

In the Name of Allah

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Faculty of Literature and Humanities

M.A. Thesis in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

**IRANIAN EFL TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

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DEDICATED TO:
MY PARENTS
AND
MY HUSBAND
WHO CONSTANTLY SUPPORTED ME

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ABSTRACT

Iranian EFL Teachers' Self-efficacy and Classroom Management

**By:
Sedigheh Mousavizadeh**

This study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management with sex being considered as a moderator variable. One-hundred and fifteen EFL teachers (62 females, 53 males) from different cities in Iran participated in the study. Two questionnaires (TSEQ and CMQ) in four-point Likert scale were used to collect the data. The analysis of the data showed that Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and classroom management were both above the average. Furthermore, a correlational analysis showed that self-efficacy and classroom management were positively correlated. However, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed that teachers' sex did not have an effect on their self-efficacy and classroom management.

Thus the study implies that teachers' classroom management can be improved if their self-efficacy increases. This can be put to use in teacher training programs as well as language schools.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMQ: Classroom Management Questionnaire

D.F: Degrees of Freedom

E. D. F: Error Degrees of Freedom

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

H. D. F: Hypothesis Degrees of Freedom

MANOVA: Multivariate Analysis of Variance

TSEQ: Teacher Self-efficacy Questionnaire

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is really complex and encompasses different aspects. Among the different aspects of teaching and teacher education, the affective side of the teachers is of considerable importance. Of various affective factors, this study is concerned with Iranian foreign language teachers' self-efficacy and its relationship with their classroom management. This affective factor is introduced in the following section.

1.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a "person's beliefs concerning his/her ability to successfully perform a given task or behavior" (Bandura, 1977, p.191). In his 1997 definition, Bandura defines self-efficacy as "the beliefs in ones' capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). According to Bandura (1997) the knowledge of people over the world has increased. Now they know how to alter the world, how to control the events and how to make use of these to improve their personal and social issues. When people believe they can control events in their lives, their incentive to act becomes more. People's self-efficacy beliefs affect their lives in different ways. The way they think, the level of effort they

put to complete a task, how strong they are when confronting with difficult situations and many other things are affected by their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be explained by Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory. In fact, self-efficacy is the focal point of this theory. Bandura (1986) believes, "What people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave" (p. 25). People make use of their self-system to control their thoughts, feelings and actions. In the following part social cognitive theory is explained more.

1.1.1 Reciprocal Causation

Social cognitive theory creates the theoretical framework for self-efficacy studies. This theory postulates that human achievement depends on triadic reciprocal interactions between one's behaviors, personal factors, and environmental conditions. Bandura (1997, p. 6) asserts:

In this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behavior; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally. Reciprocity does not mean that the three sets of interacting determinants are of equal strength. Their relative influence will vary for different activities and under different circumstances.

Jackson (2002) states that self-efficacy is an important internal factor which mediates between external factors and human behavior. In fact, he considers the internal factors such as our beliefs as the mediators between what is in the environment and the way we behave.

The following figure shows the relationship between the three major classes of determinants in triadic reciprocal causation. Each variable interacts with the other two to produce some results.

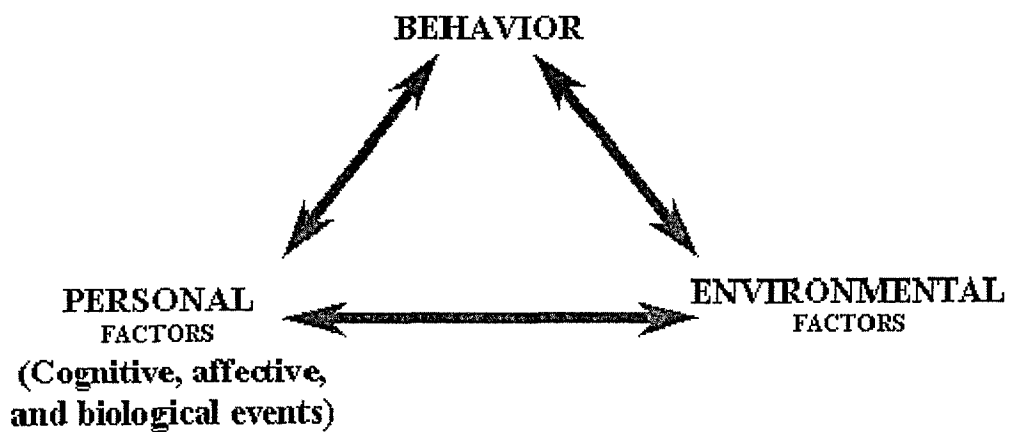


Figure 1.1: Reciprocal Causation

Pajares (2002, p.1)

Some examples are provided here in order to make the relationships more tangible:

Example one: People's angry behavior will affect their personal attributes; it may bring stress, hypertension, etc to them. These personal factors can also define the kind of behavior that people show.

Example two: People's behavior will be affected by their environmental factors. In a hot summer day, they do not turn on the heater and sit in front of it.

Example three: People's behavior will affect the environment too. Inappropriate usage of water sources will cause the water shortage in the environment.

Example four: The environment can affect people's personal factors. Cold winter weather may cause a sore throat and fever.

Example five: People's personal characteristics also affect the environment. The way people feel and think about their job affects their working environment.

1.1.2 Factors Affecting Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1997) the following factors affect self-efficacy:

- A) Mastery experience
- B) Vicarious experience
- C) Verbal persuasion
- D) Physiological and affective status

Each of these factors is explained below.

Mastery experience is the experience of successfully performing tasks and behaviors. It is the most important factor affecting a person's self-efficacy because it is the real recognition of one's success. Successful performance increases self-efficacy beliefs while failure decreases them. When people experience success permanently, their feelings of self-efficacy improve. As Bandura (1997) puts it, people should experience difficult success rather than easy success to improve their self-efficacy because if they just have easy success, they will lose their self-efficacy in more difficult situations. An example can make the difference between easy and difficult success clear. People who struggle to reach their goals in difficult situations of life have

higher self-efficacy to confront the hard times in future than those who reach their goals without any difficulty.

Vicarious experience is another factor which affects self-efficacy beliefs. It is a process in which people compare themselves with others. Self-efficacy beliefs can be acquired through observation and modeling. When people see someone succeeding at something, their self-efficacy will increase and where they see people failing, their self-efficacy will decrease. Similarity to others helps people to compare their abilities with them and therefore increase or decrease their self-efficacy. Although vicarious experience is not as effective as the mastery experience, it is very helpful when one is particularly unsure of oneself. When people have doubts about their ability to do something, they examine it by looking at their models performing the task. As Bandura (1997) maintains, mastery experience is not the only factor that affects self- efficacy, modeling or vicarious experience plays a role too.

Verbal persuasions have influential effects on self-efficacy beliefs. They include the verbal encouragements/discouragements people receive from others. Some people are very sensitive to verbal persuasions. They take the positive and negative persuasions as signs of their own abilities or inabilities. Decreasing others' self-efficacy is much easier than increasing it especially when people do not have a clear idea of themselves. According to Bandura (1997, p.101),

People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise. To the extent that persuasive boosts in perceived efficacy lead people to try hard

enough to succeed, self-affirming beliefs promote developments of skills and a sense of personal efficacy.

People rely to some extent on their physiological and emotional state to judge their capabilities. Stress and unusual situations cause people to show signs of distress. People with low self-efficacy take these feelings as signs of their own inabilities while people with high self-efficacy are likely to interpret such physiological signs as normal and unrelated to their actual ability. Therefore, people's interpretation of their physiological and emotional status affects their self-efficacy.

1.1.3 Effects of Self-efficacy on Human Function

People's self-efficacy affects human function in different ways. Pajares (2002, p. 2) asserts,

Self efficacy beliefs can influence the individual's thought patterns and emotional reactions; the choices people make; the courses of action they pursue; how much effort they will expend on an activity; how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles; and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations.

Accordingly, low self-efficacy leads people to think they do not have the abilities to perform an action. They think the tasks are too difficult, so they cannot make good plans to complete them. However, people with high self-efficacy often look at the tasks with great attention, consider all the possible ways to do the task, choose the best solution and then follow the necessary

procedures. Difficulty does not bring pessimism to them and they attribute the failure to external factors. In contrast, people with low self-efficacy attribute failure to their low ability.

As Bandura (1986) observes, "When people are not aiming for anything in particular or when they cannot monitor their performance, there is little basis for translating perceived efficacy into appropriate magnitudes of effort" (p. 39). On the other hand, people with high self efficacy are shown to put greater efforts into the problem. People may experience high or low self-efficacy in different activities of their lives. Among these activities, teaching a foreign language is not an exception. Teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs about their ability to influence students' learning, produce the desired learning outcomes, and achieve their teaching goals. Self-efficacy plays an important role in teachers' teaching experience.

1.2 Foreign Language Teachers' Self-efficacy

According to what was discussed above, each person may have high or low self-efficacy. They have different degrees of self-efficacy in various activities of the daily life including their jobs. As a result, language teachers too may exhibit different degrees of self-efficacy. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs help them to produce the desired learning outcomes for their learners. When teachers have low self-efficacy, they can not follow effective lesson plans, instructional methods and classroom management techniques. If they do not believe their capabilities, they will come to serious problems in their teaching experience. Teachers with low self-efficacy can not accept the new trends in technology and education.

According to Bandura (1997) technology is changing and improving rapidly; new teaching methods are introduced and computer science has