

Study of the Relationship between Teaching Style and Teacher Efficacy: A Quantitative Case Study in Mashhad, Iran

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the correlation between teaching style and teacher efficacy among 80 Iranian EFL female teachers from Tabadkan District high schools in Mashhad. To fulfill this aim, the participants responded to two separate questionnaires; the Teaching Style Inventory (Dunn & Dunn, 1977) and the Teacher Efficacy Questionnaire (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient) through SPSS. Findings showed a significant relationship between teaching style and teacher efficacy of high school female teachers ($n=80$, $r=0.57$, $p=0.00$). The results of this investigation may have suggestions for stakeholders, policymakers, administrators, and teachers to address the significance of the issues regarding the two primary variables of this study. Furthermore, teacher educators are encouraged to re-design their professional development programs to suit the genuine requirements of teachers in their unique educational environment if they are to educate successful teachers who can cope successfully with the everyday realities of the classroom.

KEYWORDS: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teacher, Teacher Efficacy, Teaching Style.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that no instructional approach is appropriate for teaching everything to individuals. A suitable method for a learner may not be practical for another learner equally. "Press conditions establish the social climate or atmosphere of a setting. Student's perceptions of this climate or learning environment are useful in predicting achievement" (Stern, 1970). One of the best ways to pay attention to English language teachers is to conduct additional research on various variables related to them. However, as a cursory look at published papers in ELT journals demonstrates, there is very little, if any, empirical research evidence on the effectiveness of the teacher in this field; we still do not know which set of teacher characteristics raise students' achievement and what qualities of the teacher may contribute to positive student outcomes. To explain the poor performance of EFL learners, several researchers have investigated the relationship between various teacher attributes and teaching styles (Lucas, 2005; Maxwell, 2012; Mwangi, 2004). However, very little research has focused on teachers' teaching style on learner achievement (Andrews, 2004; McGowan, 2007), and even fewer have emphasized the teacher's teaching style relationship and teacher efficacy, particularly on female high school English teachers (Davis-Langston, 2012). To fill a portion of this gap, the current study was conducted to investigate the relationship between two different aspects of English language teachers that have been shown to be influential in teachers' classroom performance, namely efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and teaching style (Grasha, 1996).

The teaching styles of the classroom instructor have significant implications for effective teaching. For years, educational leaders have identified the need for instructional approaches to meet the variety of learners in classes. Teachers and instructors can become frustrated knowing they do not achieve the needs of a portion of learners in their classes. Not achieving the teachers' unique teaching styles is why such a problem (Friedman, 1984). Studies revealed that circumstances consider demands for adaptation, meaning that teachers' needs adapt to the surrounding and immediate environment. When instructors choose a presentation method like a lecture in the educational context, they place limited and specific adaptation demands upon the learners' minds. Learners who cannot adapt to the condition find themselves trapped and may withdraw or try to change the circumstances; thus, learning may be

underscored. Following this trend, Papanastasiou (2002) propagated that “instructional delivery of English material plays just as vital of a role in the mastery of mathematics as the students’ cognitive ability” (p.98). As Holcomb (2001) argued, “teacher trainees typically develop a teaching style that is most comfortable to their personality, regardless of the subject matter or students that they intend to teach” (p.169).

Awareness of the teachers and adapting learners’ learning styles contribute to learner achievement. Research findings indicate that if teaching styles concur with learning styles, learners’ retention and appreciation of the learning content significantly increase (Felder, 1993). However, in most cases, teachers unconsciously favor those learners whose learning styles align with their styles. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) have proposed a list of teaching styles of teachers:

- *The academic orientation* focuses on teachers’ subject expertise and considers the quality of teachers’ education as her professional strength.
- The *practical orientation* focuses on the class techniques and artistry of the teacher with practical experiences in the class.
- The *technical orientation* focuses on the behavioral and knowledge skills that teachers need, such as competency-based and micro-teaching approaches.
- The *personal orientation* focuses on the importance of the interpersonal relationship classes and, as a result, is based on discovery and experimentation of emotional strength.
- The *critical inquiry orientation* considers schooling as a process of social reform to enhance democratic values and reduce social inequities by developing teachers’ reflective and critical practices to turn into social change agents.

Whatever their orientation is, all the teachers have their preferences for the way they teach. Such choices are dependent on their training, experiences, academic background as a teacher and a human being. Stitt-Gohdes (2003) supported this idea by implying that “most teachers teach the way they learn” (p.36). The methods and approaches they exploit for teaching, the strategies they implement, the educational trends they follow, and the activities they utilize in their classes show their educational background and convey how they are trained and educated. Teachers often inherit the vision of their profession from the educators who worked with them. As a result, they inevitably transfer their image to their students.

Hoyt and Lee (2002) have stated that teachers’ teaching styles and pedagogical preferences can be categorized into three classifications that are utilized interchangeably and commonly: teaching approaches, teaching styles, and teaching methods. The teaching approach deals with the combination of related teaching methods because they have similar instructional purposes or describe similar behaviors. The teaching method is defined as the specific instructional behaviors or techniques, and finally, teaching style deals with the way different teaching approaches are mixed.

Moreover, teachers aware of their teaching styles adapt and adopt various teaching techniques and methods according to their needs, backgrounds, and philosophy. Grasha (1996) made a helpful model of the teaching styles of teachers in higher education.

- a) *Formal authority* establishes standards and defines appropriate ways of doing things. Such teaching styles are teacher-centered and generally content-based. Setting relationships with learners is not considered to be compulsory. Participation of the learner is not desired.
- b) *The personal model* teaches by direct examples and illustrations. This teaching style is teacher-centered, and the focus is on modeling and demonstration. Teachers encourage learner participation and role models. Their presentation includes different learning styles and expects learners to take responsibility for their learning.
- c) *The facilitator* directs and guides by exploring options, asking questions, suggesting alternatives. The focus of this teaching style is on activities and tasks. It is learner-centered, and learners will be engaged in several studies. Such a teaching style is appropriate for independent learners who can collaborate and participate actively with other learners. Group activities are created in which learning, problem-solving, and student collaboration are significant.
- d) *Delegator* develops learners’ capability to perform autonomously. There is much responsibility and control for learning in groups or individuals of learners in this teaching style. Learners are given a choice in implementing and designing their complicated learning projects. (inja mige in 3 jomle kheili mesle hame)

The other variable of the study refers to teacher efficacy which is a simple idea with significant implications. A teacher's efficacy belief is a judgment of one's abilities to bring about desired findings of learners' learning and engagement, even among those learners who may be unmotivated or difficult (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977). Such a judgment has powerful influences. As Khanshan and Yousefi (2020) pointed out, teachers' efficacy in their instructional practice has recently become a more pressing issue for educational research that addresses teachers' expectations regarding their ability to influence learners as well as their beliefs about their own abilities to carry out the specialized tasks that comprise teaching.

Teachers' efficacy has been correlated to learner findings such as achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992), motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989), and learners' efficacy (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988). Furthermore, teachers' efficacy beliefs are also related to their behavior in the classes. As maintained by Mohamadi and Asadzadeh (2012), efficacy influences the attempt teachers to invest in teaching, the aims they set, and their aspiration level. In this regard, teachers with a strong level of efficacy exhibit more significant levels of organization and planning (Allinder, 1994). Also, they are more open to new ideas and tend to experiment with new methods to meet the learners' needs better (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). In line with this claim was Yada et al. (2021)'s proposition that efficacy beliefs affect teachers' persistence when their resilience in the face of setbacks and things do not go smoothly.

From a rather different perspective, greater efficacy of the teachers enables teachers to be less critical of learners when they make errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986), to work longer with a learner who is attempting (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and to be less inclined to refer a problematic learner to special education (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Podell & Soodak, 1993; Soodak & Podell, 1993). Teachers with a high sense of efficacy show more enthusiasm for teaching (Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1984; Hall, Burley, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1992), have more commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Trentham, Silvern, & Brogdon, 1985) and are likely to be in the course of teaching (Burley, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

In general, research on teaching style and teacher efficacy has been extensive. For example, Hodges, Kulinna, and Cothran (2003) focused on the needs of physical education teachers to utilize diverse teaching styles, while Provitera and Esendal (2008) conducted a study on teaching and learning styles used in management education. Zhang (2007) attempted to explore the issue of style match/mismatch in another research. His studies indicated that students expected their teachers to educate in styles that matched their professional personalities. Likewise, Akbari, Kiany, Imani Naeni, and Karimi Allvar (2008) concentrated on three teacher qualities – teaching style, efficacy, and reflectivity – and students' success results. Their study revealed varying degrees of connection between components of teaching style, efficacy, reflectivity, and student success. Furthermore, they discovered that all of the components of the three previously stated teacher qualities, except for one of the components of teaching style, namely interpersonal rapport, may predict student performance.

Baleghizadeh and Shakouri (2017) uncovered the relationship between self-efficacy and teaching styles of a group of 87 ESP instructors from various universities in Tehran, Iran. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale and the Teaching Styles Inventory was used to collect data. The results manifested a significant positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their teaching styles. The 'Personal Model' style, in particular, had the strongest correlation with high levels of instructors' sense of self-efficacy. In the same vein, Zeraatpishe, Mirhashemi, and Motallebzadeh (2018) conducted a comprehensive investigation on the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' personality characteristics, teaching styles, and self-concept. The study's population consisted of 60 females and 40 males. The results indicated that there are strong correlations between all personality subscales and Teaching Style. Furthermore, the findings revealed strong correlations between all personality subscales and Teacher Self-Concept. Finally, the findings revealed strong links between Teaching Style and Teacher Self-Concept.

In another study conducted on 70 teachers, Khanshan and Yousefi (2020) investigated the relationship between teachers' efficacy perceptions and their instructional practices through employing both questionnaire and interview data collection instruments. Their findings indicated that on the whole, the efficacy of teachers was significantly correlated with their teaching practice, with the ELT teachers' efficacy-teaching relation not reaching a statistical significance.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Because teachers play such an essential part in educating their students, it is appropriate to evaluate the influence of their personalities, beliefs, and performances on their students' performance. The teaching style and teacher efficacy are two major characteristics that have been separately investigated in numerous research, notably in main significant education, but relatively few studies have been conducted to investigate whether and how these two components are connected. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, virtually little study has been performed in high schools on the link between teaching style and teacher efficacy. The purpose of this research is to determine the association between teaching style and teacher efficacy. To this end, the following research question guided this study:

RQ1. Is there any significant relationship between teaching style and teacher efficacy of high school English female teachers?

Based on the research question of this study, a null hypothesis was formulated as well.

H₀1. There is not any significant relationship between teaching style and teacher efficacy of high school English female teachers.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The context of this study was 34 public high schools in Mashhad, Iran. The participants comprised female high school English teachers within the academic year 2020-2021. The teachers included a sample of EFL teachers affiliated with the ELT department. Convenience sampling was utilized as the sampling procedure in the present study. Out of 100 English teachers, 80 female English teachers were chosen to participate in the examination supported Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size. The participants, who were the first researcher's colleagues in various high schools around the city of Mashhad, were all Iranians and local speakers of Persian (Farsi).

INSTRUMENTS

Two questionnaires were used to collect data on teaching style and teacher efficacy. The questionnaires for this study were test-piloted by 30 EFL teachers. In this piloting, the two questionnaires were completed by a group similar to the one in the main study. In ensuring reliability, the researchers used the Spearman Rank correlation formula. The researcher requested three expert professors within the faculty of education to appraise the two instruments concerning face and content validity to validate the instruments. Their comments assisted the researcher in improving the quality of the final instruments administered. An in-depth description of these two instruments is presented below.

TEACHING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dunn and Dunn (1977) developed a questionnaire split into six parts (66 questions) on a Five-Likert Scale. Each scale also has a code. "Never" equals 0 times per year, "Rarely" equals up to six times per year, "Occasionally" equals two to four times per month, "Frequently" equals two to three times per week, and "Always" equals four to five times per week or more. Each part includes questions about instructional planning (11), teaching methods (6), teaching environment (19), evaluation techniques (8), teaching characteristics and classroom management (8), and educational philosophy (14 questions). It is worth mentioning that the last section, i.e., educational philosophy, was excluded since the related questions are not considered as the main focus of this study. The questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.93, and also the validity of the instrument was proved by three university professors furthermore.

TEACHER EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher used the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen- Moran, and Woolfolk (2001) to measure teacher efficacy. Concerning all 24 survey items, the teachers were required to choose a number on a five-point Likert scale. A response of "5" indicated strong agreement, and a response of "1" indicated strong disagreement. The sum of scores of all items represents the overall efficiency score. High scores indicated higher efficacy. The questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.94. Also, the validity of the instrument was proved by three university professors further.

PROCEDURE

The following procedure was followed to achieve the investigation's goal: After arranging meetings with the manager of the Head Office of Education in Mashhad, the researcher briefly presented the purpose of the research and the research instruments to obtain permission to conduct the research. Teachers of high school English have also requested permission to visit their classrooms and perform the research. Following that, all participants were told to respond independently so order to convey their actual feelings openly. Finally, the connection between the two variables was explored using data from the surveys.

STUDY DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

A Pearson coefficient correlation analysis was performed with no intervention from the researcher to investigate the connection between the measured variables. SPSS was used to do data analysis (version 22). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the items' normality. Effect sizes, i.e., R2 for correlational analysis (Creswell, 2012), were used to determine the association's commonsense significance since quantifiable significance may indicate results that are down to earth of little pertinence.

RESULTS

Table 1 depicts the detailed results for the two questionnaires. No outliers or other abnormalities were found.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for TS and TE*

	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
TS	80	185.00	190.06	48.11	2315.50
TE	80	62.00	85.98	15.85	251.25
Valid N (listwise)	80				

Note. TS= Teaching Style; TE= Teacher Efficacy.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to ensure that the data was distributed properly. The results of this test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

		TS	TP
N		80	80
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	190.06	85.98
	Std. Deviation	48.11	15.85
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.08	.09
	Positive	.08	.07
	Negative	-.08	-.09
Test Statistic		.08	.09
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.20 ^c	.08 ^c

The p-values of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for TS is 0.20 and for TE is 0.08, as shown in Table 2. Because these values are greater than .05, we may assume that the data distribution is normal; hence, parametric tests can be used. At that time, the Pearson coefficient correlation test was used to answer the primary study question of this inquiry. The results of this test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Correlation between Teaching Style and Teacher Efficacy*

		TS	TE
TS	Pearson Correlation	1	.57**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00
	N	80	80
TE	Pearson Correlation	.57**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	80	80

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

As illustrated in Table 3, teaching style was significantly related to teacher efficacy ($r=.57$, $n=80$, $p=.00$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to probe the association between the efficacy of EFL female teachers and their style. The correlation test results specified that there was a special connection between the teaching style of EFL teachers and their efficacy. These findings get support from those of previous studies (e.g., Artino, 2012; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Mohamadi & Asadzadeh, 2012; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016). As Khanshan and Yousefi (2020) rightly noted, teachers' efficacy beliefs allude to and strengthen their classroom instructional practices.

This finding is in line with the results of Grasha's (1996) study, manifesting that every teacher owns each style to various degrees, and each style is always present in his or her performance, albeit to varying degrees. As a result of the study's findings, it is possible to infer that teaching styles should also be considered in addition to other aspects associated with teachers' efficacy, such as student outcomes, contextual components, instructional characteristics. This corresponds to theoretical interpretations of the constructs. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy (2001) conceptualized the notion of teacher efficacy as a type of belief in one's capacity to perform courses of action required to complete a teaching job, while teaching style is defined by Grasha (1996) as a pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors that teachers show in their classroom. Thus, teacher efficacy is reflected in every teacher style as a belief connected to teachers' various behaviors and aims coming from their needs.

Based on the findings of this study, if teachers do not gain a proper understanding of learners' educational and cultural backgrounds, language proficiency, and other factors related to the learning styles' development, they may not have the ability to evaluate learners' ability to accept teaching styles and have the flexibility for developing learning styles. Consequently, teachers should be aware of what and how various factors related to learners' learning styles' development and evaluate learners' abilities for accepting new teaching styles. Additionally, when teachers encounter that mismatches happen, they minimize learners' anxiety by building a good rapport. Only when learners are motivated can they be able to defeat any academic challenges they encounter. A proposed framework concludes that providing an influential learning environment and allowing enough time for learners to adapt to the new contexts are required in encouraging learners to accept new teaching styles (Vermunt & Verloop, 1999). Also, it suggests the prerequisite for enhancing learners' flexibility of developing learning styles by minimizing possible unfavorable factors.

Our results reprise findings from the early research conducted by Baleghizadeh and Shakouri (2017) examined the relationship between some Iranian ESP instructors' self-efficacy and their teaching styles. Their data analysis shows a significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their teaching styles. In particular, the 'Personal Model' style showed the closest link with high levels of instructors' sense of self-efficacy. Moreover, this finding confirms the exploration results of a research study investigated by Karimi Allvar (2009) that appraised high correlations between efficacy and interpersonal rapport and intellectual excitement, the two components of teaching style in his study. This association was also earlier argued for by Zeraatpishe et al. (2018), who investigated the relationship among Iranian EFL teachers' personality traits, teaching styles, and self-concept. They indicated that there are significant relationships between all sub-scales of personality and Teaching Style. Besides, they showed significant relationships between Teaching Style and Teacher Self-Concept.

This finding was in congruence with those of Akbari and Tavassoli's (2011), who postulated that it seems that no matter what teaching style a teacher uses, it does not seem to be related to his/her degree of efficacy, even though not very congruent with the findings of Akbari et al. (2008) who found no significant correlations between teacher efficacy and interpersonal rapport (one of the two components of teaching style in the instrument they used).

The study's findings show that teaching style is one of the elements related to a sense of efficacy, an influential factor in rewarding teacher performance and improving learner accomplishment. This emphasizes the significance of employing teacher styles linked with more significant efficacy beliefs to improve the educational process. It is predicted that supporting teachers in implementing and improving styles linked with higher efficacy would increase satisfaction for both teachers and students.

The findings of this study have some limitations which should be acknowledged. First, the participants were only female English teachers. Besides, the participants were Iranian teachers, so the results cannot be generalized to other nationalities. Accordingly, the outcomes of the present study can be of significance to various stakeholders in the context of education, including schools' educational administrators, policymakers of the teacher education system, and teacher educators themselves. When the emphasis is put on teacher accountability and effectiveness within high schools, this study can pave the ways to enhance the teachers' beliefs in terms of their capabilities. Significantly, the educational community attempts to consider factors that may increase teachers' efficacy, as such beliefs have been revealed to affect teacher behavior and teaching practices. Also, more research should be examined for school contextual effects on teacher efficacy to understand how high schools can enhance teachers' beliefs within themselves for the students' benefit they serve.

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