

Please cite this paper as follows:

Fadaee, E., Marzban, A., & Najafi Karimi, Sh. (2022). Teacher Autonomy and Personality Traits: A Comparative Study of Iranian Male and Female EFL Teachers. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 10 (42), 53-66.

Research Paper

## Teacher Autonomy and Personality Traits: A Comparative Study of Iranian Male and Female EFL Teachers

Elaheh Fadaee<sup>1</sup>, Amir Marzban<sup>2\*</sup>, Shaban Najafi Karimi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English Language Teaching, Qaemshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr, Iran

*Elaheh\_Fadaee@yahoo.com*

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of English Language Teaching, Gaemshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr, Iran

*Amir\_Marzban@yahoo.com*

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English Language Teaching, Qaemshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr, Iran

*Najafibox@yahoo.com*

Received: January 4, 2022

Accepted: February 22, 2022

### Abstract

Teacher autonomy and teacher personality, both affecting teaching and learning processes are focused on in this study. So, SPSS-26 was conducted based on the 156 Iranian EFL teachers (63 males and 93 females)' online responses to the Teacher Autonomy Scale designed by Pearson and Moomaw and NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory suggested by Costa Jr. and McCrae. As a result, Extraversion stayed in the first place among the Big Five traits of personality, according to its correlation degree to teacher autonomy, which was assessed as very strong, pushing Neuroticism to the last stand, assessed as weak. Other findings are as follows: a) male teachers naturally felt more sense of autonomy than females did; b) females can be more negatively affected by the people and things surrounding them; c) males are more extraverted than females; d) males generally tended to experience new things more than females did; e) agreeableness was more dominant in the females' character compared to the males' character, and f) males were usually more conscientious than females. Finally, Self-Determination Theory was applied to support the above inferences.

**Keywords:** *EFL teachers, Gender, Personality traits, Teacher autonomy, The big-five factor*

**استقلال و ویژگی های شخصیتی مدرس: بررسی مقایسه ای مدرسان زبان انگلیسی آقا و خانم در ایران**  
استقلال مدرس و ویژگی های شخصیتی مدرس هر دو بر روند آموزش و یادگیری تاثیر دارند. این مقاله به بررسی مقایسه ای رابطه بین استقلال مدرسان زبان دوم و ویژگی های شخصیتی آنها مبتنی بر جنسیت می پردازد. داده های مورد نیاز از طریق توزیع در دسترس و آنلاین دو پرسشنامه بین مدرسان انجام شد که در این میان 156 مدرس زن و مرد به آنها پاسخ دادند. سپس، از اس پی اس اس نسخه 26 برای تحلیل داده ها و پاسخ به دو سوال تحقیق استفاده شد. نتایج نشان داد که: الف) در بین 5 ویژگی شخصیتی، ویژگی برون گرایی رتبه اول را بر مبنای همبستگی بالا با استقلال مدرس دارد؛ ب) حس استقلال مدرسان آقا نسبت به مدرسان خانم بیشتر است؛ همچنین حس برون گرایی، تمایل به تجربه رویدادهای جدید، و حس با وجدان بودن در مدرسان آقا بیشتر از مدرسان خانم است.

**واژگان کلیدی:** مدرسان زبان دوم، جنسیت، ویژگی های شخصیتی، استقلال مدرس

## Introduction

In the 1970s, with a more precise goal of approaching foreign language learning in adults, the idea of autonomy emerged (Benson & Huang, 2008). The first aim was to have a language center for learners to self-access and monitor their learning and for teachers and authorities to concentrate on learners' self-directed learning.

Teacher autonomy is defined as having great authority over the learning context, having sufficient opportunity to share experiences and learning techniques, and settling on choices that influence the school and the educational system (Pearson & Hall, 1993). It is a teacher's willingness, capability, and freedom in keeping his or her teaching and learning activities under control (Han, 2017). In most teaching environments, it is observed that teachers have little freedom in selecting the class curricula and methods of teaching. To become autonomous teachers, they should possess autonomy and independency in their working situation besides the talent and skill, knowledge, and the experience of teaching (Webb, 2002). Teacher autonomy should not decline policymakers' responsibilities nor be an additional burden on teachers. It is just the teacher's right to carry out a movement for fulfilling the learners' needs. In teacher autonomy, full independence is not intended; instead, responsibility should come along with autonomy which ensures that teachers, being concerned about the students' autonomy, consider their desires and needs at the time of decision-making.

Since teachers are critical components of pedagogical performance and development, there is an immediate need to understand them and their personality traits. Each teacher has a unique personality, and his or her personality can be reflected in the approach, methodology, and techniques he or she employs to manage and administer the classroom. Galluzzo (2005) also stated that the teacher's characteristics have important effects on the process of language learning. Zhang and Watkins (2007) also mentioned that teacher personality and controlled activities are core features of teacher engagement processes in language learning. Enhancing awareness of teachers' personality traits is a critical concern, as teachers often have trouble developing a supportive EFL learning environment (Faltis & Hudelson, 1994). Concerning teaching styles, the psychological characteristics and behavior of teachers might be helpful (Ellis, 1985). According to Ornstein (1990), finding out personality traits to improve teaching styles and approaches in disciplining students is necessary for teachers. Thompson (1986), one of the researchers trying to obtain the relationship between personality and affective teaching, stated that teaching is influenced by a teacher's perceptions and is evident in his or her instructional planning and learner's assessment. Galluzzo (2005) expressed that as the learner's personality influences the process of language learning, the teacher's personality also can have a strong impact on the learner's achievement. According to Saha and Dworkin (2009), teachers should explore how their personality factors influence their autonomy besides understanding their personal and psychological characteristics, which are needed for teacher training.

The factor of gender, which teacher autonomy may be under its influence, is focused on in this research, too. There are studies confirming that gender has a significant relationship with teacher autonomy as Naseri Karimvand (2011) asserted that gender and social relations could affect teachers' lives and their preferences in teaching; in the educational context, male teachers usually have authority over female teachers (Bartlett, 2005). Research on a mixed-gender group of EFL Iranian teachers also showed some relatively-high positive significant correlations between the teachers' autonomy and their personality traits (Fadaee, Marzban, & Najafi Karimi, 2021).

Many types of research similar to this under-study survey have been carried out, which the results of some of them are expressed here to have more background about the scholars' contradictions.

Witty (1947, p.669) believed "an effective teacher is a person whose companionship, counsel,

and advice are sought", has conducted a survey on personality characteristics of effective teachers in which some items were common in students' opinions: broad interests, cooperative and democratic attitude, patience, fairness, impartiality, kindness, friendly manner and appearance, consistency and flexibility in behavior, and interests in pupils' problems.

Dodge (1948, p. 107) presented the five categories of successful teachers: "social or at ease in social contacts; more willing to take initiative responsibility; free from fears and worries; sensitive to and valuing the opinions of others; and slow in making decisions". Lamke (1951) selected 32 teachers of Wisconsin University graduates, sought to examine the personality of good and bad teachers. He believed that good teachers are frivolous, gregarious, adventurous, and relaxed, having intensely artistic or sentimental interests; bad teachers are more cautious, shy, and conscientious than good teachers

In research by Blašková, Blaško, Jankalová, and Jankal (2014), ten appropriate personality competencies were introduced which among them professionalism, fairness, and communicativeness were the three important and valuable ones by the students. In another study, it was found that teachers' personality traits have a significant relationship with dimensions of burnout and emotional intelligence (Pishghadam & Sahebjam, 2012).

There are a few studies concerning personality and efficacy. Klassen and Tze (2014) claimed that teacher personality and teacher effectiveness have strongly correlated with each other. Henson and Chambers (2002) said that there is not a strong relationship between efficacy and types of teacher personality except in the case of the extrovert/Introvert dichotomy. By administering the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), they found positive relations between extravert teachers and their instructional practices regarding self-efficacy.

Some researchers (Chastain, 1975; Pritchard, 1952; Rossier, 1976; Smart, Elton, & Burnett, 1970; Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976; Strong, 1983; Suter, 1977; Wong-Fillmore, 1983; Scheibner-Herzig, 1984, among others) focused on the area of personality and language learning, considering the relationship between personality types such as extraversion and introversion with success in language learning.

Teacher personality has a significant relationship with students' learning (Kim, Jörg, & Klassen, 2019). In Tope (2011)'s study, teacher personality is a crucial factor in students' learning process. His results showed that teacher personality affects school discipline, particularly in the classroom situations, on the assembly ground, and outside the school. Andabai and Basuo (2013) stated that teacher personality must be taken into consideration when employing teachers. They found a positive relationship between teacher personality and learners' learning. In a study by Erton (2010), "there is not a strong but low statistical relationship between the personality traits and the learning styles" (p.124).

Regarding the relationship between personality traits and teaching styles, a robust association between personality and teachers' motivating styles was founded (Reeve, Jang, & Jang, 2018). A survey on EFL teachers' personality traits (introvert and extrovert) and their teaching styles (teacher-centered and student-centered) in adults indicated that personality type was not a significant predictor of teaching styles (Behnam & Bayazidi, 2013).

Navidnia (2009), in a study on EFL Iranian teachers and the Big Five model, indicated that Extraversion and Conscientiousness significantly predicted teacher efficacy. The relationship between EFL teachers' personality and their success using NEO-FFI was investigated, too (Khodadadi & Mirjalili, 2013). The finding section revealed that teachers' total scores on the personality test, NEO-FFI, correlated significantly with their total scores on the characteristics of successful English language teachers' questionnaires. Also, it is revealed that out of the five factors of the personality traits, Agreeableness did not correlate with any factors of the characteristics of successful English language teachers. Ikpi, Enya, and Johnny (2014) stated that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness have a weak relationship with students' achievement.

The following questions were developed to investigate the correlations between teacher autonomy and personality traits in Iranian EFL teachers, minding their gender:

Q1. What is the correlation between teacher autonomy and personality traits in EFL teachers?

Q2. How can it psychologically be justified in case there is any difference between males and females regarding the first question?

### Methodology

Methodological elements are expressed to answer the research questions. Participants and instruments, including two questionnaires used for the accomplishment of the research purposes, are stated in detail; the design of the study and the procedure, including information about data collection, is presented.

### Participants

Using convenient sampling and distributing the two pre-mentioned questionnaires, 156 responded questionnaires were sent back by Iranian academics through online social networking. These participants, including 63 males and 93 females with degrees in B.A., M.A., and Ph.D., taught in English language institutes, state and private schools, and universities and had 1 to 25 years of teaching experience.

Dividing by gender, teachers' age, and work experience are presented in Tables 1 and 2, and teachers' educational major is presented in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 1**

*Male Teachers' Age and Experience*

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	63	21.00	55.00	34.28	8.34
Experience	63	1.00	25.00	7.47	6.17
Valid N (listwise)	63				

Table 1 indicates that the average age of male teachers is (34. 28). Also, the average year of work experience is about (7.47).

**Table 2**

*Female Teachers' Age and Experience*

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	93	21.00	55.00	34.33	7.40
Experience	93	1.00	25.00	7.23	6.33
Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 2 indicates that the average age of female teachers is (34. 33). Also, the average year of work experience is about (7.23).

**Table 3**

*Male Teachers' Educational Major*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Linguistics	3	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Teaching	45	71.4	71.4	76.2



Translation	15	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 indicates that the highest educational major of male teachers belongs to Teaching, and the lowest belongs to Linguistics.

**Table 4**

*Female Teachers' Educational Major*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Linguistics	5	5.4	5.4	5.4
	Literature	3	3.2	3.2	8.6
	Teaching	65	69.9	69.9	78.5
	Translation	20	21.5	21.5	100.0
	Total	93	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 indicates that the highest educational major of female teachers belongs to Teaching, and the lowest belongs to Linguistics.

Generally, as the figures show, the teachers' average year of work experience is around 7, and almost 70 percent of the two groups (males and females) have got English Language Teaching majors.

### Materials and Instruments

To do the needed assessments, two sets of questionnaires were selected to explore the correlations between the teachers' autonomy and their traits of personality:

**Teacher autonomy scale (TAS)** including 18 items along with a five-scale (Never true for me, Almost never true for me, Sometimes true for me, Often true for me, and Always true for me) presented by Pearson and Moomaw (2005) has been used previously in several studies (Fallah & Gholami, 2014; Lepine, 2007; Saljoughi & Nemati, 2015, among others). The construct validity was adequate, and the internal consistency was  $r=0.83$ , according to Moomaw (2005); the Teacher Autonomy Scale used in this study has  $r=0.92$ . As a result, this questionnaire includes a high level of validity and reliability.

**NEO Five-factor inventory (FFI)** measuring the personality characteristics, was developed by Costa Jr. and McCrae (1992), includes 60 questions, each of which focuses on one of the five sub-constructs as follows: Questions 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46, 51, and 56 are related to Neuroticism; questions 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, and 57 focus on Extraversion; questions 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 53, and 58 are included in Openness to Experience; questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, and 59 are categorized in Agreeableness; and questions 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60 are related to Conscientiousness. Each question was given a Likert scale including five alternatives as (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, and Strongly disagree). The internal consistency coefficients reported by Costa Jr. and McCrae (1992) was between 0.68 to 0.86; the Personality Inventory's reliability for the five subscales of this analysis varies from 0.74 to 0.92, which is in a reasonable range.

## Procedure

To measure the teachers' level of autonomy and their personality traits, the two-mentioned questionnaires were shared with EFL teachers by sending an email request to each, and the data were collected from the sent-back responses. For this aim, the descriptive statistics of Group M (as a control group including all the 156 participants) and Group A and Group B (as the two experimental groups consisted of 63 males and 93 females, respectively) were analyzed. Moreover, Pearson correlation was performed to analyze the attainable relationship between teacher autonomy of each three groups and their personality's five sub-constructs. SPSS-26 was used to do all the statistical analysis. Results are shown in 4 tables.

## Results

Here, the findings of descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations are classified and compared to answer the two research questions mentioned before:

Table 5 presents the autonomy average score of each group of teachers divided by gender. The autonomy scores which can be taken by each individual range from 18 to 90.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Autonomy in 3 Groups*

Scale	Groups	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autonomy	A (Males)	63	33	79	63.44	12.168
	AutM (Mixed)	156	33	79	56.55	13.340
	B(Females)	93	33	77	51.88	12.009

Table 5 indicates that the mean score of Group M's autonomy is 56.55, lower than that of Group A (63.44) and higher than that of Group B (51.88), measured separately.

Table 6 presents the statistical assessment of the five sub-constructs of personality divided by gender. The possible range of scores for the selected test is between 12 and 60.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Personality Traits in 3 Groups*

Subscales	Groups	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Neuroticism	A(Male)	14	38	25.71	5.824
	M(Mixed)	14	40	26.95	6.081
	B(Female)	16	40	27.78	6.139
Extraversion	A(Male)	24	60	49.48	9.062
	M(Mixed)	15	60	44.27	10.891
	B(Female)	15	60	40.74	10.646
Openness to Experience	A(Male)	24	60	44.10	8.358
	M(Mixed)	18	60	41.13	9.425
	B(Female)	18	57	39.13	9.619
Agreeableness	A(Male)	30	60	47.21	9.225
	M(Mixed)	21	60	43.96	9.075
	B(Female)	21	60	41.75	8.322

	A(Male)	30	60	45.71	8.220
Conscientiousness	M(Mixed)	21	60	42.40	8.327
	B(Female)	21	57	40.16	7.662

Table 6 indicates that the mean score rating of the measured personality traits in Group M based on the degree of their dominancy in the overall character of the group individuals is as follows:

The Extraversion (44.27), the Agreeableness (43.96), the Conscientiousness (42.40), the Openness to Experience (41.13), and the Neuroticism (26.95).

Below, the mean score ranking of the evaluated personality traits of the experimental groups is considered:

Group A: the Extraversion (49.48), the Agreeableness (47.21), the Conscientiousness (45.71), the Openness to Experience (44.10), and the Neuroticism (25.71) - With exactly the same ranking as the control group.

Group B: the Agreeableness (41.75), the Extraversion (40.74), the Conscientiousness (40.16), the Openness to Experience (39.13), and the Neuroticism (27.78) - With a relatively different ranking to the control group.

As it is observed, the Extraversion and the Agreeableness are the most dominant personality traits in the overall character of the individuals in the studied groups; on average, the Neuroticism is the least dominant trait in both males and females. Another considerable finding here is that the Group A's mean scores gained for all traits except the Neuroticism are higher than Group M's, while Group B's mean scores gained for them are lower than Group M's; this is conversely true for the Neuroticism.

Hereafter, to analyze the relationship between teachers' autonomy and their personality traits, the Pearson correlation was calculated; the results of the analysis for these three groups are categorized in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Correlation between Teachers' Autonomy/Personality Traits in 3 Groups*

Scale	Groups	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeable	Conscientious
	A(Male)	- 0.160	0.676	0.385	0.263	0.435
Autonomy	M(Mixed)	- 0.210	0.659	0.415	0.425	0.477
	B(Female)	- 0.152	0.544	0.329	0.408	0.367

As it is illustrated in Table 7, in all groups, some significant relationship, from relatively weak to very strong, can be observed between teachers' autonomy and personality traits; however, among these traits, the Neuroticism can be put aside by having the weakest correlation of all and of course a negative one to teacher autonomy; other traits can again be ranked by their correlation degree to teacher autonomy in the male group as the Extraversion, the Conscientiousness, the Openness to Experience, and the Agreeableness. Also, in the female group, the ranking is as: the Extraversion, the Agreeableness, the Conscientiousness, and the Openness to Experience.

### Discussion

This section provides a specific discussion based on the acquired results and makes an attempt to link them to the findings of other research and to interpret them.

More interestingly, the Neuroticism correlates weakly but negatively to teacher autonomy

(Table 7) and this sub-construct also has a negative relationship with the other four sub-constructs of personality (Fadaee et al., 2021). They emphasized that this result, on its own, has some significant consequences for the educational supervisors and administrators that they must first remove whatever causes teachers to have fatigue, sadness, anxiety, and other depressive emotions, even though it costs increasing their independence and freedom. It is observed that as a teacher's sense of autonomy increases, he or she finds him or her less influenced by neuroticism feelings and emotions, which can make one feel bored, discouraged, and threatened. Besides, teachers that are not dominated by a narcissistic self and a neurotic desire for authority and power have been shown to be effective (Hamachek, 1969). Moreover, Table 7 also shows that the Neuroticism in male is lower than in females, supported and frequently reported by past studies too (Costa Jr., Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001; Schmitt, Realo, Voracek, & Allik, 2008; Dahlan, Sulastiana, Harding, & Sumantri, 2016).

Elaborating on the correlations calculated in this study between teacher autonomy and the other sub-constructs of personality, there was also found another consistency between Alibakhshi (2011)'s findings and this study's statistical results, as in his study, the predominant personality type was extraverted EFL teachers. It is observed that the Extraversion is the most dominant personality trait in the overall character of the individuals in the understudy groups. In the same vein, it was concluded that the Extraversion, the Conscientiousness, and the Agreeableness are the best of their kind, among the five sub-constructs of NEO-FFI, specifically in the teaching process (Keshavarz, Jafari, Salahshor, & Vaziri, 2013). As previously mentioned, the figures 0.67, 0.65, and 0.54 revealed very strong correlations between teacher autonomy and the Extraversion of three groups; besides, this sub-construct stood first among all sub-constructs in terms of its degree of correlation to teacher autonomy. The psychological justification of such a strong correlation between teacher autonomy and the Extraversion needs some explanations on the characteristics of extraverted people. Extraverted individuals need to primarily obtain pleasure, amusement, satisfaction, motivation, and energy from outside themselves. Friedman and Schustack (2016) pointed that extravert tend to have a lot of enthusiasm and are usually very excited. They are typically talkative and assertive; in comparison to introverted people, they can appear dominant in social contexts. What was enumerated above on the extraverts' needs is in full compliance with the teachers' need for autonomy.

About the Openness to Experience, it is observed that this sub-construct in Group A stands on the third level, and in Groups, M and B stands on the fourth level of strength among the five sub-constructs in terms of their correlations to teacher autonomy. On the other hand, a difference can be seen in the degree of Openness to Experience between Group A and Group B, meaning, in a way that the teachers with more autonomy are willing to experience new things, and, in another way, males are more likely to experience new things more than females do. In the same vein, in a study done in 55 nations by Schmitt et al. (2008), gender differences in Big Five personality traits were examined, which shows that in the Openness to Experience, males and females have negligible average differences. Contrary, he found that in the Neuroticism, the Extraversion, the Agreeableness, and the Conscientiousness, females are higher than males. In another survey, males were higher in the Extraversion and the Openness to Experience only, while females were higher in the Neuroticism, the Agreeableness, the Extraversion, and the Openness to Experience, respectively (Costa Jr. et al., 2001). Regarding the Openness to Experience, males were significantly higher than females in 8 cultures, but females were significantly higher than males in 4 cultures. What is clear is that Extraverted and Openness to Experience teachers try to use more negotiations and social activities in their classes, making a more enjoyable condition for learning. These types of teachers use their freedom in choosing communicative styles of teaching to have an attractive process of learning.



The correlation between teacher autonomy and the Agreeableness calculated for different groups of teachers indicates that as teachers feel more sense of autonomy, their degree of Agreeableness becomes lower. Agreeableness, according to Otten (2020), represents personal differences in general concern for social harmony; instead of being antagonistic and suspicious towards others, it is a desire to be cooperative, generous, considerate, helpful, thoughtful, and compassionate. Individuals with low agreeableness are usually challenging or competitive ones, and they can be considered argumentative or dishonest. They are uninterested in others' well-being and in getting along with others; focusing on self-interest, they are less likely to extend themselves for others. Most Agreeableness sub-constructs are coincidentally in accordance with female gender characteristics (Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1997). By these specifications and statistical results, one can conclude that the high agreeable personality best fits with the female social role as a housekeeper; therefore, females show higher levels of agreeableness, as researchers like Schmitt et al. (2008) and Costa et al. (2001) consistently indicated this subject; besides, it seems there to be a normative social instruction for females to behave in this way (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Judge, Livingston, & Hurst, 2012).

According to the research's statistical results, the Conscientiousness, after the Extraversion, is the second prominent personality trait of Group A and Group M, and the third prominent of the Group B. Highly conscientious individuals are usually thorough, responsible, and hardworking; they are more likely to obey social values, try to meet other's expectations, and be able to withhold pleasure to accomplish long-term goals. Kell (2019) mentioned that Conscientiousness is associated with several practically significant variables such as health, educational achievement, job performance, unemployment, and smoking. Other studies (Garcia, Kupczynski, & Holland, 2011; Kim, Dar-Nimrod, & MacCann, 2018; Kim & MacCann, 2018) also found that teachers' conscientiousness has a positive relationship with teacher effectiveness measures. Conscientious teachers can improve the level of conscientiousness in their learners, too, according to Cheng and Zamarro (2016). On the other hand, highly unconscientious individuals may be careless, lazy, and negligent. According to the acquired statistical analyses, there was a relatively strong correlation between teacher autonomy and the Conscientiousness of participants; a small difference was seen in the correlation coefficients of GA and GB, as males scoring is more than females, and also males were higher in the autonomy sense. However, it can be inferred that males are usually more conscientious than females. The above-said findings can be justified by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as below:

According to Self-determination theory (SDT), each person has an essential need to encounter independence and competence. This means that individuals internally want to make their behaviors. Individual's autonomy is also described as his or her need to feel psychologically free and to behave with a sense of control over his or her actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This theory consists of some sub-theories, one of which is the proposition of the human's universal, fundamental and innate psychological needs, classified into three categories:

**Competence:** It is characterized by one's perceived self-belief to perform well in a given activity.

**Autonomy or freedom of choice:** People have a high degree of perceived autonomy when they think they are involved in the sport as they want to, rather than they are forced by external factors (expectations) or others, for example, parents, coaches, or bosses to do so.

**Psychological relatedness:** A sense of common experiences and positive relationships characterize this need, encouraging individuals to form groups and enjoy meaningful activities.

SDT theory suggests that fulfilling these three fundamental needs is essential for individuals to attain psychological development, well-being, and internalization, just as plants need water, minerals, and sunlight to grow well. However, whether a person becomes aware of his or her natural tendencies or not depends on if he or she encounters the essential triggers needed to

achieve these tendencies. Thus, teachers, like other people, feel motivated by activities that pave the ground for them to meet those three needs.

The need for autonomy does not indicate to always act independently from the wishes of others; if an employee willingly is going to do something and it occurs to meet the terms and requirements desired by his or her boss, this particular need is fulfilled (Trogakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2013). However, autonomy would be thwarted if the person would rather go out for lunch and is obligated to keep working. Also, autonomy in the field of teaching and education can be divided into some components like the authorities, rights, and acting territory granted to teachers. These autonomy components can mainly affect the issue of teacher creativity, meaning that too much direction and control on teachers by heads and supervisors can lead to a leak in their external motivation, the desired efficiency, and expected productivity. Thus, the teachers' perception of autonomy and independence must be raised by institutes and academies if creativity is to get the due importance and bring about the favorite results in the process of teaching.

### Conclusion

This study was conducted to clarify the link between male and female teachers' autonomy and their personality traits to answer the two research questions. Generally, it can be concluded that the mean score differences in male and female teachers' autonomy can be very significant considering the difference in numbers of the two groups, which has resulted in a decrease in the average level of autonomy of the whole participants as a single sample group. Another considerable finding here was that the mean score gained for all traits except the Neuroticism was higher in males than females; this is conversely true for the Neuroticism. In addition, some positive relationships between both male and female teachers' autonomy and the other four sub-constructs of personality traits were seen.

However, putting tables 5 to 7 above together, the following assumptions can be listed, disregarding their generalizability to the study population, which is left open to further studies to work on:

- Males naturally feel more sense of autonomy than females do.
- Females are usually more affected by neurotic feelings than males. Also, as a teacher's sense of autonomy increases, he or she finds him or her less influenced by neuroticism feelings and emotions. So, females, lower in autonomy sense, can be more negatively affected by the people and things surrounding them.
- The teachers' needs to feel more sense of autonomy and the needs of their extraversion character seem to have identical mental origins; however, males are more extraverted than females.
- Teachers with more autonomy are willing to experience new things, and males generally tend to experience new things more than females do.
- As individuals feel more sense of autonomy, they are less likely to agree with whatever their bosses/supervisors tell them to do and the reverse. In addition, the Agreeableness is more dominant in the females' character compared to the males' character
- Finally, it can be inferred that males are more conscientious than females.

This study can have an impact in a variety of ways on language teachers, language learners, material developers, teacher educators, language policy manufacturers, and test developers as outcomes of the study are useful in these fields.

- Considering the findings acquired in this research may generate new relevant areas in teacher autonomy and personality traits. Future research could shed light on:
- Constructing the potential ways to put aside barriers that were diagnosed in this study in

order to develop teacher autonomy.

- Comparing EFL and ESL teachers' autonomy in relation to other variables.
- Considering learners' views about teachers' personalities and behavior in the classroom. For this purpose, information must be gathered from both teachers and students through modified new questionnaires. Studying learner autonomy can be helpful, too.
- Concerning reflective teaching approach and conceptions of teaching and learning in relation to teacher autonomy propose some precious recommendations for further researches.

### References

- Alibakhshi, G. (2011). On the impacts of gender and personality types on Iranian EFL teachers' teaching efficacy and teaching activities preferences. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(1), 1-22.
- Andabai, P. W., & Basuo, B. K. (2013). Teacher's personality and classroom management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria: The issues and perspectives *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(6), 113–118. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2013.v3n6p113>
- Bartlett, L. (2005). Dialogue, knowledge, and teacher-student relations: Freirean pedagogy in theory and practice. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(3), 344-364. doi:10.1086/430261
- Behnam, B., & Bayazidi, M. (2013). The relationship between personality types and teaching styles in Iranian adult TEFL context. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 2, 21–32.
- Benson, P., & Huang, J. (2008). Autonomy in the transition from foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. *DELTA*, 24, 421–439. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-44502008000300003>
- Blašková, M., Blaško, R., Jankalová, M., & Jankal, R. (2014). Key personality competences of university teacher: Comparison of requirements defined by teachers and/versus defined by students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 114, 466-475. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.731>
- Brescoll, V. L., & Uhlmann, E. L. (2008). Can an angry woman get ahead?: Status conferral, gender, and expression of emotion in the workplace. *Psychological Science*, 19(3), 268-275. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02079.x
- Chastain, K. (1975). Affective and ability factors in second language learning. *Language Learning*, 25(1), 153-161. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1975.tb00115.x>
- Cheng, A., & Zamarro, G. (2016). Measuring teacher conscientiousness and its impact on students: Insight from the measures of effective teaching longitudinal database *Economics of Education Review*, 64, 251–260. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2018.03.001>
- Costa Jr., P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Revised neo personality inventory (neo-pi-r) and neo five-factor inventory (neo-ffi) manual. Odessa, FL: Psychological assessment resources. .
- Costa Jr., P. T., Terracciano, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: Robust and surprising findings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(2), 322–331. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.2.322>
- Dahlan, D., Sulastiana, M., Harding, D., & Sumantri, S. (2016). Gender differences in neuroticism on college students. Paper presented at the 2nd Asean Conference on Psychology & Humanity, University of Padjadjaran Bandung, Indonesia. Retrieved from <http://mpsi.umm.ac.id/files/file/723%20-%20728%20Djudiyah%20Dahlan.pdf>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01)
- Dodge, A. F. (1948). A study of the personality traits of successful teachers. *Occupations: The*

- Vocational Guidance Journal*, 27(2), 107-112. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-5892.1948.tb01469.x>
- Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford, uk: Oxford university press.
- Erton, I. (2010). Relations between personality traits, language learning styles and success in foreign language achievement. *Journal of Education*, 38(38), 115–126.
- Fadaee, E., Marzban, A., & Najafi Karimi, S. (2021). The relationship between autonomy, second language teaching styles, and personality traits: A case study of iranian efl teachers. *Cogent Education*, 8(1), 1881203. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2021.1881203
- Fallah, S., & Gholami, H. (2014). The relationship between teachers' mediation and teacher autonomy. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 7(3), 425–433.
- Faltis, C., & Hudelson, S (1994). Learning english as an additional language in k-12 schools. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(3), 257–468. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/3587303>
- Friedman, H. S., & Schustack, M. W. (2016). *Perspectives on personality: Classic theories and modern research*. San marcos, california: California state university.
- Galluzzo, G. R. (2005). Performance assessment and renewing teacher education the possibilities of the nbpts standards. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 78(4), 142-145. doi:10.3200/TCHS.78.4.142-145
- Garcia, P., Kupczynski, L., & Holland, G. (2011). Impact of teacher personality styles on academic excellence of secondary students. *National Forum of Teacher Education Journal*, 21(3), 1-8. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Garcia,%20Patricia%20Impact%20of%20Teacher%20Personality%20Styles%20NFTEJ%20V21%20N3%202011.pdf>
- Hamachek, D. (1969). Characteristics of good teachers and implications for teacher education. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 50(6), 341-345.
- Han, L. (2017). The connotations of language teacher autonomy. *English Language Teaching*, 10(10), 135-139. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n10p134>
- Henson, R., & Chambers, Sh. M. (2002). Personality type as a predictor of teaching efficacy and classroom control beliefs in emergency certification teachers. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the southwest educational research association, austin, texas.
- Ikpi, E. E., Enya, D. B., & Johnny, U. A. (2014). The influence of personality trait on the academic performance of secondary school students in cross river state, nigeria. *Iosr. Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(3), 12-19. doi:<https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19311219>
- Judge, T. A., Livingston, B. A., & Hurst, Ch. (2012). Do nice guys and gals really finish last? The joint effects of sex and agreeableness on income. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(2), 390–407. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026021>
- Kell, H. J. (2019). Do teachers' personality traits predict their performance? A comprehensive review of the empirical literature from 1990 to 2018. *ETS Research Report Series*,(1), 1-27. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12241>
- Keshavarz, M., Jafari, A., Salahshor, M., & Vaziri, S. A. (2013). Study of the relationships between cognitive styles, personality traits and academic achievement. *Journal of Torbat Heydariyeh University of Medical Sciences*,1(1), 11-19. Retrieved from [http://jms.thums.ac.ir/files/site1/user\\_files\\_7bf497/admin-A-10-1-2-1c78fef.pdf](http://jms.thums.ac.ir/files/site1/user_files_7bf497/admin-A-10-1-2-1c78fef.pdf)
- Khodadadi, E., & Mirjalili, P. (2013). Foreign language achievement and its relation to teacher effectiveness and personality. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 2(2), 191–210.
- Kim, L. E., Dar-Nimrod, I., & MacCann, C. (2018). Teacher personality and teacher



- effectiveness in secondary school: Personality predicts teacher support and student self-efficacy but not academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(3), 309-323. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000217>
- Kim, L. E., Jörg, V., & Klassen, R. M. (2019). A meta-analysis of the effects of teacher personality on teacher effectiveness and burnout. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31(1), 163-195. doi:10.1007/s10648-018-9458-2
- Kim, L. E., & MacCann, C. (2018). Instructor personality matters for student evaluations: Evidence from two subject areas at university. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88(4), 584-605. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12205>
- Klassen, R. M., & Tze, V. M. C. (2014). Teachers' self-efficacy, personality, and teaching effectiveness: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 12, 59-76. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2014.06.001>
- Lamke, T. A. (1951). Personality and teaching success. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 20(2), 217-259. doi:10.1080/00220973.1951.11010441
- Lepine, S. A. (2007). The ruler and the ruled: Complicating a theory of teaching autonomy. (doctoral dissertation, university of texas libraries, austin, united states).
- Moomaw, W. E. (2005). Teacher-perceived autonomy: A construct validation of the teacher autonomy scale. (doctoral dissertation, the university of west florida, pensacola, united states).
- Naseri Karimvand, P. (2011). The nexus between iranian efl teachers' self-efficacy, teaching experience and gender. *English Language Teaching*, 4(3), 171-183. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v4n3p171>
- Navidnia, H. (2009). Psychological characteristics of english language teachers: On the relationship among big five personality traits and teacher efficacy beliefs. *JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES*, 1(1), 79-99.
- Ornstein, A. C. (1990). A look at teacher effectiveness research—theory and practice. *NASSP Bulletin*, 74(528), 78-88. doi:10.1177/019263659007452814
- Otten, S. (2020). Gender-specific personality traits and their effects on the gender wage gap: A correlated random effects approach using soep data. Soep papers on multidisciplinary panel data research, university of hamburg.
- Pearson, L. C., & Moomaw, W. (2005). The relationship between teacher autonomy and stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 29(1), 38-54.
- Pearson, L. C., & Hall, B. W. (1993). Initial construct validation of the teaching autonomy scale. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 86(3), 172-178. doi:10.1080/00220671.1993.9941155
- Pishghadam, R., & Sahebjam, S. (2012). Personality and emotional intelligence in teacher burnout. *The Spanish journal of psychology*, 15(1), 227-236. doi:10.5209/rev\_SJOP.2012.v15.n1.37314
- Pritchard, D. F. L. (1952). An investigation into the relationship between personality traits and ability in modern languages. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 22(2), 147-148. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8279.1952.tb02817.x>
- Reeve, J., Jang, H.-R., & Jang, H. (2018). Personality-based antecedents of teachers' autonomy-supportive and controlling motivating styles. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 62, 12-22. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2018.01.001>
- Rossier, R. (1976). Extroversion-introversion as a significant variable in the learning of oral english as a second language. (doctoral dissertation, university of southern california, los angeles, california, united states). doi:<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll26/id/449226>



- Ryan, R. M., & LaGuardia, J. G. (1999). Achievement motivation within a pressured society: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn and the politics of school reform. In t. Urdan (ed.), *advances in motivation and achievement* (pp. 45–85). Greenwich, ct: Jai press.
- Saha, L. J., & Dworkin, A. G. . (2009). Teachers and teaching in an era of heightened school accountability: A forward look. *International handbook of research on teachers and teaching*, 21, 1177-1185. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3\\_76](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-73317-3_76)
- Saljoughi, S., & Nemati, A. (2015). The relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy among efl students in bandar abbas. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 9(2), 178–185.
- Scheibner-Herzig, G., Thiele, A., Jelinek, G., & Kokoschka, S. (1984). A study of foreign language achievements and personality variables in 15-year-old pupils. *TTL Review of Applied Linguistics*, 65(1), 43–56. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.65.03sch>
- Schmitt, D. P., Realo, A., Voracek, M., & Allik, J. (2008). Why can't a man be more like a woman? Sex differences in big five personality traits across 55 cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(1), 168–182. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.1.168>
- Smart, J. C., Elton, C. F., & Burnett, C. W. (1970). Underachievers and overachievers in intermediate french. *The Modern Language Journal*, 54(6), 415-420. doi:10.2307/322830
- Smith, P. B., Dugan, S., & Trompenaars, F. (1997). Locus of control and affectivity by gender and occupational status: A 14 nation study. *Sex Roles*, 36(1), 51-77. doi:10.1007/BF02766238
- Strong, M. (1983). Social styles and the second language acquisition of spanish-speaking kindergartners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 241-258. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/3586652>
- Suter, P. H. (1977). Using audio-visual study lessons to teach the unprepared student. *School Science and Mathematics*, 77(3), 247. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1949-8594.1977.tb09352.x>
- Thompson, R. A. (1986). Temperament, emotionality, and infant social cognition. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* (31), 35-52. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.23219863104>
- Tope, O. (2011). The influence of peer group on adolescent's academic performance: A case study of some selected schools in ogun state. Nigeria: Egobooster books.
- Trougakos, J. P., Hideg, I., Cheng, B. H., & Beal, D. J. (2013). Lunch breaks unpacked: The role of autonomy as a moderator of recovery during lunch. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(2), 405-421. doi:10.5465/amj.2011.1072
- Tucker, G. R., Hamayan, E., & Genesee, F.H (1976). Affective, cognitive and social factors in second language acquisition. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 32(3), 214-226.
- Webb, P. T. (2002). Teacher power: The exercise of professional autonomy in an era of strict accountability. *Teacher Development*, 6(1), 47-62. doi:10.1080/13664530200200156
- Witty, P. (1947). An analysis of the personality traits of the effective teacher. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 40(9), 662-671. doi:10.1080/00220671.1947.10881565
- Wong-Fillmore, L. (1983). The language learner as an individual: Implications of research on individual differences for the esl teacher. In m. A. Clarke, & j. Handscombe (eds.), *on tesol* (pp. 157–173). Washington, dc: Tesol.
- Zhang, O., & Watkins, D. (2007). Conceptions of a good tertiary EFL teacher in China. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 781–790. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00103.x>