Original Research

The Effects of Self-Efficacy on Iranian EFL Teachers' competency in ELT

Iranian Evolutionary and Educational Psychology Journal
December 2020: 278-293
© University of Hormozgan Publication 2020
DOI: 10.29252/ieepj.2.4.278
http://ieepj.hormozgan.ac.ir

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Abstract: Teacher competency is defined as a knowledge, skill, ability, personal quality, experience or other characteristic that contributes to a teacher's capacity to teach effectively. Despite the importance of teachers' competency in teaching, few studies in Iranian EFL context have explored the relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' competency. Accordingly, the present study attempted to investigate the effects of self-efficacy on a group of Iranian high school EFL teachers' competency by using one-sample t-test, confirmatory factor analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach. A total of 197 high school EFL teachers teaching English in Hormozgan province (namely, in Bandar Abbas and Minab cities) participated in the study. A teacher competency test and a self-efficacy beliefs scale were used to collect the necessary data. The results of data analyses indicated that that there was positive relationship between self-efficacy and EFL teachers' competency. Likewise, instructional strategy, as the subscale of self-efficacy, could best predict EFL teachers' competency. As for the implications of the study, it can be suggested that the results of the study can be used as a framework in improving EFL teacher education policy and designing and implementing of teacher-training programs.

Keywords: EFL teachers, Competency, Self-efficacy beliefs, ELT

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[DOR: 20.1001.1.25884395.2020.2.4.1.3]
[DOI: 10.52547/ieepj.2.4.278]

Introduction

Teachers are one of the most influential elements for the success of any educational system. Many researchers and professionals responsible for teacher development and evaluation have sought to establish criteria for assessing effective teaching (Richards, 2001). Many things can be done to create a context for good teaching, but it is teachers themselves who ultimately determine the success of a program. Good teachers can often compensate for deficiencies in the curriculum, the materials, or the resources they make use of in their teaching (Richards, 2001).

Since teachers play one of the essential roles in the teaching environment, the quality and capability of them should be given adequate attention in order for any educational system to be successful (Scheopner, 2010). Consequently, the needs, concerns, and psychological factors of the teachers should be considered to increase the effectiveness of any educational system.

Good and qualified teachers are essential for efficient functioning of educational systems. Competent teachers are vital for increasing the effectiveness of teaching and for enhancing the quality of learning. Teachers, curriculum, schools, students, and teaching aids are important factors in an educational system. Without com-

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petent, skilled, and qualified teachers, no system of education would be effective and productive. Research supports this notion that teacher' competency and actions to be taken on his part in the classroom play a vital role in provoking effective and efficient learning on the part of the students (Markley,2004).

It is important to understand teachers' perceptions and beliefs because teachers are seriously involved in various teaching and learning processes and they are practitioners of educational principles and theories (Jia, Eslami & Burlbaw, 2006). Teachers have a primary role in determining what is needed or what would work best with their students. Findings from research on teachers' perceptions and beliefs indicate that these perceptions and beliefs not only have considerable influence on their competency and classroom behavior but also are related to their students' achievement (Grossman, Reynolds, Ringstaff & Sykes, 1985; Hollon, Anderson & Roth, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Morine-Dershimer, 1983; Prawat & Anderson, 1988; Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). According to Eggen and Kauchak (2002) Motivational beliefs are fundamental for effective teaching. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions affect their competence and influence the students' performance. Thus, knowing the perceptions and beliefs of teachers enables one to make predictions about teaching and assessment practices in classrooms.

Teachers' competency is concerned with the task of preparing teachers to become highly effective educators. Along with the necessary pedagogical skills and content knowledge, educators need to be confident in their abilities to enact effective instructional practices that result in students' learning, motivation, and other positive outcomes. That is, they need efficacy for teaching (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teachers' self-efficacy belief increases students' motivation to learn and affects forming higher perception of personality (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eceles, 1989). Moreover, it influences teachers' efforts and aims in teaching process (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Bandura (1977) considered self-efficacy as one of the most central psychological mechanisms that affect action. General educational research has found that teachers' self- efficacy not only directly affects teachers' competency but also influences the overall teaching environment. For example, highly self-efficacious teachers believe that they can bring about positive changes in student learning, whereas teachers with low self-efficacy do not believe in their teaching (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). They indicate that external factors exert a more powerful influence on student learning than their own teaching (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In all education system, the competency of teachers is one of the leading factors determining school effectiveness and students achievements. In order for teachers to maintain a high level of professional performance, they must be aware of different variables and beliefs that may affect their competency(Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

A search of the literature indicates a scarcity of research on the perspectives of EFL teachers, and in particular on their motivational variables. Up to now, the above-mentioned body of knowledge has been accumulated about ELT teachers' competency. However, the motivational aspects of teachers' performance especially the role of their self-efficacy beliefs is least investigated In Iranian EFL contexts especially among high school ELT teachers. Consequently, due to the importance of motivational aspects of teachers' competency especially the role of their self-efficacy beliefs, more research is needed to explore the relationship between teachers' competency and their motivational variables in Iranian EFL contexts. Therefore, the current study attempts to address this gap in the literature. More specifically, the current research attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Does self-efficacy have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' competency in ELT?

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2. Which components of self-efficacy can best predict Iranian EFL teachers' competency in ELT?

Literature Review

Theoretical framework: Competency is one of the most contested concepts in the literature on teachers and teacher education, having provoked much debate since its appearance (Shulman, 1987).Teachers need to possess a body of knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge to a variety of situations within their professional setting. This body of knowledge involves knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, including pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), as well as a philosophical, historical and sociological framework for educational ideas (Cowen, 2002). The assumption that teachers need a strong knowledge base has always been and today remains present in the world (van Huizen, 1992; Wubbels, 1992).

Anselmus (2011) believes that teacher's competence refers to the right way of conveying units of knowledge, application and skills to students. The right way includes knowledge of content, process, methods, and means of conveying content. Teacher's competence also refers to the ability of the teacher to help and counsel his or her students to achieve high grades.

Shabani (2006) also divides teacher's competencies into characteristic and scientific. By characteristic competencies he means: student oriented authoritarian, student oriented and intimacy oriented, subject oriented and intimacy oriented, subject oriented authoritarian; By scientific competencies he means: awareness of psychology, teaching methods, new communication methods, social psychology, teaching psychology and communicating.

Rahaman (2010) indicated that teacher's professional competencies incorporate knowing and understanding students' needs and their learning process, subject matter knowledge, curriculum, the education framework and the educator's role. Professional competencies also incorporate abilities such as subject application, classroom strategy, classroom administration, evaluation and recording.

Bovina (2002) has placed increased emphasis upon the basic areas of teachers' competence, which include mastery of subject matter; understanding of human nature, interest in continues professional improvement of knowledge.

Aghaie (2006) thinks that the most important competencies of a teacher are familiarity with different thinking skills, teaching methods, class management, information technologies and research skills.

Rahimi (2007) claims that teachers' competency is learning about teaching and it is presented to teachers through a collection of courses on content knowledge and pedagogy.

The content of knowledge that a teacher should know are classified into five categories: field knowledge, program knowledge, teaching knowledge, personal knowledge and school-environment knowledge. It has been thought that there is relationship between teachers' field knowledge and presenting it to students and knowledge that a teacher should know has been reconstructed in the form of subject field knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

Malderez and Wedel (2007) propose a rather distinct framework: knowing about things (KA), knowing how to do things (KH) and knowing to use appropriate aspects of other kinds of knowledge while actually teaching (KT). They argue that the latter type brings together the two other types of knowledge and depends on specialist skills (e.g. noticing, interpreting behaviors, using their knowledge and skills in the right place and at the right time) which they can use to support learning. Such knowledge, although cannot be taught but rather developed over time through practicing and extensive exposure to real teaching.

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Teachers' Self-Efficacy: Teachers' self-efficacy is a motivational construct based on the self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). There are two major dimensions in the literature in relation to teachers' sense of efficacy: personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy (Ross, 1992; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The first dimension is generally agreed upon as having to do with teachers' beliefs that the teaching profession in general can bring about students changes or teachers' beliefs in their ability to support and change students learning (Bandura, 1997; Ross, 1992). Swars (2005) describes personal teaching efficacy as teachers' beliefs in their ability to become effective teachers. Poulou (2007) defines personal teaching efficacy as teachers' judgments of their ability to execute particular courses of action and to bring about desired goals. The second dimension, general teaching efficacy, refers to teachers' beliefs that effective teaching can bring about student learning regardless of other factors such as home environment, family background, and parental influences (Ross, 1992; Swars, 2005).

Previous research indicates that efficacious teachers tend to plan their duties better than low efficacy teachers (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). This is because high efficacy teachers perceive difficult tasks as challenges to be solved rather than consider them as threats to be put aside. They set challenging teaching goals and set a strong target to achieve them (Bandura, 1993; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). On the other hand, low efficacy teachers usually shy away from difficult tasks because they perceive these tasks as personal threats (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Low efficacy teachers also have low commitment to the learning goals that they have stated. They tend to give up easily in handling and facing difficult conditions and find difficulties in recovering their sense of efficacy after failure or setbacks (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006). Onafowora (2005) in her research on the issues of self-efficacy of novice teachers at the beginning of their teaching career argues that although teachers come to classrooms with good understanding of subject matter, they find difficulty in balancing their theoretical framework and practice. She believes that the stage of transition from learning to teaching requires a lot of confidence, which new teachers mostly do not possess. Moreover, Knoblauch and Hoy (2008) indicate that teachers need more than content and pedagogical knowledge to allow them to be effective in teaching and gain the goals. Teachers need motivation and a sense of efficacy to be able to transfer content and pedagogy knowledge optimally.

Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs can affect students' achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Efficacious teachers manage classroom to provide a healthy, safe environment for learning, and to equip students with the necessary skills to be successful in life, both academically and socially even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated (Wong & Wong, 2009).

Teachers who encourage students to learn are viewed as having teaching efficacy beliefs, that is, they believe in their abilities to produce desired student learning. Students who are not engaged and not interested in learning are easily discouraged; therefore, teachers who can motivate them to learn are needed (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Teachers need to use different instructional methods that will engage students in learning. Having knowledge of various teaching methods enables teachers to plan and prepare their work to meet students' learning needs. Competent teachers plan and prepare, are knowledgeable about their teaching materials, have a clearly defined pedagogy, choose their instructional objectives, and evaluate students as they teach. Teachers, however, who choose teaching because of job security, may not take much responsibility in planning and preparation; therefore, problems emerge ((Tournaki, Lyublinskaya, & Carolan, 2009).

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In helping students learn, competent teachers may act as mediators as they interact with learners. Effective teachers' instruction can be perceived as scaffolder, supporting learners in benefiting from objectives. Learners may not benefit from the goals of learning without the support of effective teachers (Ashman & Conway, 1997). Brophy (2006) proposed scaffolding students' task engagement, which is one of the principles of good teaching that teachers use to support students in learning as well as engaging them in tasks effectively.

As the investigation of literature revealed, EFL teachers' competency and their motivational aspects is still an under-researched area and few studies have explored the nature of teachers' performance and its effects on English language teaching. Consequently, due to the importance of motivational aspects of teachers' competency especially the role of their self-efficacy beliefs, more research is needed to explore the relationship between teachers' competency and their self-efficacy beliefs in Iranian EFL contexts.

Material and Method

Participants and settings: The necessary data were collected from 197 EFL teachers teaching English in Hormozgan province high schools (namely, in Bandar Abbas and Minab cities), Iran. The rationale for selecting the participants was based on convenience sampling method, which involves selecting those who are available to the researchers at the time. Teachers' ages ranged from 31 to 50. They had degrees in TEFL, English literature, linguistics and English translation, their experience in teaching ranged from 2 to 30 years; the study was conducted with both male and female EFL teachers (125 males and 72 females) that their native language was Persian.

Instruments

Teachers' Competency Test: The teachers' competency test developed and validated by Pishghadam, Bagheri, and Shahriari (2011) was used to measure EFL teachers' competency. The test consisted of 61 items including:

a. Items corresponding to the teaching of skills

b. Items corresponding to the process of assessment and testing

c. Items related to the theories of first and second language acquisition

d. Items related to teacher behavior within the classroom

The items were in multiple-choice forms and intended to be functional in nature and present participants with clearly defined circumstances, which they had possibly been faced while teaching in their own classes. Measures were taken to evade the presence of items dealing with the theoretical knowledge or beliefs of the participants (Pishghadam et al, 2011).

The test included 10 components in the following areas: (1) Feedback & flexibility, which consists of 13 items. Items 6, 7, 11, 17, 18, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 32, 48, and 49 measure teachers' amount of flexibility and the teachers' ability and method of giving feedback. (2) Teaching methodology refers to the methods and the techniques that teachers use in their classes. This factor consists of Items 24, 31, 41, 42, 44, 60. (3) Learning boosters are factors that can increase learning. This component includes items 1,3,8,35,38,45,51,52,58 (4) Motivation which refers to the eagerness to do something that include items 10, 14, 22, 36, 40, 43, 55, 56, 57. (5) Sociology of Language Teaching and Learning refers to the social relationships in the class between the teachers and the students and among the students. This component consists of items 4,6,12,21,28,30. (6) EQ (Emotional Quotient) which refers to the teachers' ability to make relationships with the learners. Items 5, 13, 16, 39 measure this factor. (7) NLP (Neuro-Linguistic programing) is an approach to teaching and learning

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that can change learners' performance. It includes items 2, 15, 29, 46, 50, 61. (8) Students' self-esteem refers to the individual's beliefs about his or her abilities and capacities as a person. Items 47 and 54 measure the teachers' awareness of this factor and the techniques that they use to restore learners self-esteem. (9) Thinking refers to items 9, 20 and 59 and tries to measure the teachers' ability to make the learners think and to raise consciousness in class and among students. (10) FSA (Face-saving Act) refers to the acts that people should take to protect their own and other people's faces. Items 33, 37, 53 measure this component (Pishghadam et al, 2011).

It was a test with the reliability index of 0.64, which had been calculated with Cronbach alpha. ELT-competency test had been validated by using Rasch analysis version 3.66. Fit statistics showed that all items fit the Rasch model following the criteria proposed by Bond & Fox (2007).

Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale: Teacher self-efficacy scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) was used to assess teachers' self-efficacy beliefs .The scale included 24 items and 3 dimensions. Each item is measured on a nine-point Likert scale ranging from 'nothing' (1) to 'a great deal' (9)". The dimensions of the scale are as follows: self-efficacy for student engagement, self-efficacy for instructional strategies, and self-efficacy for classroom management. Each dimension consists of eight items. Sample items include "How much can you do to get through the most difficult students?"; "How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students" and "How well can you respond to defiant students?". (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, P.800). This questionnaire enjoyed from a good reliability index: 0.89 Cronbach's Alpha.

Procedure of data collection: In order to collect the required data, the participants were required to respond to the teachers' competency test, and self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire. The study was done in Hormozgan Province (namely, in Bandar Abbas and Minab cities). The researcher consulted with the head of education administration and English department in both cities. The permission was taken from authorities to distribute the two questionnaires among high school EFL teachers teaching English in Bandar Abbas and Minab cities. The teachers were provided with instructions for completing the questionnaires, and the purpose of the study was explained to them. The researcher guaranteed that the information would be kept confidential and would be used just for the research purposes. In the first part of administration, the participants were given teachers' competency test, in the second stage; they completed the self-efficacy questionnaire with 24 items. The teachers were asked to fill the questionnaires completely. Totally, a sample of 250 teachers got the questionnaires and 197 of them filled them in completely and gave them back to the researcher.

Procedure of data analysis: The measured variables produced numeric data that was analyzed statistically in order to provide insight into the effects of self-efficacy on EFL teachers' competency. Initial analysis was done to confirm no violation of normality in the data and a number of confirmatory factor analyses were run to evaluate the appropriateness of the variables and see the possible relationship among the variables of concern. The original goal of the research was to investigate the effects of self-efficacy beliefs on EFL teachers' competency in ELT using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach which brings together reliability statistics analysis, One-sample t-test and confirmatory factor analysis in hypothesizing the relationships between variables. A useful methodology for statistically specifying, estimating, and testing hypothesized relationships among a set of substantively meaningful variables is linear structural equation modeling ((Bentler, 1995). Linear Structural Relationships (LISREL) statistical package enables the researchers to specify the relationship between variables and to test for how well the obtained data fits the specified model (Skehan, 1991). In addition,

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WARPPLS is used to respond the research questions. The SEM model allows the researchers to investigate the relationship between latent variables and observed constructs and to observe how the variables affect each other. Moreover, it specifies the structural and measurement part of the model (Winke, 2013). Accordingly, we decided to see the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and teachers' competency.

Results

Reliability Statistics: Cronbach alpha, confirmatory factor analysis and composite reliability were used to determine the reliability of the scales of the study. The following table shows the related results. As Table 1 shows all of the research constructs possess an alpha Cronbach 0.70 and above, which is considered an acceptable reliability. Moreover, the results of the composite reliability are above 0.70, which show the appropriateness of the research questions. Furthermore, the results of the AVE of the research variables were above 0.50 showing the acceptable reliability of the questionnaires.

Table 1. Cronbach alpha, Composite reliability and the AVE of the variables

Variables	Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Combined reliability	AVE
Self-Efficacy	Instructional Strategy	0.820	0.715	0.567
	Student Engagement	0.771	0.744	0.615
	Classroom Management	0.769	0.817	0.516
Competency	Feedback and flexibility	0.719	0.819	0.519
	Teaching methodology	0.698	0.911	0.512
	Learning boosters	0.816	0.937	0.876
	Motivation	0.785	0.917	0.983
	Sociology of language teaching and learning	0.850	0.856	0.651
	EQ	0.719	0.864	0.569
	NLP	0.815	0.871	0.858
	Self-esteem	0.841	0.745	0.679
	Thinking	0.912	0.790	0.762
	FSA	0.851	0.769	0.570

One-sample t-test: One-sample t-test was used to study if the sample comes from the population with the identified mean. Considering the nine-point Likert scale of Self- Efficacy Questionnaire, the median of the scale was considered to be five.

Null hypothesis: H0 the variable status is not appropriate. H0: $\mu \leq 0.5$

Alternative hypothesis: H1 the status of the related variable is appropriate. H1: $\mu \geq 0.5$

As Table 2 shows the mean of the variables are above five and all of the variables of the study are in appropriate status ($t>1.96$, Sig. <0.05).

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Table 2. One-sample t-test for the self- efficacy variable

Variables	Dimensions	N	Means	SD	T-value	*p*	Status
Self-Efficacy	Instructional Strategy	195	5.49	0.788	22.47	0.00	Appropriate
	Student Engagement	193	5.02	0.245	14.33	0.00	Appropriate
	Classroom Management	192	5.33	0.832	17.45	0.00	Appropriate

Considering the fact that the response to Competency Test was one or zero, 0.5 was considered as the median of the scale. The design of the hypotheses would be as the following:

Null hypothesis: H0 the variable status is not appropriate. H0: $\mu \leq 0.5$

Alternative hypothesis: H1 the status of the related variable is appropriate. H1: $\mu \geq 0.5$

Table 3. One sample t-test for Competency

Variable	Dimensions	No.	Means	SD	T-value	*p*	Status
Competency	Feedback and flexibility	191	0.55	0.615	77.12	0.00	Appropriate
	Teaching methodology	195	0.61	1.118	11.32	0.00	Appropriate
	Learning boosters	193	0.57	1.09	61.12	0.00	Appropriate
	Motivation	193	0.51	0.877	49.11	0.00	Appropriate
	Sociology of language teaching and learning	194	0.50	0.914	53.18	0.00	Appropriate
	EQ	190	0.59	0.716	66.11	0.00	Appropriate
	NLP	194	0.52	0.591	54.00	0.00	Appropriate
	Self-esteem	194	0.71	1.312	47.99	0.00	Appropriate
	Thinking	191	0.62	0.903	22.18	0.00	Appropriate
	FSA	95	0.51	0.715	19.57	0.00	Appropriate

As Table 3 shows the significance values for all the variables were less than 0.05. In addition, the mean of these variables has significant difference at 0.5 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Considering $t>1.96$, it can be observed that the mean of these variables is more than 0.5 and possesses an appropriate status.

Confirmatory factor analysis: To ensure the appropriateness of the evaluating model, the variables were estimated by using confirmatory factor analysis process. Goodness of fit is an acceptable index for evaluating the reliability of the items of the questionnaire. In addition, the values of T-value and its standard coefficient must be significant for evaluating the reliability of the items of the questionnaire. If the values of chi-square are less than 3and RMSEA is less than 0.07, it is concluded that the questionnaire (and its items) has the appropriate goodness of fit. In this study, the confirmatory factor analysis was done based on one model.

According to results of LISREL output for confirmatory factor analysis for Self-efficacy, the model has an appropriate goodness of fit index. For example, X2/df is less than 3 and the amount of RMSEA is less than 0.08 showing that the model has a goodness of fit. Furthermore, the factor loading for all of the items are

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more than 0.70, confirming that the items are good indicators of the variable. Also, all of the variable of the model are significant because the related significance of the parameters were more than T=1.96. Moreover, the findings of the factor loadings indicate that the items of the questionnaire appropriately measure the research variables.

In the next stage, responses to competency subscales were inserted to LISREL. Considering the high number of questions of this variable, the models of the variable were inserted into LISREL in two stages. The output of LISREL for five variables of competency (Feedback and Flexibility, Teaching Methodology, Learning Boosters, Motivation, and Sociology of language teaching and learning) is as the following in the standard state. According to toutput of LISREL, the fitness indices such as X2/df (<3) and RMSEA (<0.08) imply that the model has goodness of fit. Furthermore, all of the factors have factor loading above 0.70 showing that the items measure the variable appropriately. Also, of the variables of the model are significant because the related significance of the parameters were more than T=1.96. This suggests that the scale items measuring the research variable are designed appropriately.

Structural Equation Modeling: After confirming the measurement model, testing of the hypotheses was done using SEM. In this study, we made use of WARPPLS for testing the hypotheses. PLS models use multiple regressions, for each part of the regression model. To respond the research questions the result of P-value for the model should be P<0.01, in this model, β shows the value of the effect size. According to the results, self-efficacy has a positive and moderate effect on competency (0.39, $p < 0.001$). Hence, it can be claimed that there is positive relationship between self-efficacy and EFL teachers' competency and the first research question is accepted.

To investigate the second research question and to identify each constitutes of self-efficacy variable, the model was tested with the presence of three constitutes of self- efficacy. The output of the WARP PLS is provided in Figure 1.

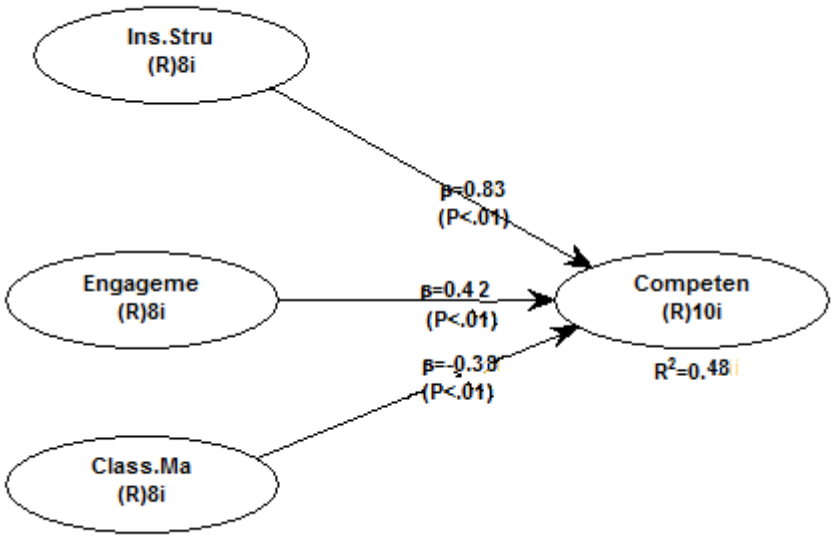


Figure 1. The SEM model for self-efficacy

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Table 4. The fitness indices of SEM for Self-efficacy

Parameter	The value in the model	The reference value
Path coefficient mean	0.51	0.05≤
R^2 mean	0.812	0.302≤
AVIF	3.71	5≥
SPR	1.02	0.7≤
SSR	1	0.7≤

As Table 4 shows the SEM model has a goodness of fit. The related results for the effect of self-efficacy variables on competency are provided in Table 5. The results show that instructional strategy has the highest effect on the competency. The second ranking is related to student engagement, and the third ranking is related to classroom management. The fitness indices are provided in table 5.

Table 5. The results of SEM analysis for the main model of the research

Path	β	Effect	p-value	Status
Instructional strategies to competency	0.83	Positive /high	P<0.001	Confirmed
Students Engagement to competency	0.42	Positive/high	P<0.001	Confirmed
Classroom Management to competencey	0.38	Positive/high	P<0.001	Confirmed

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research attempted to study the effect of self-efficacy on EFL teachers' competency. In order to investigate the effect of self-efficacy on teachers' competency, Structural Equation Modelling technique was used. The results of this analysis indicated that self-efficacy has a positive and moderate effect on teachers' competency in ELT based on the data collected from Iranian high school EFL teachers. It is generally believed that competent teachers need the knowledge base for teaching, which is an amalgam of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that underlie the capacity to teach effectively (Shulman, 1987). Moreover, Bandura (1977) indicated that teachers' self- efficacy not only directly affects teachers' competency but also influences the overall teaching environment. Furthermore, Ashton and Webb (1986) declared that teachers who have a higher level of self-efficacy are more organized, have a greater skill of instruction and questioning, have better abilities to explain and can solve academic problems easily.

This study adds to the body of research by stating that self-efficacy is capable of playing a significant role in teachers' competency since there was positive relationship between self-efficacy variable and EFL teachers' competency. This finding led us to accept the definition of competence as "a knowledge, skill, ability, personal

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quality, experience or other characteristic that contributes to a teacher's capacity to teach effectively. More generally, competency is the ability to carry out a task or resolve a problem in a professional context by bringing acquired skills and knowledge to bear" (Kelly, Grenfel, Allan & McEvoy, 2004, p. 117). Likewise, the result of the study allowed us to accept the definition of self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).

The results of the study also revealed that instructional strategy as the subcomponent of self-efficacy had the highest effect on teachers' competency. The second place belongs to student engagement and the third place belongs to classroom management, which reflects that the second research question has been accepted.

The self-efficacy variable is highly influential in teachers' competency since what teachers know, think, feel and believe are discursively connected to what they actually do in the classroom. In other words, their self-perceptions of teaching capabilities are determining factors in their management of classroom and successful rendering of the content knowledge to their learners (Bandura 1997). Moreover, teacher self-efficacy is associated with teachers' competency in their own ability to plan, organize and carry out classroom activities required to attain given educational goals (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012).

These findings are consistent with the work of researchers who have found that the quality of self-efficacy helps teachers to encounter difficulties and to achieve better performance (Woolfolk,Ross, &Hoy, 1990). Moreover, the results of the current study are aligned with Ghanizadeh and Moafian(2011), who confirmed the effects of self-efficacy on teachers' pedagogical success. Furthermore, the findings of present research are in line with the Prendergast, Garvis, and Keogh (2011), who found the effects of self-efficacy on teachers' mental structure and their capacity to do activities in the classroom. The results of the current study are also consistent with Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) who explored the relation of teachers' self-efficacy with their emotional intelligence. As EFL pre-service teachers are concerned, the findings of the present study are in line with Goker (2006), who confirmed the impact of peer coaching on self-efficacy and instructional skills. In fact, it is believed that teachers' self-efficacy not only directly influences the teachers' competency but also affects the overall teaching environment (Dembo, 2001).Also, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards teaching profession have the capability to influence their competency and teaching practice (Ispir ,2010). It is an approach, which improves EFL teachers' competency, includes testing and increasing their opinions and beliefs about learning and teaching based on their own experience of language classrooms and developing their knowledge of language theories, language learning psychology, opinions, and beliefs (Hill, 2005). Moreover, competent teachers are those who have enough knowledge about the subject that they teach. They are capable of creating and constructing knowledge. Their competency includes enough knowledge about their learners, the social demands of the learners, their beliefs, pedagogy, the curriculum, and teaching/learning environment (Dawely, 2006).

On the whole, this study has shed some lights on the motivational aspects of teachers' competency, especially the role of self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, the findings of the present study confirmed the positive effects of self-efficacy in English language teaching and the evidence indicates that self-efficacy variable makes a unique if not specialized contribution to English language teaching. Consequently, an attempt must be made to identify specific conditions dependent on each variable and try to maximize their facilitating potentials and minimize their inhibiting roles.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research: While conducting this comprehensive study, the researcher faced a number of challenges. The most important problem was the teachers' reluctance

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to participate in the data collection sessions and respond to and deliver questionnaires of the study, which affected both the quantity and quality of the collected data. In fact, the researcher collected data from nearly 250 teachers in two educational settings, but only 197participants had fully completed and delivered the assigned instruments. Definitely, some teachers' lack of interest and their perfunctory manner in responding to the instruments have affected the validity of results.

Because of limitations of time and budget, this study could only investigate self-efficacy variable influencing high school EFL teachers' competency In Bandar Abbas and Minab cities. Examining the effect of this variable in Hormozgan province or nation-wide would yield results that are more general.

The present study explored the role of a limited number of motivational variables (self-efficacy) in competency of Iranian EFL teachers, future research endeavors must include and inspect the role of cognitive, affective and social variables on their competency to see whether they can make a difference or affect the teachers' performance or not. The nature of contributory potential of each variable must also be explored based on more powerful qualitative methods and by using more longitudinal studies that can trace the teachers' motivational changes over a longer period of time. Comparing the effects of these factors and variables between male and female English teachers would have also been useful.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding: The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Acknowledgements: We are grateful to all the participants who have contributed to this study.

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