

## **Relationship Between Iranian EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Their Burnout Level in Universities and Schools**

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### **Abstract**

In every field of teaching and learning, there are some factors that have an important role in both teachers' and students' performance. Two of these effective psychological factors in the context of education include self-efficacy and burnout. This research was conducted to examine the statistical relationship between English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' self-efficacy and burnout levels in the universities and schools of Iran. The data collection instruments were two questionnaires, 'Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale' and 'Maslach Burnout Inventory'. The participants included 152 randomly selected teachers working in universities and schools. After data collection, the SPSS software was applied to convert the obtained data into numerical and interpretable data. To quantify the statistical relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout levels, correlational analysis was used. Results indicated, there was negative correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout levels. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was conducted to estimate the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout better, which indicated that teachers' self-efficacy was a negative predictor of their burnout.

**Keywords:** Burnout, EFL teachers, self-efficacy

### **Introduction**

Teachers communicate with large numbers of students, parents, and principals whom each have different demands and problems. This important responsibility as a teacher needs to better understand social norms and values. By a better understanding of the norms and values, teachers can become role models and community will identify with them. In Iran, many EFL teachers are highly motivated to teach when they begin to teach. These teachers think of the ways to be more creative and innovative in order to help their students in learning English as a foreign language effectively. They like to interchange different ideas with other colleagues and learn new things. Therefore, these teachers may lose the excitement and pleasure of teaching in time, or they may begin seeing their workplace as a stressful environment.

As stated by Johnson et al. (2005), teaching profession is one of the stressful jobs. Long-term stress can lead to chronic fatigue that has a close relationship with the burnout symptom. According to Maslach (2015, p. 1415), burnout is "a psychological syndrome that develops in response to chronic emotional and interpersonal job stressors". Therefore, to decrease the level of burnout, it is unavoidable to remove stress. Recently, teachers' self-efficacy and its relationship with their burnout have received substantial research interest. It is commonly believed that these two factors considerably influence teaching and learning processes. Over the past few decades, teachers have increasingly become the focus of attention in the educational systems because they have the most important role in teaching contexts. Wright, Hom, and Sanders (1997, p. 63) in their study argued that, "more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor".

Human resources of each organization as the most important factor in achieving their goals

play an important role and is considered the driving force of the organization. Job burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment in which teachers are more susceptible to burnout because of their job nature. In other words, because effective teachers are essential to the achievement of educational goals and objectives, it can be quite clear to examine the factors affecting the burnout and self-efficacy of EFL teachers in particular. Since self-efficacy is an important variable and can affect rate and time of burnout, the relationship between self-efficacy and job burnout is studied. Keeping the two mentioned variables into consideration, changes in the possible associations between these variables are quite likely to affect the outcome of an educational program and therefore need to be widely investigated.

### **Literature Review**

This section is purporting to present an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the study as well as the empirical research conducted about the main variables under investigation, namely EFL teachers' burnout and self-efficacy.

#### **Teacher's Burnout**

Jennett, Harris, and Mesibove (2003) defined burnout as a result of long-term job stress, particularly among teachers. They argued that most of the teachers may experience anxiety in their job, while the reasons behind this problem are different. Actually, some of the teachers can manage job stress successfully, while in contrast others may not be able to manage their job stress. Further, burnout can be defined as a constant exhaustion with various cognitive, emotional, physical, and social syndromes, originating from long-term job stress, especially in jobs with continual human contacts (Brouwers, & Tomic, 2000; Johnson et al., 2005).

According to Maslach (1999), burnout is a psychological problem of mental and emotional exhaustion because of the expanded stress factors on the job. It is consisted of three subscales, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) pointed out that Emotional exhaustion relates to being emotionally overextended, depersonalization on the other hand, relates to representing negative responses to the others, and reduced personal accomplishment relates to having a negative evaluation of one person. Put differently, as stated by Byrne (1991), emotional exhaustion refers to the feelings of tiredness as one's energy is used up; depersonalization is related to the development of negative attitudes about the others and considering them as enemies; and reduced personal accomplishment refers to the individuals' dissatisfaction with their achievements.

In the same line, Shirom and Melamed (2006) specified three aspects: emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and cognitive tiredness. Both methods are alike as both focus on the emotional aspect. For this reason, latest studies emphasize on the emotion-regulation ability, that demonstrate a central part of emotional intelligence and dealt with the potential to control one's own and others' emotional conditions (Brackett et al., 2010). It is necessary to mention that the emotion-regulation ability affects how teacher's express emotions, handle their stress, and interact with the other people (Gross, 2002) and it additionally related to the burnout symptom (Brackett et al., 2010). It should also have added that the specific emotion-regulation abilities are not only considerable in this regard, but also, teachers' thoughts about these abilities. It means that emotion-regulation is a component of teachers' self-efficacy.

In a study, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) represented that self-efficacy has a continuous impact on depersonalization and a concurrent impact on personal achievement, whereas the direction was reverse for the association between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion.

Further, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) indicated that there was a significant association between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout level, and particularly for emotional exhaustion. Therefore, more researches on this area of study, particularly with regard to various educational organizations, are required to understand the association between teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout. Without this broad sense, it is not possible to make a conclusion that self-efficacy develops like a factor protecting from burnout syndrome nor is it possible to discover the most effective approaches to assist teachers' self-efficacy with the purpose of decreasing their burnout.

According to Maslach (1999), burnout is “an issue of particular concern for people-oriented occupations in which (a) the relationship between providers and recipients is central to the work and (b) the provision of education, service, or treatment can be a highly emotional experience” (p. 209). Thus, teaching is one of the occupations in which burnout can be developed. In addition, Huberman and Vandenberghe (1999) pointed out that entire burnout process in a university or school refers to various elements like interpersonal tensions, overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, along with the class size, demographics, heterogeneity of pupils, pupils' aptitudes and sociocultural backgrounds.

In a study, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) aimed to find the statistical relationships between teachers' efficacy and burnout. The results revealed that emotional exhaustion had an impact on efficacy whereas the time-frame was synchronous, while efficacy had an impact on personal accomplishment and depersonalization whereas the time-frame was longitudinal and synchronous respectively. As a final, they proposed many solutions on how to remove and decrease teachers' burnout level. In another research, Grayson and Alvarez (2008) investigated the relative contributions of teacher satisfaction, demographic characteristics and teacher-rated school climate on their burnout level. Ultimately, they concluded that teacher stressors, which cause increased degrees of burnout, should be decreased so that the school climate can be improved. In spite of the above mentioned researches that concentrated on teachers' burnout level as an effective factor in mainstream education, burnout has not been well studied in the field of EFL.

### **Teacher's Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy theory is originated from the Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura (2006) has defined self-efficacy as individuals' faith in their capacity to be successful in certain conditions. Our understanding of environmental opportunities depends on efficacy beliefs and it affects the degree of exertion applied on a performance, and the degree to which anyone would persevere when confronted with difficulties (Pajares, 1997). According to the social cognitive theory, teachers' self-efficacy can be defined as their beliefs in ability to plan, organize, and implement different educational activities that are critical to achieve pedagogical purposes. Self-efficacy influences how teachers to understand the opportunities and difficulties and how much effort and what activities they need to use in overcoming these difficulties (Bandura, 2006).

In spite of the fact, the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their students' accomplishments was confirmed by many researches (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012), leading to a priority to consider teachers' self-efficacy as set of professional attitudes that includes all necessary challenges in their everyday work. Teachers with high self-efficacy are capable to effectively handle these challenges containing problems with reference to the students' learning and behaviour, contact with colleagues and parents, school leadership, and long-life learning. Therefore, they do not experience them as

stressful, unlike teachers with low self-efficacy. It implies that teachers' high self-efficacy can be seen as a factor to protect them from stressful situations, containing lasting strong stress leading to the burnout symptom.

According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998), efficacy relates to individual's viewpoints about their potential to carry out at a given level of achievement. Bandura (1977) stated that these viewpoints affect how much attempt individuals make, how much they tolerate failures, how much stress they experience in dealing with challenging situations, and how long they continue in front of problems. As stated by Henson, Kogan, and Vacha-Haase (2001), a strong meaning of efficacy is one of the best features of effective teachers as it referred to a range of positive teaching behaviors. Further, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) argued that a teacher with a high level of efficacy has more organization and planning, is more energetic about new thoughts, and is more involved in the needs of students.

To better interpret the notion of teacher's efficacy, various studies have been carried out in the literature (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The most extensively applied of these models is that of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), which was also applied in the present research. In their model, teacher efficacy includes three components namely, classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies. Classroom management refers teachers' beliefs in their ability to control students' disruptive behavior; student engagement deals with teachers' beliefs in being able to involve students' in classroom activities; and instructional strategies relates to teachers' beliefs in their ability to engage alternative or new strategies in the classroom. Despite the rich literature on both theoretical and empirical characteristics of teacher efficacy in mainstream education (Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009; Liaw, 2009; Shidler, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Wheatley, 2005), there have been few studies on teacher efficacy in the EFL field (Abednia, 2006; Atay, 2007; Chacon, 2005; Moradkhani, 2009; Safari, Davaribina, & Khoshnevis, 2020).

In a study, Abednia (2006) attempted to create an instrument to measure a teacher efficacy for foreign language contexts. Although his instrument was an important development in teacher efficacy researches in the field of EFL, it does not have a clear theoretical framework behind it, and its subscales measure total teacher efficacy rather than teacher efficacy in specific activities and contexts, which is much highlighted in the teacher efficacy literature by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) and Wheatley (2005). In another study, Chacon (2005) indicated that there was a positive relationship between teachers' efficacy and their language proficiency, in which teachers with higher level of efficacy had more language proficiency. Eventually, Moradkhani (2009) also conducted a study on the efficacy of English language teachers, in which he concluded no statistical difference between the teachers' efficacy and their students' achievements.

### **Purpose of the study**

Taking the previously stated factors into account, it is quite wise to assume that having effective teachers in order to achieve the objectives of an educational program is undeniable. This research was an effort to examine the association and interaction between two determining aspects of EFL teachers' social cognitive behavior, namely their self-efficacy and burnout. Some of the researchers proposed that lacking sense of mastery (i.e., self-efficacy) in EFL teachers ultimately leads to their incapability of adaptation and accordingly their being burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chwalisz, Altmaier & Russell, 1992).

The present research aimed to shed more light on EFL teachers' burnout process by

considering their self-efficacy. This research also attempted to examine Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and its relationship with their burnout level. Therefore, it investigated the following research question.

RQ. Is there any statistical relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout?

## Methodology

### Design of the Study

The present research is quantitative in nature and the following procedure was followed in order to achieve the purpose of the study. After preparing the questionnaires (Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale and Teacher's burnout scale) in print, the researcher took the advice of a number of professions colleagues concerning the validity of the questionnaires in order to make sure that they are suitable for the intended purposes. They confirmed the construct and content validity of the questionnaires. The reliability of the test was also calculated through Cronbach Alpha.

To examine the statistical association between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout level, correlational survey research design model was employed. After measuring these teachers' self-efficacy and burnout level quantitatively, correlational research design was used to observe whether there was a statistical association between the variables. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), the reason behind the design of this study is composed of testing if the measurement number of one variable varies systematically in relation with the measurement number of other variable.

### Participants

This study consisted of 152 EFL teachers from different universities and schools volunteered to participate in the research. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the teachers. According to the Table 1, more than half of the participant (58.552 %) were male teachers. Majority of the participants aged between 26 and 45 years (82.236 %), representing that most of the teachers were young, whereas only 2.631 percent of the teachers were between 56 and 65 years.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Study*

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	89	58.552
	Female	63	41.447
Age Group (Year)	26-35	76	50.000
	36-45	49	32.236
	46-55	23	15.131
	56-65	4	2.631
Year of Teaching gp.	6-15	82	53.947
	16-25	67	44.078
	26-35	3	1.973
Place of Teaching	University	74	48.684
	School	78	51.315

Total	152	100.0	100.0
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It is worth mentioning, this study was investigated only on teachers whose experience of teaching has ranged between 6 and 35 years. Taking into account the fact that the dominant age group was 26-45, it is quite logical that the majority of the participants had a lower teaching experience (53.947 %). In accordance with Table 1, the highest teaching experience was between 6 to 15 years and 16 to 25 years, whereas only 1.973 percent of the participants had teaching experience between 25 and 35 years.

Because some of the EFL teachers work in other educational settings in addition to their fixed work place, this study divided them into two groups (e. g., universities and schools) that teachers themselves mentioned at the time of completing the questionnaires. In accordance with Table 1, the higher percentage belonged to those teachers who work in the schools (51.315 %), and the lower percentage related to those teachers who work in universities (48.684 %).

### **Instruments**

Two questionnaires of Burnout and self-efficacy were used in this research, and demographic form asked about the participants' demographic information involving age, gender, year of teaching (experience), and place of teaching.

#### ***Teacher's burnout scale***

To measure the burnout level of Iranian EFL teachers, Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators' Survey (MBI-ES) by Kokkinos (2006) was applied. This 22-item measurement scale includes three subscales, namely *Emotional Exhaustion (EE)*, *Depersonalization (DP)* and *Personal Accomplishment (PA)*. The frequency scale ranged from zero (never) to six (every day). High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low scores on personal accomplishment are indicators of burnout. The scoring is as follows: emotional exhaustion: Nine items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 20, which illustrate feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by job, depersonalization: Five items 5, 10, 11, 15, 22, which identify a doubtful attitude and impersonal response between oneself and service recipients, and personal accomplishment: Eight items: 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, which explain feelings of efficacy and achievement in employee's work with individuals. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the entire of the questionnaire was estimated as .897. The coefficients for subscales were also measured. The coefficient for Exhaustion was .895; .754 for Depersonalization and .815 for Personal accomplishment.

#### ***Teachers' self-efficacy Scale***

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale, designed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001), consists of 24 items and is divided into three factors: Efficacy of classroom management (8 Items), efficacy of students' management (8 Items) and efficacy of instructional strategies (8 Items). The participants were requested to report their beliefs on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 meaning "nothing," 3 meaning "very little," 5 meaning – "some influence", 7 meaning – "quite a bit", and 9 meaning – "a great deal". The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the entire of the questionnaire was calculated as .872. The coefficient was .824 for Efficacy in Student Engagement subscale; .782 for Efficacy in Instructional Strategies and .844 for Efficacy in Classroom Management.

### Data Collection Procedure

When the questionnaires were piloted with a group of 34 teachers, minor modifications were made in the wordings of some items to improve their intelligibility. Additionally, the scores obtained from these teachers were fed into *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) and Cronbach's alpha was estimated for the scales to make sure the scales were sufficiently reliable. It is worth mentioning that a group of teachers in Tehran and Ardabil provinces of Iran were contacted and requested to distribute the prepared questionnaires among their own colleagues and ask for their cooperation. As stated before, the questionnaires were given to 64 teachers in person and 88 copies were sent via email or social networks (mainly Telegram and WhatsApp). Totally, 152 teachers answered completely the questionnaires and returned them back. These questionnaires were scored and the obtained data were given into SPSS version 16. It is necessary to mention that the negatively worded items were reverse-coded and the necessary preliminary computations were done to prepare the data for the SPSS.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed employing the SPSS analytic software through calculation of means, frequencies, correlation and hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The data were tested for multicollinearity and singularity, outliers, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity before doing the analyses. Specifically, assumptions for the linear regression analyses were examined. EFL teachers' age, gender and year of teaching (experience) factors were controlled and hierarchical multiple regression test was conducted, while investigating the prediction of the teachers' burnout level by their self-efficacy.

## Results

As mentioned above, a number of statistical procedures were implemented to examine the association between teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout level, the participants' mean scores for these variables were estimated to measure their self-efficacy and burnout levels.

According to achieved results in the Table 2, teachers perceived their self-efficacy levels in their job as quite high ( $\bar{x} = 3.97$ ; Often). Then, the mean score for the Classroom Management subscale is the highest in comparison with other subscales ( $\bar{x} = 4.11$ ; Often). These results also indicated that teachers perceived them to be most efficacious in classroom management. It was followed by teachers' perception of self-efficacy in employing instructional strategies ( $\bar{x} = 4.02$ ; Often) and students' engagement in the process of learning actively ( $\bar{x} = 3.82$ ; Often).

**Table 2.**

*Means, standard errors and standard deviations for teacher self-efficacy scores*

	$\bar{x}$	SE	SD
Classroom Management	4.11	0.03	0.54
Instructional Strategies	4.02	0.03	0.52
Student Engagement	3.82	0.04	0.58
Teacher Efficacy Total	3.97	0.03	0.44

Results of the study in the Table 3 represent that teachers' burnout levels were found relatively lower ( $\bar{x} = 2.18$ ; Rarely) in comparison with their self-efficacy. The highest mean score among the subscales was for Exhaustion ( $\bar{x} = 2.37$ ; Rarely). These results show that teachers

recognized that they were physically and emotionally worn out. Exhaustion was followed by low Personal Accomplishment ( $\bar{x} = 2.21$ ; Rarely) and Depersonalization ( $\bar{x} = 1.64$ ; Never).

**Table 3**

*Means, standard errors and standard deviations for teacher burnout scores*

	$\bar{x}$	SE	SD
Exhaustion	2.37	0.05	0.79
Low Personal Accomplishment	2.21	0.03	0.51
Depersonalization	1.64	0.04	0.64
Burnout Total	2.18	0.03	0.52

It is necessary to mention that Pearson correlation coefficient was estimated before examining the prediction of teachers' burnout by their self-efficacy in order to observe whether there was any statistical relationship between these variables. The correlation test between teachers' burnout scores and self-efficacy scores put forward a medium, significant and negative correlation between the variables,  $r = -.480$ .  $p < .01$ . These findings represent that by increasing the teachers' self-efficacy scores, their burnout scores decrease significantly. Then, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to get a better description of this relationship. The findings of the hierarchical multiple regression test, which was conducted to observe whether teachers' self-efficacy had a predictive power on their burnout level, are represented in the Table 4.

**Table 4**

*The hierarchical multiple regression test results for teachers' self-efficacy and burnout*

Model		Dependent Variable: Burnout				
Independent Variables		B	Std.Error	Beta	t	p
1. Step	(Constant)	2.144	.355		6.004	.000
	gender	.007	.093	.006	.086	.928
	year of teaching	-.09	.015	-.135	-.655	.510
	Age	.004	.014	.067	.330	.739
2. Step	(Sabit)	4.294	.433		9.866	.000
	gender	.089	.081	.076	1.088	.275
	year of teaching	-.013	.013	-.190	-1.054	.291
	Age	.09	.012	.143	.794	.425
	Self-efficacy	-.578	.080	-.493	-7.086	.000

$\Delta R^2 = .244^{***}$

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

According to the Table 4, in the first step, age, gender, and year of teaching (experience) variables were controlled and in the second step, teachers' self-efficacy points were added to the model. It is worth mentioning that in the first step, control variables explained 0.5 % variance of



teacher burnout. But, after adding self-efficacy points to the model in the second step, explained variance increased to 24.4 %,  $F(4.156) = 12.87, p < .001$ . Therefore, teachers' self-efficacy explained an additional 24 % of variance. When the values related to self-efficacy variable are estimated, the findings revealed that the influence of teachers' self-efficacy on their burnout level is significant,  $\beta = -.493, p < .001$ . These findings represent that when age, gender, and year of teaching (experience) variables are controlled, teachers' self-efficacy negatively predicts their burnout.

### Discussion

The present research attempts to find the statistical relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout level in universities and schools. As stated in the literature, one of the main factors increasing teachers' burnout level is a lack of professional skills leading to teachers' stressful situations more often than teachers whose capabilities are higher. Therefore, it can be stated that it is not only capability itself but also "simply" the belief about self-efficacy is beneficial. Several researches about teachers' self-efficacy represented that self-efficacy is an important prerequisite for professional development. The present research has confirmed the statistical relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout level. Particularly, this research has investigated the main role of self-efficacy and its close relationship to job burnout. Teaching profession is a highly emotional activity; Therefore, it is necessary to both teachers' professional development and students' achievement that more studies are conducted in the field of emotion-regulation in teachers' life.

As mentioned above, the purpose of this research was to find the statistical relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout at university and school settings. Therefore, this relationship between the variables was evaluated by correlation analysis and a significant, medium and negative correlation was found. Regression analysis was conducted after the examining the existence of the relationship. Demographic data such as age, gender and experience variables were controlled while conducting hierarchical multiple regression test. The findings of the regression analysis proposed that teachers' self-efficacy negatively predicted their burnout. Put differently, teachers with low self-efficacy experienced burnout more than those teachers with high self-efficacy. In a research, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) pointed out that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about classroom management were remarkably related to their burnout level. Further, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) stated that exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions of burnout have a negative relationship with teachers' self-efficacy, which is in line with the results obtained in the present study.

In the same way, Karahan and Balat (2011) stated that there was a negative relationship between private school teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout. Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) in a study on Syrian and German teachers also suggested a negative relationship between teachers' burnout and their self-efficacy. The result indicated that this relationship is an intercultural phenomenon. Later, Çelikkaleli (2011) found a negative relationship between teachers' burnout and their self-efficacy in an education center for adults. These results in agreement with the current study pointed out that the negative influence of the low teacher self-efficacy on job burnout is common for teachers of different school levels. When the results of the present study and previously conducted studies are reviewed, it can be concluded that teachers' self-efficacy is a crucial factor that should be taken into account by teachers and all the educational administrators.

In line with the results of current study, Kerry-Henkel (2017) stated that teachers with higher self-efficacy experienced less burnout. Higher teacher self-efficacy was correlated with

fewer referrals for students to the student support team and the identification of fewer students at-risk for emotional difficulties. Higher teacher burnout was not correlated with number of referrals but was found to be associated with the identification of more students at-risk for emotional difficulties as well as the number of total students identified as at-risk overall

Maslach et al. (2001) argued that if the relationship between burnout, self-efficacy and job satisfaction and the results of the present study and other similar studies that represent the negative relationship between teachers' burnout and their self-efficacy are taken into account, it can be argued that teachers' self-efficacy is an important factor for effectiveness of universities and schools. As stated by Hoy (2000), there are three main factors which have an important role in constructing teachers' self-efficacy. The first factor is the teachers' positive teaching experiences particularly at the beginning of their job. The second factor is the observing other teachers' effective teaching practices. The third and last factor involves convincing teachers about their effectiveness or potential effectiveness by offering positive and constructive feedback for effective teaching practices.

Bolat (2011) explained the role of positive experiences as a necessary factor to increase the teachers' self-efficacy. To achieve this goal, teachers should be given opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge, to have practice their responsibilities. Teachers should also be provided courage and rewarded for their skills and knowledge. Education administrators and stakeholders are recommended to consider these mentioned elements in increasing teachers' self-efficacy. These attempts may involve the job or in service training to increase teachers' capabilities and other necessary arrangements.

Although the results of this study suggested a negative relationship between teachers' burnout and self-efficacy, the answer to the question of which methods can help to increase their efficacy is not discussed. Tschannen-Moren and Hoy (2001) stated that taking into account teachers' self-efficacy has an influence on student achievement, behaviors and attitudes along with their performance, studying how to improve teachers' self-efficacy seems a very important area of study. Understanding teachers' self-efficacy factors that contribute to its continuity make it necessary to collect qualitative data by instruments like observation and interview or quantitative data collection techniques when necessary.

According to the above mentioned discussions, burnout is considered to be a potential problem for all EFL teachers, particularly in universities and schools, where teachers have to deal with students and other colleagues. Another substantial point related to the teachers' burnout was its direct and indirect costs and damages. Accordingly, the implementation of measures to control the level of burnout, results in improving teachers' mental health, teaching effectiveness, interpersonal relationships and finally their job satisfaction.

### **Conclusions**

Effective teachers have a pivotal role in the performance and success of educational systems and different psychological and sociological factors can influence their success and failure. For this reason, the present research intended to investigate two important factors influencing the performance of EFL teachers. More specifically, it aimed to investigate the interaction and relationship between two determining aspects of EFL teachers' behavior, namely burnout and self-efficacy. One-hundred and fifty-two Iranian EFL teachers from different universities and schools participated in the study. As the main data collection instruments, two questionnaires were submitted to the participants in three different ways: email, social networks and in person, and they were requested to complete and send them back. After data collection, SPSS version 16 was employed to find the relationship between the main variables.

According to the findings of the data analysis, there was negative correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout levels. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was conducted to estimate the relationship between the self-efficacy and burnout better, which indicated that teachers' self-efficacy was a negative predictor of their burnout. The results of this study proposed the significance of conducting different courses for EFL teachers to increase their self-efficacy. EFL teachers are recommended to acquire skills related to control their stressors in order to manage their burnout level. In the same line, education administrators and managers also have an important role in providing the necessary requirements for these teachers. In this regard, chancellors and Colleagues can help and support for stressed-teachers.

Any language teaching investors or stakeholders, such as educational policy-makers, teachers, and researchers might benefit from the findings of this research. Moreover, this study can help educators and administrators to better understand the psychological and sociological aspects of EFL teachers and take measures to remove barriers in this regard and foster the achievement of educational objectives. The education policy for EFL teachers should concentrate on developing skills for different aspects of the educational process, because of the teacher's multifaceted role. It has been proposed that teachers should achieve their potential skills and develop the proficiency which are necessary to manage the classroom. EFL teachers are recommended to be trained on how to deal with conditions and challenges related to the social environment of Iran. According to this study, it is recommended to assist the EFL teachers by giving feedback to reduce their job stress and increase self-efficacy.

This study has different limitations which should be kept in mind in order to interpret the findings. At first, it is necessary to mention that, as the sample included EFL teachers from specific areas, that make it impossible to generalize the findings to other teachers. As a second limitation, the present study did not consider the differences among cultures, religious beliefs, and their educational autonomy. Studying the previously mentioned aspects of EFL teachers are recommended to get more precise conclusions. In spite of the limitations, the findings have provided new insights that deserving additional studies.

Because the teachers studied in this research were English language teachers working at universities and schools, further research can be conducted in the field of teachers of other disciplines and elsewhere. Future studies could be intended to investigate deeply into other factors regarding self-efficacy and burnout like commitment, job satisfaction, professional development, engagement, and leadership. Developing and extending this study may involve a greater sample size, involving various types of educational workplaces and demographic examples.

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