

An Investigation of Collective Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Self-Efficacy Subscales in the EFL Context of Iran

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Abstract

The concept of teacher efficacy has received significant attention in educational contexts in recent years and has been empirically probed at two levels: individual teacher efficacy and collective teacher efficacy. Teacher and collective efficacy are different constructs which can impact educational decisions and student achievement. Further, being a context and culture-specific construct, teacher efficacy has been less investigated in EFL contexts. The current study explored the relationship between collective teacher efficacy, teacher self-efficacy and its components, i.e. efficacy for classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies in the EFL context of Iran.

Further, the factors or subscales of teacher self-efficacy which may account for the observed variance in collective teacher efficacy will be examined. Data were collected from 90 English instructors through Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and Goddard's (2002) Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale (CTES) questionnaires. Interviews were used to gain deeper insights into different teacher efficacy features. Correlation analysis illustrated no significant relationship between the English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy as well as its three subscales. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis indicated none of the three subscales of teacher self-efficacy was a strong predictor of collective teacher efficacy.

Keywords: Teacher-efficacy; Self-efficacy, EFL; Collective teacher efficacy

1. Introduction

One of the most effective ways to improve the teaching and learning process is through teacher development with the hope of providing teachers with necessary experiences to improve educational system because as Hargreaves and Fullan (1992, p. ix, cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) believe “the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement.” Teacher educators refer to verbal skills, content knowledge, pedagogical techniques, cultural sensitivity, teacher efficacy, technological proficiency, and interpersonal skills, as the criteria for teaching effectively (Settlage, Southerland, Moore, & Schademan, 2003). Over a quarter of century ago, teacher efficacy emerged as one of the teacher characteristics that may profoundly affect teaching and learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Researchers have shown the powerful effects of teachers’ perceptions of self-capability on student learning (e.g. Armor et al., 1976; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, 1992, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), on clarity and enthusiasm in teaching (Tschannen-Moran et al, 1998), on teachers’ willingness to implement innovations (Berman, et al., 1977; Guskey, 1984; Smylie, 1988, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), on the reduction of teacher stress (Parkay et al., 1988; Greenwood et al., 1990, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), and on teachers’ willingness to stay in the field (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982, cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

1.1 Teacher Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy is derived from Bandura’s social cognitive theory that defines self-efficacy as the belief “in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). Applied to the context of education, teacher efficacy is “a teacher’s judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783).

Although teacher efficacy is easily confused with actual teaching effectiveness, teachers’ efficacy beliefs may underestimate, overestimate, or accurately reflect actual teaching effectiveness. To sum up two decades of debate about the meaning and assessment of teacher efficacy, “teacher efficacy remains a conceptually elusive construct” that is “difficult to assess with certainty” (Hebert, Lee, & Williamson, 1998, p. 224, cited in Wheatley, 2005).

1.2 Collective Teacher Efficacy

Inquiry into teacher efficacy beliefs emphasizes that teachers have not only self-referent efficacy perceptions but also beliefs about the conjoint capability of a school faculty. Teacher self-efficacy taken to the group level is called collective teacher efficacy and is defined as “a construct measuring teachers’ beliefs about the collective (not individual) capability of a faculty to influence student achievement; it refers to the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on student achievement” (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 486).

1.3 Theoretical Foundations of Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is largely grounded in Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory and its construct of self-efficacy. Bandura introduced the psychological construct of self-efficacy as a component of his social cognitive theory of human behavior, and gradually self-efficacy beliefs (alternatively referred to as perceived self-efficacy or efficacy expectations) occupied a more central position in the social cognitive theory. Bandura’s social cognitive theory postulates that perceptions of efficacy are important to individual and organizational behavior and change. Individuals who feel that they will be successful on a given task are more likely to be so because “they adopt challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite setbacks, and develop coping mechanisms for managing their emotional states” (Ross & Gray, 2004, p. 2).

Agency is the main feature of social cognitive theory (SCT). According to Bandura (1986), the essence of humanness is the capability to exercise control over life events. As such, self-efficacy beliefs constitute a key factor of human agency. They are said to influence the courses of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishing they realize (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

1.4 Collective Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Self-Efficacy

The shared theoretical framework underlying both teacher and collective efficacy is Bandura’s social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory considers personality as an agent-related phenomenon. Also, the social cognitive theory acknowledges that personal agency operates within a network of socio-cultural influences and thus the theory extends human agency to collective agency—

people's shared beliefs that they can work together to produce effects. That is, "people make causal contributions to their own physiological functioning through mechanisms of personal agency" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). According to Goddard and Goddard (2001), humans and organizations (through collective actions of group members) exhibit their agency by choices they make. Individuals and organizations tend to pursue activities they believe they are more successful at, that is, where they feel more self-efficacious. So, it is clear that efficacy is a factor that determines the operation of agency.

A review of the past studies on the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy demonstrates that teachers' self-efficacy and collective efficacy beliefs covary positively in response to group success (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Additionally, researchers have found links between student achievement and two kinds of teacher efficacy beliefs—teachers' beliefs in their own instructional efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), and teachers' beliefs about the collective efficacy of their school (Goddard et al., 2001).

Contrary to teacher self-efficacy studies, the study of collective teacher efficacy is relatively new. Bandura (1997, p. 468) states that "although perceived collective efficacy is widely recognized to be highly important to a full understanding of organizational functioning, it has been the subject of little research in schools." One of the earliest collective efficacy studies by Bandura (1993) showed that collective efficacy is significantly and positively related to school-level achievement. More recently, two studies by Goddard and his colleagues (Goddard, 2000; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2000) showed that collective efficacy perceptions are important predictors of differences among schools in student-level achievement. In addition, higher levels of collective efficacy were associated with higher levels of teacher self-efficacy (Goddard & Goddard, 2001) as well as higher student achievement (Goddard et al., 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Teachers' sense of efficacy is context-specific. According to Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), teachers may feel efficacious for teaching particular subjects to certain students in specific settings, and they can be expected to feel more or less efficacious under different circumstances. Even from one class period to another, teachers' level of efficacy may change (Ross et al., 1996; Raudenbush et al., 1992; cited in Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). To address the context-specific nature of this construct, the present study was limited to an ELT context because there are few studies focusing on teacher efficacy in this context (e.g., Chacon, 2005; Goker, 2006).

In this study, the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy as well as between collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-

efficacy subscales were examined. In other words, the following research questions were explored:

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL English instructors' perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and their sense of self-efficacy?
2. Is there any significant relationship between EFL English instructors' perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and their efficacy for classroom management?
3. Is there any significant relationship between EFL English instructors' perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and their efficacy for instructional strategies?
4. Is there any significant relationship between EFL English instructors' perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and efficacy for student engagement?
5. Which subscales of teacher self-efficacy accounts for the variance in collective efficacy of teachers?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

In this study, 90 Payam Noor University (PNU) English instructors from all over Iran voluntarily participated. They had from 1 to 18 years of teaching experience at PNU and ranged in age from 23 to 60. Among them, 50% held M.A. in TEFL, 25% M.A. in Linguistics, 10% M.A. in English Literature, 7% Ph.D. in TEFL, 5% Ph.D. in Linguistics, and 3% Ph.D. in English Translation. With regard to their gender, 71% were male and 29% female.

Age	Gender		Academic Degree						Teaching Experience
	Male	Female	M.A.				Ph.D.		
			Literature	Linguistics	Translation	TEFL	Linguistics	TEFL	
23 to 60	71%	29%	10%	25%	3%	50%	5%	7%	1 to 18

2.2 Instrumentation

Two instruments, the 12-item Teacher Sense Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), and the 10-item Collective Teacher

Efficacy Instrument (CTES; Goddard, 2002) were used. The items in both questionnaires were answered on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*nothing*) to 9 (*a great deal*) showing the degree of their agreement with the point mentioned in that item.

CTES was designed based on a social cognitive model. In their attempt to develop a measure of collective efficacy, Goddard et al. (2001) chose a group orientation for the items in the collective efficacy scale. Goddard et al.'s model of collective teacher efficacy items was developed in such a manner that teachers would consider both group competence and task analysis in their efficacy assessments.

To assess teachers' perceptions of their colleagues' efficacy, the 12-item scale of CTES was used. The 12-item scale is more theoretically pure than an earlier 21-item scale and these two scales are highly correlated ($r = .983$, $p < .001$), suggesting little change resulted from the omission of almost 43% of the items. The items in the questionnaires were on a 9-point scale so that the probability of the answers could be increased (Bandura, 1997). As Bandura contends, "including too few steps loses differentiating information because people who use the same response category would differ if immediate steps were included" (cited in Siwatu, 2005, p. 44).

Some minor modifications were done to CTES in order to make it more compatible with the target situation. However, because the changes were minimal, the conceptual structure of the questionnaire, and its validity was kept intact.

To measure teacher's perceptions of their own self-efficacy, the short version of TSES was used. This questionnaire was further developed and modified by Chacón (2005) to fit an ELT context. TSES consists of 12 items that are on a 9-point scale.

The two questionnaires tapping teacher self-efficacy and teacher collective efficacy scales adapted for the purpose of the current study were administered to 90 PNU English instructors all over Iran. Overall, 90 questionnaires were returned out of which 85 cases were to be included in the analysis.

The reliabilities of the questionnaires was found to be .83, and the reliability of collective teacher efficacy questionnaire was found to be as high as 0.94. Table 1 presents the mean score of different aspects of the EFL instructors' efficacy. In the entire sample, the mean of collective teacher efficacy was 4.85 and the mean of teacher self-efficacy was 7.03:

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics on Mean Scores of Different Aspects of the EFL Instructors' Self-Efficacy*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Total Score
Efficacy for Classroom Management	29.39	4.49	36
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	28.56	4.87	36
Efficacy for Student Engagement	27.14	5.01	36

As it can be observed in Table 1, the respondents' perceived efficacy for classroom management was slightly higher than efficacy for instructional strategies and efficacy for student engagement.

3. Results

To answer the first question concerning the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy, the *Pearson product moment correlation* coefficient was computed to measure the degree of relationship between the English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and their sense of self-efficacy:

Table 2 *Relationship Between CTE and Self-Efficacy*

Sum of Collective Teacher Efficacy		
Sum of Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.19
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.071
	<i>N</i>	85

As displayed in Table 2, the *r*-observed value is .19 with a probability of .071. Because this probability is greater than the .05 significance level assumed by the researchers, it can be concluded that there is not any significant relationship between the PNU English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and their sense of self-efficacy.

To answer the second research question on the relationship between the PNU English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and their efficacy for classroom management, a correlation coefficient between the two variables was conducted (see Table 3). As displayed in the table, the *r*-observed value is .14 with a probability of .19. Because this probability is greater than the .05 significance level assumed by the researchers, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and their efficacy for classroom management:

Table 3 *Relationship Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Efficacy for Classroom Management*

Sum of Collective Efficacy		
Efficacy for Classroom Management	Pearson Correlation	.141
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.19
	<i>N</i>	85

Table 4 indicates the result of using the *Pearson product moment correlation* coefficient to examine the relationship between the variables in the third research question. As can be seen, the *r*-observed value is .17 with a probability of .11. Because this probability is greater than the .05 significance level, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and their instructional strategies:

Table 4 *The Correlation Coefficient Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Instructional Strategies*

Sum of Collective Efficacy		
Efficacy for Instructional Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.172
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.116
	<i>N</i>	85

The fourth research question examined the relationship between the instructors' collective teacher efficacy and teacher's efficacy for student engagement. Therefore, the *Pearson product moment correlation* coefficient was performed between these variables. As Table 5 illustrates, the *r*-observed value is .18 with a probability of .091. Because this probability is greater than the .05 significance level proposed by the researchers, it can be concluded that there is not any significant relationship between the PNU English instructors' collective teacher efficacy and the student engagement:

Table 5 *Relationship Between Collective Teacher Efficacy and Student Engagement*

Sum of Collective Efficacy		
Student Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.184
	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	.091
	<i>N</i>	85

The fifth research question was about the extent to which the factors/subscales of teacher self-efficacy can account for the observed variance in collective teacher efficacy. In order to probe the predictive power of three subscales

of teacher self-efficacy, multiple regression analysis was run. It was necessary first to examine if the linearity assumption of the regression analysis is met. Figure 1 demonstrates that the relationships between the abovementioned variables are linear. The Normal Probability Plot indicates that the regression model is linear:

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

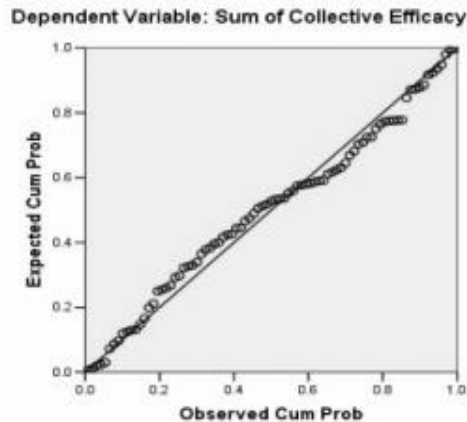


Figure 1 Normal Probability Plot for Regression Linearity Assumption

Table 6 illustrates the results of the *multiple regression analysis* for the fifth question. The results show the contributions made by the subscales of teacher efficacy (i.e., instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management) in predicting the collective teacher efficacy. The values of the partial regression coefficients (i.e., column labeled B) reflect the original units in which the variables were measured. Partial regression coefficients were examined to explore the relative importance of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Table 6 displays that the regression coefficients of the efficacy for student engagement (.20), efficacy for classroom management (.001), and efficacy for instructional strategies (.16) are not significant:

Table 6 *Regression Coefficient on the Subscales of Teacher Self-Efficacy and Collective Teacher Efficacy*

Coefficients (a)								
Mode 1		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	β(Beta)			Tolerance	VIF
		(Constant)	37.465	6.442		5.815	.000	
	Student Engagement	.207	.229	.125	.901	.370	.611	1.636
	Classroom Management	1.953E-02	.270	.011	.072	.943	.550	1.820
	Instructional Strategies	.164	.244	.097	.671	.504	.571	1.753
(a) Dependent Variable: Sum of Collective Efficacy								

As in Table 7 can be observed, the *R*-value is .203 and its square value, *R*-square is .041. If *R*-square is stated in percentages, then it would indicate the amount of variance in the dependent variable—collective teacher efficacy—that can be predicted by teacher self-efficacy subscales. The results indicate that all these variables can only predict about 4% of the collective teacher efficacy:

Table 7 *Model Summary*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> -Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> -Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.203(a)	.041	.006	8.24491
A Predictors: (Constant), Instructional Strategies, Student Engagement, Classroom Management				

In brief, none of the subsets of teacher self-efficacy accounts for a significant proportion of the variance observed in collective teacher efficacy.

4. Discussion

What this study was specifically after was to probe the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy. As teacher efficacy is a context-specific construct, this research was limited to the ELT context of PNU. Therefore, all of the participants of this study had the experience of teaching English at this university.

Based on the first general research question, which concerned the relationship between the PNU English instructors’ collective teacher efficacy and

teacher self-efficacy, three other more specific research questions were posed to examine the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and the three subscales of teacher self-efficacy, namely, classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement.

Interestingly, the researchers failed to reject any of the null hypotheses; in other words, there was no convincing evidence in support of the assumption that there is a significant relationship between English instructors' perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy as well as its three components. The other important finding of this study relates to the means of the collective teacher efficacy items. Item 5 asking "*Teachers at PNU do NOT have the skills needed to produce meaningful learning*" had the lowest score, and the last item stated "*Teachers at PNU do NOT have the skills needed to deal with students' learning problems*" had the second lowest mean. Considering these results may indicate that the PNU English instructors do not underestimate their colleagues' competence. In other words, the PNU English instructors might consider their colleagues as competent ones, whereas the PNU context itself may be the cause of the observed low collective teacher efficacy. The possible factors influencing the perception of the instructors can include the large number of students in each class, the predetermined heavy course syllabuses to be covered, and the limited number of class sessions that is usually half the standard hours. Furthermore, most of the PNU instructors are not the faculty members of this university and are only invited to teach some courses there. Therefore, they are usually not much familiar and in contact with the particular educational system of PNU, and this point may negatively affect their general view of the university. This may suggest the need for some special workshops or seminars to make the instructors quite familiar with the particular nature of this university, especially due to the fact that the majority of the English instructors are not the PNU faculty members.

As pointed out earlier, the current study examined two distinct but theoretically-related constructs related to teachers, that is, teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy. Both of these constructs have their origins in Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997). The social cognitive theory emphasizes building collective efficacy through mastery and vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states of the individuals. This important organizational dimension, strong collective teacher efficacy, can increase teachers' self-efficacy perceptions.

Comparing the results of this study, particularly the fact that no significant relationship was found between the English instructors' teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy, with the findings of Goddard and Goddard (2001) supports Bandura's (1997) view that perceived collective efficacy is an important aspect of organizational culture. Cultural values, to a great extent, determine the

individual and group behavior. Put it more simply, the observed low collective teacher efficacy compared to teacher self-efficacy in the current study may refer to the point that collaborative activities should be stimulated in the organizational culture of PNU, because as Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995, cited in Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004) rightly contend, “Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do), by collaborating with other teachers, by looking closely at students and their work, and sharing what they see” (p. 598).

As it is emphasized in the social cognitive theory, specific actions are required of individuals in order to expect specific outcomes. In order to perceive more collective teacher efficacy, the PNU English instructors must know how to become learners in the university, how to learn from their colleagues, and how to use the experiences of their colleagues in solving their teaching problems.

In addition, teaching programs at PNU can be designed in a way that encourage teachers to collaborate, conduct collective inquiry, and examine the effectiveness of instruction by setting goals in specific areas measured by assessments and benchmarks, because according to Fullan (1991, cited in Ryan, 2007), teacher development depends not only on individuals, but also on the relationship between teachers and those with whom they work.

All in all, our understanding of self-efficacy beliefs of teachers may be incomplete without accounting for effects of the environment because self-efficacy beliefs play a fundamental role embedded within an environment and the social context of teaching cannot be ignored if teaching tasks are to be effective.

5. Conclusion

In Iran like many other developing countries, all problems related to education should be seriously considered because education is a major agent of development. Besides, teachers play a crucial role in this regard (Rizvi & Elliot, 2005). Their knowledge, their art of teaching, their interactions with students, and even their beliefs can influence what learners achieve.

The results from the present study indicate there is not any significant relationship between the PNU English instructors’ perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and teacher self-efficacy as well as its three components (i.e., efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for instructional strategies, and efficacy for student engagement). The absence of any significant relationship between the variables of the current study recognizes the negligence of collaborative activities in teacher development in the ELT context of PNU. In other words, the PNU English instructors may not be so familiar with the importance of collaborative activities, or

with the role that their colleagues may play in producing the desired educational outcomes.

Finally, the findings of this study illuminate possibilities for building teacher efficacy through teacher development and avenues for a great deal of future research that can further our understanding of both teacher and collective efficacy. Although much literature suggests collaborative school cultures facilitate teacher development (e.g., Little, 1982, 1986; Kleinsasser, 1993; McLaughlin, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001, cited in Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004; Rosenholtz, 1985, 1989), there is little documentation as to how teachers actually teach (and talk about teaching) within their own specific workplace (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). Therefore, such studies can be investigated in the educational settings to reveal the role of collaboration (if any) in teaching of English in order to find ways to strengthen teachers' motivation for more collaboration in their teaching tasks, because the low collective teacher efficacy compared to teacher self-efficacy may indicate the point that the educational system of Iran may not make teachers cognizant of the role of collaboration in enhancing learning and teaching outcomes.

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