

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Reflection as Predictors of Teacher Burnout: An Investigation of Iranian English Language Teachers

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Abstract

In modern education, teachers are regarded as a central and focal part of educational systems and are responsible for the development of education. It should be mentioned that teachers have an influential role in planning and offering an effective and significant educational program. The significant role of teacher-related variables in affecting teachers' performance and learning outcomes of students has been widely acknowledged in various educational contexts. Therefore, the investigation of teacher variables has received research attention in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. To contribute to this line of research, the current study was set to investigate the role of teacher reflection and self-efficacy in predicting burnout among Iranian EFL teachers. To this end, three validated scales measuring these variables were administered to 171 male and female teachers. As for the data analysis, Structural Equation Modeling was utilized to test the hypothesized model of the constructs. The results indicated that teacher reflection accounted for 12.1% of the variance, and teacher self-efficacy accounted for 25.2% of the variance in burnout. Although both variables had a unique effect on teaching burnout, teacher self-efficacy turned out to be a stronger predictor of burnout. Concerning the implications, teacher education programs may pay more serious attention to teacher self-efficacy and reflection as they proved to play a significant role in reducing teacher burnout.

Keywords: English for teacher reflection, self-efficacy, EFL teachers, burnout, structural equation modeling

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INTRODUCTION

Influenced by the radical shift of attention in teacher education over the last three decades, teachers have no longer been assigned the knowledge consumer roles but they have been considered as “active, thinking decision-makers” (Borg, 2003, p. 81) that play the key roles in the world of the classrooms. This shift of orientation was further boldfaced with the rise of postmethod pedagogy which was introduced as an alternative to compensate for the limitations of the method in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Crandall, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Within this so-called postmethod era, teacher educators have been concerned with providing pre-service and in-service teachers with a repertoire of workable techniques and strategies to assist them in developing their “personal practical knowledge” which is required to overcome the challenges in the classroom (Clandinin, 1985, p. 362).

As one of these practical strategies, reflective teaching gained momentum in second language teaching after the introduction of postmethod pedagogy (Akbari, 2007; Wright, 2010). In the absence of a solid teacher education program in the postmethod era, reflective teaching was borrowed from the mainstream education and became an integral part of teachers’ educational growth, providing language teachers with the opportunities to relate theory to practice and enhance teachers’ learning experiences (Fathi & Behzadpour, 2011; Griffiths, 2000; Jay & Johnson, 2002). Reflection is conceptualized as “the process of mirroring the environment nonjudgmentally or critically for the purpose of decision-making” (Milrood, 1999, p. 10). Reflection on teaching practice empowers practitioners to gain a clear insight of contextual variables in the classroom and this will enhance teachers’ awareness of pragmatics of language instruction, thereby improving their competence in relating theoretical abstractions to practical applications in the classroom (Wallace, 1991).

Rooted in the theoretical underpinnings of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy underscores further engagement and agency of individuals so that

they can have more control over what they do (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is defined as “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). From this perspective, self-efficacy makes individuals become more reflective as well as self-organized and affects their goals and behaviors (Schunk & Meece, 2006). It also influences a person’s choice, activities, the amount of effort they devote to doing a particular activity, and the degree of their perseverance in facing impediments (Pajares, 1997). As far as teacher self-efficacy is concerned, numerous definitions have been proposed for this construct in educational settings (e.g., Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier, & Ellett, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). In the present study, the researchers adopted the definition proposed by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) who considered teacher self-efficacy as “the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (p. 22).

The third variable under the investigation of the present study is burnout. As a psychological construct, burnout is considered a kind of chronic occupational stress which can be experienced by different individuals such as teachers (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). Burnout refers to the state that teachers fail to successfully cope with the chronic stress they experience in their work (Jennett, et al., 2003). This construct is usually defined as a composite of three underlying components including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Emotional exhaustion also includes physical exhaustion which is materialized by low energy and chronic fatigue (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Depersonalization is concerned with negative, pessimistic beliefs and perceptions about one’s learners or colleagues. Also, reduced personal accomplishment is conceptualized as teachers’ tendency to assess themselves negatively and an overall perception that they are not doing a significant job anymore.

Few studies have ever been conducted to explore the relationship between teacher reflection and burnout (e.g., Mahmoodi & Ghaslani, 2014;

Shirazizadeh & Karimpour, 2019). It is hypothesized that teacher reflection affects burnout. It is widely argued that reflective teachers are likely to be less frustrated, are better decision-makers, and are more competent in overcoming educational problems they encounter in the classroom. As a result, they are less afflicted by feelings of burnout (Shirazizadeh & Karimpour, 2019). Moreover, an accumulated body of research has demonstrated that self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of teacher burnout (e.g., Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Lauermann & König, 2016; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge; no previous study has investigated the simultaneous relationship of teacher reflection and self-efficacy in teacher burnout.

This simultaneous investigation provides us with the ability to examine which of the two constructs (i.e., reflection and self-efficacy) is a more powerful predictor of teacher burnout. As a result, the investigation of the relationships between teacher reflection, self-efficacy, and teacher burnout appears to be much warranted. In the present study first, the unique contribution of each of these two predictor variables is investigated, and then the simultaneous contribution of both variables to teacher burnout is examined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The investigation of teacher-related variables has received some research attention in the ELT context (Choi & Lee, 2016; Nishino, 2012; Fathi & Derakhshan, 2019; Fathi & Savadi Rostami, 2018). The relations among teacher reflection, self-efficacy, and burnout have been the focus of some studies in ELT literature. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to review all the body of research conducted in this area, to ground this research, several more illustrative studies are reviewed here. For instance, Moradkhani, Raygan, and Moein (2017) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' reflective practices and their self-

efficacy. To this end, 102 Iranian EFL teachers were recruited as the participants of this study. The data were collected by administering a survey and conducting a series of follow-up interviews. The findings of correlational analyses revealed that, except for critical reflection, all the other components of reflection were significantly correlated with teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Also, the results of the regression analysis demonstrated that the metacognitive component of reflection was the only predictor of self-efficacy. Additionally, qualitative data analysis revealed that the components of reflection contributed to improving self-efficacy via one of the four main sources, including mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological/emotional arousal.

Carrying out a mixed-methods study, Shirazizadeh and Moradkhani (2018) investigated how EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practice could be related to their burnout. In so doing, several 223 Iranian EFL teachers filled out reflection and burnout questionnaires. The findings revealed that reflection was negatively correlated with burnout, suggesting that engagement in reflective practice was correlated with less burnout. As the qualitative phase of the study, a series of interviews were carried out to uncover factors hindering teacher reflection. The qualitative data analysis indicated that obstacles to reflection can be grouped into the four categories of teacher-related, job-related, curriculum-related, and student-related factors.

In another study, Motallebzadeh, Ahmadi, and Hosseinnia (2018) examined the relationship between EFL teachers' reflection and their teaching effectiveness. To this end, 115 Iranian EFL teachers who were teaching at various language institutes selected through convenience sampling served as the participants of the study. To collect the data required for this study, English language teaching reflection inventory and effective teaching scale were administered to the participants. The results obtained from structural equation modeling revealed that the components of teacher reflection were significantly and positively correlated with the teaching effectiveness of the teachers. Besides, it was found that a significantly

strong and positive relationship existed between EFL teachers' degree of teaching effectiveness and their years of experience. Also, there was a weak positive and significant correlation between teachers' degree of reflection and their experience. Also, employing a mixed methods research design, Cabaroglu (2014) investigated the effect of action research on EFL student teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in a 14-week course in which action research was employed as the reflective teaching approach. The purpose of the course was to aid the pre-service teachers in enhancing their classroom activities and in employing an inquiry-based approach to both learning and teaching so that they can improve their knowledge base. As for the study treatment, the prospective teachers were provided with the opportunity to become more actively engaged in their professional growth. The data about the change in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their learning experiences in the course were gathered through employing self-efficacy questionnaires, reflective journals, and a course evaluation form. The findings revealed that the teachers demonstrated progress in teaching efficacies, enhanced self-awareness, problem-solving competencies, and learning autonomy. Overall, it was found that action research as a reflective teaching technique could contribute to improving pre-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

Concerning the association between self-efficacy and burnout, some empirical studies have verified the significant correlation between the two variables. For example, Khani and Mirzaee (2015) explored the correlations among stressors, contextual variables, self-efficacy, and teacher burnout in the context of Iran. 216 English language teachers from private language institutes completed a set of validated scales of the variables. Using structural equation modeling to examine the proposed model, the researchers found that contextual variables could directly contribute to teacher burnout. They also found that self-efficacy can play significantly direct and indirect roles in decreasing teacher burnout. Overall, their study revealed that self-efficacy could act as a mediating variable mitigating the negative impacts of contextual variables and stressors on teacher burnout. In another study, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) examined the relations between

teachers' beliefs of the contextual variables, their self-efficacy, collective teacher efficacy, teacher burnout, and teacher job satisfaction. A big sample of Norwegian teachers was recruited as their participants. The data analysis conducted by structural equation modeling indicated a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. Also, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) confirmed the role of self-efficacy in influencing teachers' emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and motivation to leave the teaching profession.

As far as the relationship between reflection and burnout is concerned, fewer empirical studies have been conducted. For example, Shirazizadeh and Karimpour (2019) explored the relationships among perfectionism, reflection, and burnout among Iranian EFL teachers. In so doing, a number of 156 Iranian EFL teachers filled out a battery of self-report scales, including the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Maslach (1986) Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey and English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory. The results of the data analysis through correlation, multiple regression, and path analysis revealed that teachers' reflection was a significant predictor of their burnout, suggesting that less reflective teachers experienced more burnout. Nevertheless, it was found that no significant relationship existed between the three dimensions of perfectionism and teacher burnout. The results of path analyses also demonstrated further multilateral correlations among perfectionism, reflection, and burnout. Overall, the findings of this study confirmed that teachers' reflection had a negative impact on teachers' burnout. In another study, Babaei and Abednia (2016) investigated the relationship between reflective teaching and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. In so doing, two validated scales measuring the two variables were administered to 225 Iranian EFL teachers. The result of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between the global variables of teacher reflection and self-efficacy. Further analysis determined efficacy for learner engagement as the only predictor of teacher reflection and Meta-Cognitive Reflection as the only predictor of teacher self-efficacy.

Moreover, the associations between the sub-scales of the two variables were explored using Structural Equation Modelling. Although most of the sub-scales of both constructs were significantly correlated, some were not, and there was a negative correlation between Cognitive Reflection and Efficacy for Classroom Management. Likewise, Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2014) investigated the relationship between teachers' burnout, emotional intelligence, and reflection. The participants of their study were a sample of 125 Iranian EFL teachers from several Iranian language institutes. In addition, differences in the teachers' burnout, emotional intelligence, and reflection were investigated in terms of teaching experiences of teachers. The results revealed that emotional intelligence and reflection were inversely correlated with burnout, and both variables were significant predictors of the degree of burnout. The results also indicated that teachers' experience did not significantly affect the relationship between teachers' burnout and reflection. In another study, Košir, Tement, Licardo, and Habe (2015) examined the significance of teachers' reflection and rumination as a correlate of classroom stress and as a variable mediating the relationships among job characteristics, classroom stress, and teacher burnout. Four hundred and thirty-nine elementary school practitioners from Slovenia took part in the research. The results revealed that rumination was a significant predictor of stress and burnout, explaining a substantial amount of variance. It was also found that although reflection was not a direct predictor of stress and burnout, it mediated the relation between perceived job characteristics and stress.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study was to test a structural model of teacher self-efficacy and reflection as predictors of teacher burnout. In so doing, first, the unique contribution of either of the predictor variables is examined, and then the concurrent contribution of the two variables to teacher burnout is explored. Therefore, the following research questions guided the purpose

of the present study:

1. Does teacher reflection significantly predict burnout among Iranian English teachers?
2. Does teacher self-efficacy significantly predict burnout among Iranian English teachers?
3. Which variable is a stronger predictor of burnout among Iranian English teachers?

METHOD

Participants

A sample of 171 Iranian EFL teachers who were teaching at both public schools and private language institutes were selected as the participants of the study based on convenience sampling. The collection of the required data was initiated by distributing the questionnaires of the three variables to the participants. To ease the data collection procedure, both online and paper-and-pencil versions of the questionnaires were used. As the participants had a good command of English proficiency, the English version of the questionnaires were administered to the EFL teachers. It took the participants about 50 minutes to fill out the three questionnaires altogether. The participants included both male ($N = 76$) and female ($N = 95$) teachers with different levels of educational degrees (i.e., BA, MA, and Ph.D.). The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 43 with a mean age of 26.12. Concerning the teaching experience, the experience of teachers varied from seven months to 23 years with average teaching experience of 5.87 years.

Instrumentation

English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (ELTRI)

Teacher reflection was assessed by the English Language Teaching

Reflection Inventory (Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadvand, 2010). This self-report scale includes 29 items gauging five underlying components. Each item is based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always”. Practical reflection (6 items) is concerned with the actual practice of reflection via keeping journals, lesson reports, talking to colleagues, and group discussions. Cognitive reflection (6 items) refers to the teacher’s conscious efforts for professional development such as reading books and journals. Affective reflection (3 items) is related to teachers’ knowledge about the learner’s affective and cognitive state. The metacognitive reflection (7 items) is about teachers’ awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, personality, and teaching profession. Critical reflection (7 items) is concerned with teachers’ consciousness of the socio-political aspects of their teaching practice.

Teacher Self- Efficacy Scale (TSES)

To assess teachers’ sense of efficacy, the scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) was employed. This scale includes 24 items measuring three underlying components including student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Efficacy for student engagement assessed teachers’ belief in their ability to engage the students in classroom activities. The efficacy of instructional strategies is concerned with teachers’ perception of the effectiveness of the strategies they employ in the classroom. Efficacy for classroom management addressed teachers’ belief in their competence in their classroom management.

English Language Teacher Burnout Inventory (ELTBI)

To measure teacher burnout, Maslach and Jackson’s (1986) questionnaire was used to measure the extent of teacher burnout, and, according to the researchers’ studies, it was the most reliable instrument in this area. This scale includes 22 questions with a 6-point Likert scale containing three sub-categories; emotional exhaustion sub-dimension (EE), depersonalization

sub-dimension (D), and personal accomplishment sub-dimension (PA). High levels of emotional fatigue and depersonalization and low levels of personal success was the matter of high burnout.

Data Collection Procedure

To achieve the objectives of this correlational study, the data were collected by distributing the batteries of the questionnaires for the three variables. The data collection began in the fall of 2019. A total of 230 questionnaires were initially administered both electronically and in print format among which 186 batteries were completed and returned (80% return rate). Among the returned questionnaires, 15 were discarded since they seemed to have been carelessly filled out. As a result, the remaining 171 completed batteries of questionnaires were considered as the dataset of this study. The battery of questionnaires included the directions and explanations on how to complete the questionnaires. In order to enhance the ease of data collection and data analysis, the online versions of the questionnaires were created by putting the items of questionnaires on the Google Docs and were then shared on the Internet channels and groups in which EFL Iranian teachers were teaching English in various parts of the country. Prior to answering the items of the questionnaires, the participants were asked to write down their demographic information such as gender, age, educational degree, and teaching experience. Additionally, the teachers were informed that their information would remain confidential and be used only for this research.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were analyzed by the SPSS AMOS 20. First, the dataset was examined with regard to the missing and outlier values. The analysis initially indicated that there were no wrongly coded data. Additionally, while analyzing the missing values, few missing items were randomly assigned through the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm. Afterward, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the

prediction of independent over dependent variables and various goodness of fit indices were analyzed. The fit indices utilized to evaluate the models of this study included: χ^2/df (chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). An acceptable model was demonstrated by $\chi^2/df < 3$, $GFI > .95$, $TLI > .95$, $CFI > .95$, and $RMSEA < .06$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

RESULTS

As the first step in data analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out to verify the fitness of all three questionnaires. In other words, as far as the psychometric properties of the questionnaires were concerned, CFA was run to test the hypothesized model. The results of indices for the CFA revealed a good fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.86$, $p = 0.00$, $GFI = 0.98$, $CFI = 0.98$, $TLI = 0.97$, $RMSEA = 0.05$). Concerning the reliability of the questionnaires and underlying components, Table 1 shows that the internal consistency coefficients of the three questionnaires were higher than 0.70, suggesting that all questionnaires had acceptable reliability indices. In addition, the composite reliabilities ranged from 0.75 (reflection) to 0.88 (burnout). Moreover, the factor loadings for all items of the three questionnaires were significant ($p < 0.001$) and acceptable. As the calculated values for composite reliabilities and the factor loadings were high, it can be argued that the model has convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 1: Overall reliability of the constructs and factor loading of indicators

Construct	Indicators	Cronbach's α /CR	Factor loadings	t- value
Reflection	I have a file where I keep accounts of my teaching for reviewing purposes.	0.751/0.751	0.82	11.35 1***
	I read books/articles related to effective teaching to improve my classroom performance.		0.86	12.44 8***
	As a teacher, I think about my teaching philosophy and the way it is affecting my teaching.		0.71	10.85 6***
	I think of ways to enable my students to change their social lives in fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias.		0.69	10.32 2***
	I think of inconsistencies and contradictions that occur in my classroom practice.		0.85	11.85 6***
	I talk to my students to learn about their learning styles and preferences.		0.84	12.23 1***
	I think of classroom events as potential research topics and think of finding a method for investigating them.		0.80	11.90 6***
	I talk about my classroom experiences with my colleagues and seek their advice /feedback.		0.87	12.37 5***
	I think of the ways my biography or my background affects the way I define myself as a teacher.		0.79	11.59 1***
	In my teaching, I include less-discussed topics, such as old age, AIDS, discrimination against women and minorities, or poverty.		0.90	12.55 0***
	I think of writing articles based on my classroom experiences.		0.87	12.41 1***
	I participate in workshops/conferences related to teaching/learning issues.		0.86	12.33 6***
	After each lesson, I write about the accomplishments/failures of that lesson, or I talk about the lesson to a colleague.		0.79	11.63 3***
	I look at journal articles or search the internet to see what the recent developments in my profession are.		0.83	12.35 2***
	I talk to my students to learn about their family backgrounds, hobbies, interests, and abilities.		0.81	11.59 1***
	I think about the political aspects of my teaching and the way I may affect my students' political views.		0.78	11.54 3***
	I think of the positive/negative role models I have had as a student and the way they have affected me in my practice.		0.82	11.89 2***
	I carry out small scale research activities in my classes to become better informed of learning/teaching processes.		0.82	11.74 1***
	I try to find out which aspects of my teaching provide me with a sense of satisfaction.		0.66	10.31 5***
	I think about instances of social injustice in my surroundings and try to discuss them in my classes.		0.77	11.33 5***
I discuss practical/theoretical issues with my colleagues.	0.86	12.32 1***		
I think about the ways gender, social class, and race influence my students' achievements.	0.90	12.54 7***		
Self- efficacy	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	0.867/0.867	0.82	11.24 1***

	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	0.89	12.85 1***	
	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	0.84	12.27 0***	
	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	0.67	11.01 8***	
	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	0.79	11.00 2***	
	How much can you do to get your students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	0.87	12.40 6***	
	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	0.85	12.10 6***	
	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	0.90	12.62 9***	
	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	0.77	11.28 1***	
	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	0.91	12.36 5***	
	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	0.86	12.16 3***	
	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	0.82	11.25 6***	
	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	0.78	11.57 4***	
	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	0.85	12.15 2***	
	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	0.89	12.25 4***	
	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	0.69	10.92 1***	
	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	0.89	12.52 1***	
	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	0.87	11.87 2***	
	How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire class?	0.72	10.95 3***	
	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	0.78	11.52 1***	
	How well can you respond to defiant students?	0.89	12.93 5***	
	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	0.87	11.74 1***	
	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	0.91	12.25 4***	
	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	0.88	11.87 5***	
Burnout	I feel emotionally drained from my work	0.881/0.881	0.90	12.61 1***
	I feel used up at the end of the workday.		0.85	12.33 5***
	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.		0.84	12.38 5***
	Working with people all day is a strain for me.		0.83	12.12 3***
	I feel burned out from my work.		0.81	11.59

I feel frustrated by my job.	0.78	11.54 3***	1***
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	0.82	11.89 2***	
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	0.82	11.74 1***	
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	0.68	11.02 1***	
I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal subjects.	0.77	11.33 5***	
I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	0.84	12.32 1***	
I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	0.90	12.61 1***	
I don't care what happens to some students.	0.85	12.33 5***	
I feel students blame me for some of their problems.	0.84	12.38 5***	
I can easily understand how my students feel about things.	0.78	11.63 3***	
I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.	0.84	12.12 3***	
I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	0.81	11.59 1***	
I feel very energetic.	0.78	11.54 3***	
I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.	0.82	11.89 2***	
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.	0.82	11.74 1***	
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	0.67	10.95 8***	
In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.	0.79	11.33 5***	

Note: CR represents construct or composite reliability

*** significant at the 0.001 significance level

In the next step, descriptive statistics and correlations between the constructs and their underlying components were computed. Descriptive statistics and correlations between teacher reflection, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher burnout have been illustrated in Table 2. As presented in Table 2, the correlation between total teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout ($r=.61, p<.01$) is higher than the correlation between total teacher reflection and burnout ($r=.48, p<.01$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Pr	18.20 (5.36)	1.00										
Af	9.08 (3.02)	.39**	1.00									
Cog	16.26 (4.77)	.43**	.32**	1.00								
Mc	22.16 (8.24)	.33**	.29*	.45**	1.00							
Cr	19.85 (5.11)	.26*	.46**	.37**	.22*	1.00						
Total Ref	85.54 (22.54)	.41**	.35**	.23*	.38**	.36**	1.00					
SE	43.55 (12.01)	.15*	.26*	.24*	.19*	.26*	.21*	1.00				
IP	42.33 (13.41)	.21*	.23*	.24*	.19*	.17*	.22*	.16*	1.00			
CM	45.05 (15.08)	.16*	.21*	.25*	.27*	.19*	.26*	.32**	.35**	1.00		
Total SE	135.71 (33.47)	.25*	.33**	.46**	.36**	.42**	.41**	.46**	.37**	.22*	1.00	
Burn Out	64.71 (18.52)	-.25*	-.24*	-.29**	-.31**	-.34**	-.45**	-.32**	1.00	-.21*	-.62**	1.00

Note. Pr= Practicality; Af = Affective; Cog= Cognitive; Mc= Metacognitive; Cr= Critical; Total Ref = Total Reflection; SE= Student engagement; IP= Instructional practices; CM=classroom management; Total SE= Total teacher self-efficacy

* $P < .05$.

** $P < .01$.

Then SEM was utilized to explore the significant role of teacher self-efficacy and reflection in predicting teacher burnout. SEM is regarded as a powerful multivariate statistical procedure which is employed to adopt a confirmatory hypothesis-testing approach for the hypothesized structural model of the present study.

To analyze the data in this study via SEM, two models were proposed, as indicated in Fig. 1. The natures of the relationships for either of these two models are identical. As a result, they are not statistically different. However, in order to verify the statistical results, the two models were investigated. To explore the unique contributions of each of the two predictor variables (i.e., teacher self-efficacy & teacher reflection), the

goodness of fit indices was utilized for the investigation of the adequacy of the hypothesized models. The model assessment revealed a good fit to the data (Table 3). As model A indicates, the correlations among the three latent constructs are significant. Teacher self-efficacy and teacher reflection had 7% of the common variance ($R^2=.278$). Teacher self-efficacy and burnout showed 25.2% common variance ($R^2=.502$). Likewise, teacher reflection and burnout shared 12.1% of variance ($R^2=.348$). Similarly, these results indicated that teacher self-efficacy turned out to be a stronger predictor of teacher burnout than teacher reflection.

Also, to check the unique contribution of teacher self-efficacy and reflection beyond and above each other, R^2 increments were investigated by comparison of the percentage of variability in burnout demonstrated in models A and B. In model B, teacher self-efficacy and teacher reflection together accounted for 28% of the variance in burnout. Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher reflection explained for the extra amount of 4% of the variance of teacher burnout, beyond the single teacher self-efficacy explanatory factor ($\Delta R^2=.28-.25=.04$). Also, the unique contribution of teacher self-efficacy in predicting teacher burnout above the teacher reflection factor was 16% ($\Delta R^2=.28-.12=.16$). These results also show that the unique contribution of teacher self-efficacy was greater than that of reflection in predicting burnout.

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Indices

	χ^2	χ^2/df	GFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
Models A and B	5.99	1.86	.98	.97	.98	.05	
Model A1 (β TR = 0)	10.86	2.81	.97	.96	.98	.04	4.87*
Model A2 (β TSE = 0)	11.75	2.95	.96	.95	.96	.03	5.76*

Note. TR= teacher reflection; TSE= teacher self-efficacy.

* $p < .05$.

Afterward, the unique contribution of teacher reflection and teacher self-efficacy on teacher burnout was explored by constraining every corresponding beta weights to zero and then their χ^2 differences were

investigated in model B. In case constraining beta weights to zero led to a substantial decrease in χ^2 , the unique effect of either of the variables in predicting teacher burnout is regarded to be significant. Table 3 demonstrates the fit indices for the models. Constraining beta weights to zero in both model A1 (β teacher reflection =0) and model A2 (β teacher self-efficacy =0) led to significant chi-square changes (model A1 (β teacher reflection =0): $\Delta\chi^2$ (1, N=194) = 4.87, $p < .05$; model A2 (β teacher self-efficacy =0): $\Delta\chi^2$ (1, N=194) = 5.76, $p < .05$). These results revealed the significant unique contribution of teacher reflection and teacher self-efficacy as correlates of burnout.

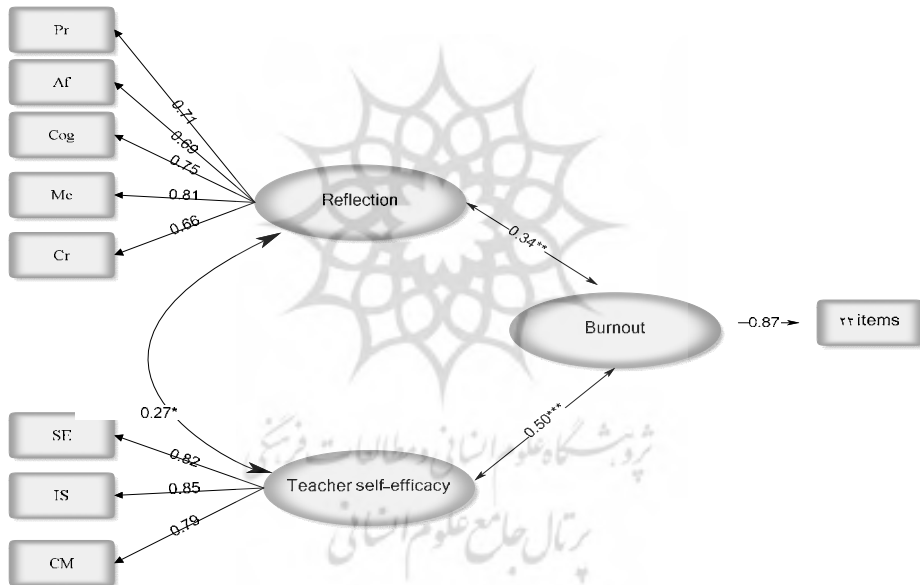


Figure 1: Model A

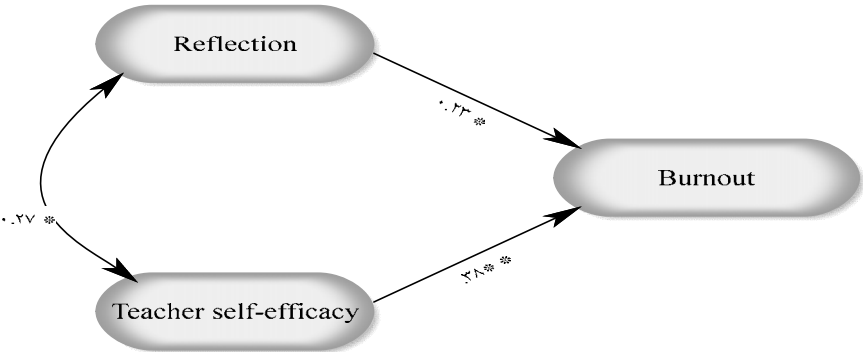


Figure 2: Model B

Pr = Practicality; Af = Affective; Cog = Cognitive; Mc = Metacognitive; Cr = Critical; Total Ref = Total Reflection; SE= Student engagement; IP = Instructional practices; CM = classroom management; Total SE = Total teacher self-efficacy. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was set to explore the significance of teacher reflection and self-efficacy in predicting burnout among Iranian English teachers. The results of the investigation of the structural model indicated that both variables could significantly predict burnout. More specifically, the results revealed that teacher reflection was a significant correlate of teacher burnout. In other words, the results of correlational analyses indicated that teacher reflection was inversely correlated with burnout, implying that reflective teachers are less likely to become burnout. This is consistent with the results of Shirazizadeh and Moradkhani (2018) who found that although EFL teachers were involved with numerous demotivating obstacles to reflection; reflective teachers were more successful in surviving the daily stressors of their teaching activities.

In other words, since reflective teachers are actively engaged in thinking about their learners and try to find solutions for the problems they encounter, they are usually more devoted and emotionally attached to their career. Therefore, such teachers are less likely to become emotionally

exhausted, feel depersonalization, and perceive a lack of personal accomplishment. These teachers also consider the challenges of the classroom as instigators for further learning and refinement of their teaching practice and hence are less likely to feel burnout (Shirazizadeh & Karimpour, 2019). As a result, it may be argued that stronger degrees of reflection can safeguard teachers against burnout and stressors because high reflective teachers may possess stronger professional identity, emotional attachment, and self-efficacy, all of which protect teachers against burnout causes (El Helou, Nabhani, & Bahous, 2016).

Also, the findings of the present study did not verify the findings of some studies which indicated that teacher burnout was moderately related to the self-efficacy of teachers (e.g., Friedman & Farber, 1992). On the contrary, since SEM was employed in this study, the results are in agreement with those of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) who used SEM to conclude that there was a strong interconnection between teacher self-efficacy and burnout.

The results of this study also indicated that teacher self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of teacher burnout than teacher reflection. This is consistent with the findings of a significant number of studies reporting that less degree of teacher self-efficacy may lead to perceptions of burnout (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). It can be argued that fewer perceptions of competence in classroom management felt by teachers can enhance occupational stress, which may raise both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The stronger predictive power of teacher self-efficacy in affecting teacher burnout may be attributed to the fact that the underlying components of teacher self-efficacy are claimed to significantly contribute to reducing teacher burnout (Betoret, 2006; Friedman, 2003; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). More particularly, teachers who feel depersonalization have no feelings towards students. It may be argued that more self-efficacious teachers who creatively devise and utilize different instructional strategies and can engage students are less likely to suffer from depersonalization.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As an attempt to shed more light on the role of teacher-related variables in EFL contexts, the present study was set to explore the role of teacher reflection and self-efficacy in predicting burnout among Iranian EFL teachers. Overall, it was found that both variables had a unique effect on teaching burnout. However, it was revealed that teacher self-efficacy turned out to be a stronger predictor of burnout. Concerning the implications of this study, teacher education programs should pay more serious attention to teacher self-efficacy and reflection as they proved to play a significant role in reducing teacher burnout. From this perspective, EFL teacher educators are recommended to adopt a practical course of actions to foster both teacher reflection and self-efficacy to help both pre-service and in-service teachers to cope with stressful situations in a more effective way. To this end, teacher education programs should focus on teachers' professional identity which is closely associated with both teacher reflection and self-efficacy (Olsen, 2012). The development of teacher identity requires interpretation and reinterpretation of who the teacher is and who he aspires to be (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Through this process of identity re-construction, ELT teachers can become more reflective, thereby becoming more emotionally attached to their jobs (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007). If the Iranian ELT community gets closer to professionalism by re-constructing identities of ELT practitioners more effectively, enhanced teachers' self-efficacy and their improved reflectivity would reduce their stress and burnout (Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015).

As far as the limitations of the study are concerned, it is acknowledged that the findings cannot be generalized to other L2 practitioners in different educational contexts. English is taught in both public and private schools in Iran and these two contexts are significantly different in terms of the freedom assigned to teachers, the number of students in the classroom, the nature of the courses, and the motivation of the students. Consequently,

conducting further empirical studies to explore the differential impacts of self-efficacy and reflection in affecting burnout in both Iranian public and private schools seems much warranted. In addition, the generalizability of these findings can be enhanced if future researchers utilize qualitative or mixed methods research designs. Such studies are likely to provide a more in-depth understanding of the variables influencing teaching burnout in EFL contexts.

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