perturbing thought patterns and by alleviating aversive affective states" (p. 50).

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

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Chacon (2005) believed that in addition to beliefs and personal knowledge, other factors such as "impact exerted by culture and society on the teachers' expectations, roles, and social relations" (p. 258) are involved in formation of teachers' self-efficacy.

Friedman and Kass (2002) proposed a novel model of teachers' self-efficacy called Classroom and School Context (CSC). This model is composed of two dimensions of teachers' function, namely classroom and school. The first dimension is related to teachers functioning in classroom, working with students and the second dimension is related to teachers functioning outside classroom, at school, interacting with personnel, parents, principal and colleagues. As Vaezi and Fallah (2011) put it, in the second dimension, "…. teacher functions as a member of an *organization* [emphasis added]" (p. 1170). The considerable point of this model is expression of a dimension which is overlooked in many studies and that is *organizational efficacy*. This organizational efficacy, according to Cherniss (1993), influenced teachers.

B. Effects of Teachers' Self-efficacy

Teachers' performance affects their self-efficacy and self-efficacy influences teachers' performance too. If a teacher has a successful experience of working with a variety of students, this will increase their confidence, which in turn will enhance their self-efficacy, and if s/he is not successful in their experience with students, their judgment will influence their confidence and self-efficacy, which in turn, will affect the time s/he will persist in teaching (Yost, 2006). Or if a teacher considers themselves unsuccessful in dealing with a particular group of learners, s/he will not spend much energy on teaching and will stop attempting with the appearance of the first obstacle, in spite of the fact that s/he may have the required knowledge and technique to solve the problem (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). So, it can be said that "self-efficacy beliefs can therefore become self-fulfilling prophesies, validating beliefs either of capability or of incapacity" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007, p. 3).

Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more satisfied with their job (Caprara et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002), expect a lot from themselves, stand firm when they face barriers (Ross & Bruce, 2007), and have more endurance and flexibility (Somech & Zahavy, 2000).

Furthermore, teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are more confident in their teaching abilities, have more positive attitudes towards teaching, and are "active and assured in their responses to students" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 9). In addition, Efficacious teachers "persist longer, provide a greater academic focus in the classroom, and exhibit different types of feedback" (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 9).

III. Methodology

A. Participants

Participants of this study were composed of 34 EFL teachers. Out of these 34 teachers, 22 were females and 12 were males. They were between 24 to 35 years old. These teachers were teaching in private English language institutes in Karaj.

B. Instrument

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) created by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) was utilized in this study. Klassen et al. (2009) maintained that TSES is reliable, and it "… showed convincing evidence of reliability and measurement invariance across the five countries" (p. 67).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) investigated the validity of Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) (another name for TSES) and asserted that "the OSTES could be considered reasonably valid and reliable …. it is of reasonable length and should prove to be a useful tool for researchers interested in exploring the construct of teacher efficacy" (p. 801).

There were 24 items and three subscales in TSES. These subscales were efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. Eight items were related to each subscale. Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22 were concerned with student engagement, items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24 were pertained to instructional strategies, and items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21 dealt with classroom management. These 24 items were offered on a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from: 1- nothing, to 9- a great deal (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The reliabilities of the subscales of self-efficacy for the present study follow: 0.81 for student engagement, 0.84 for instructional strategies, and 0.71 for classroom management.

C. Procedure

EFL teachers received TSES questionnaire, and they were asked to answer it.

D. Data Analysis

A Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was run to answer the research question.

IV. Results and Discussion

The research question can be converted into the following null hypothesis:

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Hypothesis$_0$: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers in terms of their subscales of self-efficacy.

In order to answer the research question, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANOVA) was run. Before reporting the MANOVA results, first, equality of variance is checked. As it can be seen in the following table (Table I), none of the variables recorded significant values; therefore, the researchers can assume equal variances.

TABLE I
LEVENE'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCESA FOR GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY SUBSCALES

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Student engagement	.423	1	195	.516
Instructional strategies	.470	1	195	.494
Class management	.004	1	195	.952

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + gender

Second, multivariate tests are checked. This set of multivariate tests of significance indicates whether there are statistically significant differences among the groups (gender in the present study) on a linear combinations of the dependent variables, namely student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management or not. The multivariate tests of significance produced are Wilks' Lambda, Pillai's trace, Hotelling's Trace and Roy's Largest Root. All the values of these tests for the independent variable, namely gender, are 29.642, with a significance value of .00. This is less than the cut-off .05; therefore, there is statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management.

TABLE II
MULTIVARIATE TESTSB FOR GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY SUBSCALES

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.992	7577.007[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.992
	Wilks' Lambda	.008	7577.007[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.992
	Hotelling's Trace	117.777	7577.007[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.992
	Roy's Largest Root	117.777	7577.007[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.992
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.315	29.642[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.315
	Wilks' Lambda	.685	29.642[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.315
	Hotelling's Trace	.461	29.642[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.315
	Roy's Largest Root	.461	29.642[a]	3.000	193.000	.000	.315

a. Exact statistic
b. Design: intercept + gender

Third, the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects were examined. Because three separate analyses are at work here, researchers are advised to set a higher alpha level to reduce the chance of Type I error, i.e. finding a significant result when there is not really one (cf. Pallant, 2007). Hence, the alpha of .05 is divided by 3, coming up with a new alpha level of .017. The present researchers, then, consider the results significant only if the probability value is less than .017. As it is displayed in the following table (Table III), male and female teachers do not differ as far as classroom management is considered. However, they differ in terms of student engagement, and instructional strategies they employ. Based on the 'partial eta squared' index provided in the table of Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Table III), .056 of the variance is accounted for by student engagement and instructional strategies factors respectively.

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TABLE III
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS FOR GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY SUBSCALES

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter
Corrected Model	Student eng	362.437[a]	1	362.437	11.497	.001	.056	11.497
	Instructional str	383.498[c]	1	383.498	11.575	.001	.056	11.575
	Class manage	43.757[d]	1	43.757	1.068	.303	.005	1.068
Intercept	Student eng	595181.218	1	595181.218	18880.077	.000	.990	18880.077
	Instructional str	661868.168	1	661868.168	19977.378	.000	.990	19977.378
	Class manage	699097.158	1	699097.158	17067.308	.000	.989	17067.308
Gender	Student eng	362.437	1	362.437	11.497	.001	.056	11.497
	Instructional str	383.498	1	383.498	11.575	.001	.056	11.575
	Class manage	43.757	1	43.757	1.068	.303	.005	1.068
Error	Student eng	6147.239	195	31.524				
	Instructional str	6460.522	195	33.131				
	Class manage	7987.431	195	40.961				
Total	Student eng	668290.000	197					
	Instructional str	767588.000	197					
	Class manage	802829.000	197					
Corrected Total	Student eng	6509.675	196					
	Instructional str	6844.020	196					
	Class manage	8031.188	196					

a. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .051)
b. Computed using alpha = .05
c. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .051)
d. R Squared = .005 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

As it was mentioned above, male and female teachers differ in terms of student engagement, and instructional strategies they employ. The question is where the difference lies. In order to answer this question, the researchers examined the table of pairwise comparisons (Table IV). According to the Table IV, male teachers are better at student engagement, however female teachers are better at instructional strategies. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE IV
PAIRWISE COMPARISONS FOR GENDER AND SELF-EFFICACY SUBSCALES

Dependent Variable	(I) Gender	(J) Gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[a]	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Student eng	Female	Male	-2.885*	.851	.001	-4.563	-1.207
	Male	Female	2.885*	.851	.001	1.207	4.563
Instructional str	Female	Male	2.967*	.872	.001	1.247	4.687
	Male	Female	-2.967*	.872	.001	-4.687	-1.247
Class manage	Female	Male	1.002	.970	.303	-.910	2.915
	Male	Female	-1.002	.970	.303	-2.915	.910

Based on estimated marginal means
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between gender and subscales of self-efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers. Therefore, difference between male and female teachers in terms of subscales of self-efficacy (student engagement, instruction strategies, and classroom management) was explored and the outcomes showed that males and females do not differ as far as classroom management is considered. However, they differed in terms of student engagement and instructional strategies they employ; male teachers were better at student engagement, while female teachers were better at instructional strategies.

Andersen (2011), Cheung (2006), Coladarci (1992), Coladarci and Breton (1997), Naseri Karimvand (2011), Raudenbush, Rowan, and Cheong (1992), and Ross (1994) found that female teachers have higher self-efficacy than male teachers. Anderson, Greene, and Loewen (1988), Evans and Tribble (1986), Gavora (2011), and Greenwood, Olejnik, and Parkay (1990) found that female teachers have higher personal teaching efficacy than male teachers.

Garvis (2009), Gencer and Cakiroglu (2007), Ghaith and Shaaban (1999), Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2011), Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), Lee, Dedrick, and Smith (1991), Pajares (2002), Taimalu and Oim (2005), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2002), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), and Wilson and Tan (2004) in their studies demonstrated that there is no relationship between gender and self-efficacy, i.e. males and females do not differ in terms of self-efficacy.

On the one hand, it can be claimed that women are usually more attentive than men. They pay attention to details more than men do, and women are more careful in doing their job. Women are usually more organized than men, and try to do their job as carefully as they can. These are true in the case of teaching as well: Because female teachers are

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more attentive, accurate and organized than men, they usually attempt to have the best instruction. They are usually sensitive to teach as effectively as they can and not to skip anything because they pay attention to details.

On the other hand, men usually do not wish to be the only speaker; even they prefer not to talk too much. Maybe it is due to this characteristic that male teachers prefer to engage learners more in teaching and allow them to have role in classroom and in their (learners) learning.

Furthermore, in traditional educational system, when teachers did not have the role of facilitator, a good teacher was a person who did everything needed and left very few things for learners to do. If s/he spoke little, or left a lot of tasks for learners to do, people possibly assumed that s/he was not a good teacher and s/he did not teach. Nowadays, this belief still exists among some learners and their parents. Maybe women because of their caution and fear of dismissal or demotion, follow the traditional educational principles, and do not provide the learners with the chance to be engaged in learning. However, men do the contrary: They engage learners in learning, and allow them to express themselves because men are more dauntless than women.

The findings of the present study may have the following implications for teacher trainers and teachers. Teacher trainers should run special courses for male and female teachers. Since the results of this piece of research indicated that male teachers were not strong in instructional strategies, in courses for male teachers, teacher trainers should try to focus on instructional strategies. They need to work on variant types and models of instructional strategies, and help male teachers to improve their abilities in the realm of instructional strategies. While running courses for female teachers, teacher trainers are required to help female teachers to develop their skills in engaging students. The findings of the present study showed that female teachers are not strong in engaging students, so teacher trainers should explain the necessity and methods of students' engagement to female teachers.

Male and female teachers themselves need to focus on developing the self-efficacy subscales in which they are not strong. Hence, Male teachers should concentrate on enhancing their instructional strategies, and female teachers should try to develop their efficacy in student engagement.

APPENDIX. OSTES QUESTIONNAIRE

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Teacher Beliefs Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.	How much can you do? 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 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 questions for your students?	(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 well 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 form ruining an entire lesson?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
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)

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