The Relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' Self-Resiliency and their Burn out

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Abstract

In a foreign language setting, social-psychological variables are very important. These variables can highly influence the learners' and consequently teachers' performance. One of the most influential psychosocial domains in language pedagogy is self-resiliency. Burnout is a persistent, negative, work-related state which involves mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion. Teacher burnout has been a major concern in mainstream education in recent years. However, it has been less examined among EFL teachers. Therefore, this study adopted a correlational design to fill the gap by examining the (possible) relationship between their burnout and self-resilience in the Iranian EFL context. Another influential factor that is of utmost importance in teaching contexts is burnout. The needed data were gathered through the application of two questionnaires: The Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Resilience Scale. The participants were 97 experienced teachers having university education from Mashhad Iran. They were both males and females and from different age groups. After obtaining the raw data, the SPSS software (version 22) was used to change the data into the numerical interpretable form. The result showed that the participants' self-resiliency has a reverse relationship with their burnout.

1. Introduction

Issues, related to teacher and teacher education, have ignited great controversy among EFL/ESL practitioners and theoreticians in the last two decades or so. For example, the concepts of teacher self-resiliency and burnout have received prominent attention in educational contexts (Morshedi Tonekaboni & Ansari Abianeh, 2020). In a foreign language setting, social-psychological variables are very important. These variables can highly influence the learners' and consequently teachers' performance. One of the most influential psychosocial domains in language pedagogy is Self-efficacy. Another influential factor that is of utmost importance in teaching contexts is burnout (Özkanal & Arikan, 2010; Riazi & Candlin, 2014). Teacher burnout will result in the undermining of student

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motivation which is in turn affected by teacher traits e.g., dutifulness, conscientiousness, and competency. Along the same lines, teachers experiencing burnout may increase their degree of self-resiliency and commitment to stay in their work (Ashraf et al., 2017) , which impacts their students in the learning process. Consequently, educational administrators seek effective strategies for diminishing teachers' dissatisfaction by identifying factors that correlate with teachers' self-resiliency (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). The increasing number of teachers undergoing burnout as a consequence of intention to leave and self-resiliency is a concern that warrants further exploration. Thus, it is of value to study teacher burnout and its potential connection with well-being. However, no studies thus far have addressed the relationship between self-resiliency and burnout with the mediating role of self-resiliency in educational settings such as universities among EFL instructors (Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016). Despite different studies done on these two variables, the results show that researchers have not agreed upon the idea that self-resiliency can mediate the way intention to leave is related or leads to burnout among teachers, most specifically among EFL instructors. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the self-resiliency of Iranian teachers of English and their reports of burnout. The present study seeks to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' self-resiliency and their burnout in a private institute context. To this end, the present study seeks; to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' self-resiliency and burnout among EFL teachers.

1.1. Significance of the study

Teachers experiencing burnout and self-resiliency seem to be more neglectful about absentees, lack of desire toward teaching-learning process and decrease in expectations about students, lack of interest, compassion and idealism for students, administration, parents and generally for the job, and also they develop negative feelings against the people they give services (Ghanizadeh & Moaifan, 2011).

The self-resiliency and burnout of teachers have emerged as especially significant in recent years given that teacher attrition is an ongoing issue in education contexts. Some reports suggest up to 40% of teachers leave the profession in less than five years of service (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). The cost of this turnover is significant, ranging from disrupted continuity of the instructional program, to a constant need to mentor and assist new teachers (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Those that remain face continuing pressures, often having trouble coping which leads to a situation where burned out and disengaged teachers teach with reduced levels of personal involvement (Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017). In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that in recent years, resilience has begun to gain importance in the area of psychology, sociology. Several studies have shown that the development of this construct could be a predictor of the development of burnout, as it contributes to the development of wellbeing to overcome stressful and traumatic factors (Morshedi Tonekaboni & Ansari Abianeh, 2020). For this reason, this study is significant due to pursued in this work is to carry out a systematic review, paying special attention to the scientific literature that includes studies that combine burnout and self-resiliency in the work performance of teachers, as fundamental factors in the work carried out by educators at different educational stages, as well as the influence they have on the quality of the teaching-learning process.

1.2. Research questions

The question that the researchers have come up with in this study was:

➤ RQ. Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' self-resiliency and their burnout?

2. Literature Review

Teachers enter in classroom settings that may or may not give support, encouragement, and opportunities to improve their knowledge and experience achievement. Moreover, many students–teachers see the teaching class as the final test of their teaching abilities and, as a test of themselves as human beings (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Morshedi Tonekaboni & Rahimy, 2014). Consequently, we must study the extent to which these individuals experience stress or burnout, as well as how personal beliefs (teacher efficacy) may serve to improve their stress (Partovi & Tafazoli, 2016).

2.1. Burnout

Burnout refers to the lack of professional well-being of individuals providing social services, namely teaching (Maslach, 2003). However, as mentioned by Ju et al. (2015) teaching is a profession subjected to the highest levels of burnout. According to Ghanizadeh & Moaifan (2011), burnout affects teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and efficacy that can in turn influence students' academic achievement. Maslach (2003) viewed burnout as a multidimensional construct encompassing three dimensions i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a sense of inefficacy.

2.2. Teacher resilience

One of the ongoing concerns for policymakers and teacher educators is equipping teachers with the qualities that improve teaching and result in effective and successful learning. A good number of studies have indicated that teachers as an influential element of every educational system face different challenges in different years of teaching and lack of ability in managing these difficulties may result in frustration and burnout. In preparing "classroom-ready" teachers (Ashraf et al., 2017), resilience is an attribute that empowers teachers to manage everyday challenges of teaching and thrive through their profession rather than survive. Teachers, as an important contributor to each educational system, seem to be more successful and confident if they equip themselves with this developmental quality. More specifically, teacher resilience can be regarded as the process of positive adjustment and ongoing development in challenging contexts and circumstances. It can be formed by different sources such as individual, situational and contextual factors that are interconnected in dynamic ways. Resilient teachers not only can thrive professionally and personally but also they can enjoy job satisfaction, positive self-beliefs, general wellbeing, and also a higher level of commitment to their profession. Resilience offers a useful lens which allows us to probe teachers internal and external worlds to explore which factors, individually and in combination, influence their capacity to sustain their passion, enthusiasm and a strong sense of fulfillment (Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Richards et al., 2016; Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017).

2.3. Previous researches

Kotaman (2016) examined the correlations among teaching context, perceived occupational stress, burnout, and teacher resilience among Iranian EFL teachers. In so doing, validated measuring instruments of the constructs under investigation were given to a sample of four hundred Iranian English teachers. The gathered data were statistically analyzed through SEM. The findings revealed that inadequate supervisory support as a component of teaching context significantly influences teachers' occupational stress more than other components. Additionally, it was found that there were significant positive correlations between occupational stress and teachers' degree of burnout. Also, significant negative correlations were observed between teacher resilience and burnout. The authors also concluded that teacher resilience could significantly decrease occupational stress and burnout. In another study, Khani & Mirzaee (2015) developed and tested a conceptual framework to account for the role of resilience in decreasing role stress and burnout. Four hundred and fifteen US teachers participated in this study. The data were gathered through administering a survey including the three

questionnaires of resilience, role stressors, and burnout. Using SEM to analyze the data, the researchers verified the hypothesized model and revealed that resilience could significantly decrease perceived teacher stress and burnout. Also, Ju et al. (2015). Klassen & Chiu, (2010) explored the interplay between teacher resilience and a sense of efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers. To this end, 92 teachers of English filled out the validated scales of the two variables. The results of the study indicated that various underlying components of self-efficacy could significantly predict teacher resilience. More particularly, it was revealed that the constructs of student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies were positively correlated with teacher resilience. Ghanizadeh & Moaifan (2011) investigated the relationship between teacher burnout and reflective teaching among Iranian EFL teachers. The findings of the study showed that there was a weak negative relationship between reflective teaching and burnout for male and female teachers and both groups were considered as a composite group of language teachers.

3. Methods
3.1. Participants

A total number of 97 EFL teachers from various cities in Iran served as the participants of the present study. These participants were teaching English at different proficiency levels at both public and private language schools/institutes. The sampling procedure was convenience sampling, and teachers' participation was quite voluntary. The teachers were both male (N=53) and female (N=44) EFL practitioners whose ages varied from 20 to 43 (M = 26.12, SD = 5.32) with their teaching experience varying from 1 to 18 years (M=8.02, SD=4.26). The participants were assured that the collected information would remain confidential.

3.2. Instrumentations

The sole source of material in the present study is from two types of scales that were used during the study.

3.3. Teacher's burnout scale

The primary source of data used in this work is naturally occurring written data derived through elicitations from Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (Maslach, 2003; Moradkhani & Shirazizadeh, 2017). Burnout was measured with the original English version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators" Survey. The questionnaire is divided into three subscales; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment and consists of 22 statements; on each of which the participant rates the frequency of the feelings addressed through the statement on a 7-point continuum (0 = never, 6 = every day). Scores on the scales are added separately. High scores on the scales of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and low scores on the personal accomplishment scale are indicative of burnout. The first subscale, emotional exhaustion measures feelings of being emotionally exhausted and overextended by one"s work (9 items; e.g., I feel used up at the end of the workday); the second subscale, depersonalization measures the negative attitudes and feelings toward one"s students (5 items; e.g., I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects); and the last one, personal accomplishment measures the satisfaction one has with their accomplishments with their students (8 items; e.g., I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work). Prior research substantiated the validity and reliability of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators" Survey (Kotaman, 2016; Morshedi Tonekaboni & Ansari Abianeh, 2020)

3.4. Resilience scale

Scale (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007) which consists of 10 items was employed. The unabridged version of this scale which includes 25 items was originally developed and validated by Ju et al. (2015)

as a multi-dimensional measuring instrument of resilience. The short version, however, was modified, shortened, and validated by Campbell-Sills & Stein (2007). This questionnaire is a Likert-type scale whose responses vary from 0 (not true at all) and 4 (true nearly all the time). The reliability coefficient of the 10-item CD-RISC was estimated by using Cronbach's alpha formula. The alpha index of .85 revealed good internal consistency for the scale.

3.5 Procedure

The data for the present study was collected through two self-report questionnaires. The lead researcher modified the format of some of the items to improve the face validity of the questionnaires and compiled them into one questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed among teachers of 9 private language institutes and 5 secondary schools in Mashhad during the summer of 2021. In this study, for collecting the data, questionnaires in the form of papers and online (using E-mail) were spread up to different English Language teachers. Collecting data started in April–May 2021. The probably needed time for filling out both questionnaires was about 15 min. Before this, the heads of language institutes were asked for their co-operation. These preliminary requests were also meant to explain the purpose of the study and the way it had been organized. After the heads approved the request, the questionnaires were handed out to every EFL teacher in the language institute accompanied by a letter explaining the nature and general aim of the study. They were asked to complete the survey and to return it within one week to their language school secretary. A second collection was conducted a week later for any additional returns. Completed surveys were collected from the institutes one week following distribution. Of hundred fifty distributed questionnaires, 97 were returned.

4. Result

The relationship between teachers' resilience and burnout The descriptive results for the overall scores and subscales of the burnout scale and resilience scale are presented in table1. As the table indicates, the Cronbach alpha values vary from 0.83 to 0.92 suggesting that the participants' responses to the items enjoy a relatively high internal consistency for both instruments of efficacy and resilience. Moreover, the p-values of the KS test which range from 0.05 to 0.11 demonstrate that the collected data are normally distributed.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers' burnout and self-resilience

	Min	*Max*	*Mean*	*Sd*	*Alpha*	*KS Sig.*
Self Resiliency	1.5	4	4	3.88	.092	0.05
Resiliency for student engagement	1.1	4	4	3.90	0.79	0.11
Resiliency for instructional strategies	1.5	4	4	3.79	0.87	0.09
Resiliency for classrrom management	1.7	4	4	3.81	0.83	0.11
Resiliency	1.4	4	4	3.72	0.81	0.07

Regarding the question, a series of Pearson- product correlations were conducted. The results in table 2 indicate that there is a moderate, but significant, the relationship between teachers' total burnout and resilience scores (r = 0.51, p < 0.01). It means that generally, EFL teachers who are more efficacious in the encouragement of students to participate in classroom activities, apply efficiently and

various teaching techniques, and deal with management-related issues are more resilient in adverse conditions or challenging situations.

Table 2. Correlation between total self-efficacy and resilience

Self-Resiliency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.258
	Sig.(2tailed)		0.022
	N	97	97
	Pearson Correlation	0.258	1
Burn out	Sig(2—tailed)	0.022	97
	N	97	

Considering the association between subscales of burn out and resilience, significant positive correlations were observed in the case of self-resiliency for student engagement (r = 0.54, p < 0.01), efficacy for instructional strategies (r = 0.60, p < 0.01) and self-resiliency for classroom management (r = 0.39, p < 0.01), with the second subscale indicating the greatest correlation.

5. Discussion

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- resiliency 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- resiliency 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 action to foster both teacher reflection and self- resiliency to help both pre-service and in-service teachers to cope with stressful situations in a more effective way. This study delved into empirically investigating the link between teachers' personality traits, psychological distress, and burnout in a representative sample of Iranian EFL teachers. Furthermore, this study examined the relative contribution of five personality factors in predicting burnout dimensions among EFL teachers. The findings determined that self- resiliency and psychological distress were related to teachers' burnout dimensions. These findings are in line with what Ashraf et al. (2017) refers to as" resilient teachers possess a sense of self-efficacy, feeling confident and competent, taking credit for and drawing sustenance from their accomplishments". The results of the present study suggest that self- resiliency may increase or impede the probability of burnout among teachers. According to the results, teachers who cannot receive any social support suffer a higher level of burnout, in parallel with numerous findings of other studies revealing the importance of social support in burnout (Ju et al., 2015; Moradkhani et al., 2017; Razmjoo & Ayoobiyan, 2019). Teltik (2009) suggested that preschool teachers who are satisfied with their jobs were less burned out and demonstrated a positive relationship between their job satisfaction levels and perceptions of professional self-efficacy.

6. Conclusion

This correlational study explored burnout and self- resiliency among a sample of Iranian EFL teachers. In essence, the results in the quantitative part of the current study demonstrated that the level of self- resiliency was generally at a good level in the sample. In general, we might conclude that most of them have an emotional or cognitive involvement with their work. Also, it is concluded that self-resiliency can play a buffering role in the development of burnout among EFL teachers. That is to say, identified self- resiliency can positively contribute to EFL teachers' accomplishment. However, the predictive power of self- resiliency should not be the overarching criterion for explaining teacher burnout. As the researchers tried to show in previous sections, it is hoped that the study can help teachers to use innovative ways of evaluating students. From the evidence of the study and considering

the limitations of current research some suggestions are introduced for further study. Firstly, the researcher collected data on a few characteristics of a qualified EFL teacher; therefore, it is highly recommended to investigate other traits which may have a probable correlation with teachers' self-regulatory skills.

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