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The Role of Foreign Language Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Their Burnout

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between the authors as a part of their joint research project. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aim: This study investigated the relationship between burnout and self-efficacy among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. In addition, differences in teachers' burnout and self-efficacy were examined with respect to demographics.
Study Design: Correlational / EX post facto.
Place and Duration of the Study: The study was conducted in 7 private language institutes in Iran. The data collection process took 10 days.
Methodology: 112 EFL teachers (56 male, 56 female/57 married, 55 single) with different age and teaching experience ranges were administered self-efficacy and burnout scales and a demographic questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Linear Regression and 2X2 Factorial ANOVA were conducted.
Results: The results revealed that self-efficacy was negatively correlated with burnout, and it could be a potent predictor of burnout among EFL teachers. It was also shown that age and teaching experience were significantly correlated with self-efficacy and burnout. Further, the findings indicated significant differences in teachers' self-efficacy and burnout with respect to marital status. However, regarding gender, only differences on teachers' burnout scores reached statistical significance.

Keywords: Burnout; EFL teachers; private language institutes; self-efficacy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Practitioners and scholars commonly classify the teaching profession as a highly stressful occupation [1]. Teachers are also affected by various psychological and social factors, and must function under conflicting expectations, pressures and demands. However, one may raise the question as to why some teachers succeed in surmounting high levels of occupational stress, in continuously enhancing students' achievements, and in setting and pursuing high goals for themselves while others cannot meet expectations imposed on them and tend to collapse under the burden of everyday stress the chronic level of which may render burnout. One reason may lie in teacher self-efficacy as a belief in one's capability. Bandura [2] stated that people with high efficacy beliefs persisted with the task in the face of difficulty and achieved higher results with lower levels of stress. Self-efficacy makes a difference in how people feel, for example, a low sense of self-efficacy is associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness. On the other hand, teacher burnout is indicated by a number of negative personality characteristics, including low levels of self-efficacy. Teacher burnout, the result of chronic and unattended stress, given the demands of the profession, hits in particular those who lack the appropriate coping resources [1]. This is particularly true when it comes to the realm of teaching a foreign language, with its high levels of affective involvement, complexity and constant interaction. EFL teachers should empathize with learners, try to keep them motivated and encourage them to participate in classroom activities. However, besides these roles, they are also supposed to engage in many other tasks such as paperwork, evaluating students, preparing for the class and keeping themselves up-to-date with their teaching area. At the same time, they might have positive or negative encounters with parents, colleagues, administrative authorities and students, all of which can affect them psychologically. Furthermore, in private language institutes teachers are only hourly paid and never get tenure. Upon failing to meet an institute's strict standards of teaching efficiency, they might be easily fired. The combination of all factors such as these may make the individual teacher feel more accountable, yet more confused, and arguably less supported with no special job security.

Nevertheless, a review of the related literature reveals that teacher' self-efficacy has not received enough attention in the area of teacher burnout particularly in an EFL context. Definitely, the scarcity of research in this area provides a convincing rationale to undertake further investigation into examining the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout. Thus, the present research focuses on reappraising the bond between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Self-efficacy belief and its sources

In the last couple of decades, the concept of self-efficacy has attracted much attention as being a significant measure for understanding and predicting human behavior and its assumed consequences. According to Bandura [2], self-efficacy beliefs steer human behavior and are generative, creative, proactive, and reflective in their condition to the human mind. He postulated sources of efficacy expectations as: mastery experience, also called enactive self-mastery, vicarious experience, also called role-modeling, social or verbal persuasion, and arousal or Physiological and emotional states.

The most prevailing and powerful influence on efficacy is mastery experience through which successful performance of the behavior increases self-efficacy for that behavior. The perception that a performance has been successful enhances perceived self-efficacy and ensures future proficiency and success. In contrast, the perception that a performance has been a failure weakens efficacy beliefs and leads to the expectation that future performance will also be inefficient [2].

The second influential factor originates from observing other similar people perform a behavior successfully. It provides people with ideas about successful manner. In contrast, observing similar people who fail lowers the individual's confidence and subsequently undermines their efforts [2].

The third source of influence is social or verbal persuasion received from others. Successful persuaders foster people's beliefs in their capabilities, while at the same time, ensure that the visualized success is achievable. Negative persuasion, on the other hand, may tend to defeat and lower self-beliefs. The most contributing effect of social persuasion pivots around initiating the task, attempting new strategies, and trying hard to succeed [3].

Psychological states, such as stress, anxiety and excitement also provide information about efficacy perception and boost the feeling of proficiency. Hence, trying to reduce an individual's stress and anxiety and modify negative debilitative states to positive facilitative states plays an influential role in amending perceived self-efficacy beliefs [2].

1.1.2 Teacher self-efficacy

Teacher efficacy is defined as "the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" [4] p.22. A plethora of studies has demonstrated the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their instructional behaviors. For instance, Pajares [5] found a strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their lesson planning, instructional decisions, classroom practices, and subsequent teaching behaviors. He concluded that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior" (p. 311). On the other hand, teachers with a low level of efficacy have been found to be cynical not only about their own abilities, but also the abilities of their students and colleagues [6].

Further, Vaezi and Fallah [7] investigated the association between self-efficacy and stress among a sample of Iranian EFL teachers in private language institutes. The results indicated significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and stress. It was also found that both dimensions of self-efficacy, namely, classroom and organizational efficacies, either collectively or separately, could predict stress among the teachers.

Moafian and Ghanizadeh [8] explored the relationship between self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among 89 EFL teachers from several private language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. Their findings showed that there was a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Further, among the 15 subscales of emotional intelligence, emotional self-awareness, interpersonal-relationship, and problem solving were found to be potent predictors of teacher self-efficacy. Along the same line, Rastegar and Memarpour [9] sought to study teacher self-efficacy with respect to teacher emotion and demographic variables in an EFL context in Shiraz, Iran. The results indicated a positive

correlation between teacher self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Using t-test and ANOVA, the researchers also found that there was no significant difference among EFL teachers with different genders, ages and teaching experiences concerning their self-efficacy and emotional intelligence.

Akbari and Moradkhani [10] investigated relationship between teaching experience, academic degree and teacher efficacy among 447 Iranian EFL teachers. The results of data analysis showed that experienced teachers (with more than three years of teaching experience) had a significantly higher level of global efficacy, efficacy for student engagement, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for instructional strategies compared to their novice counterparts. In contrast, teachers who had English-related academic degrees did not enjoy significantly higher levels of efficacy except in the subcomponent of student engagement.

Teacher's self-efficacy may also contribute to promote students' sense of efficacy, fostering their involvement in class activities and their efforts in facing difficulties. Further, a strong sense of teacher's self-efficacy promotes a firm commitment to the profession and collaborative relationships with colleagues and parents [11], contributing fruitfully to the promotion of a rich and stimulating learning environment.

However, the current literature available on the role of teacher efficacy in the experience of teacher burnout is quite limited in terms of quantity and quality of studies especially in EFL context. This is a concern when one considers the profound consequences of this syndrome in regard to the serious effects on teachers [12], the students they teach [13],, the educational system [12], and society-at-large as a whole. Consequently, investigating the role of teacher efficacy in teacher burnout with considering individual differences is justified especially in EFL context with high levels of constant interaction and affective involvement.

1.1.3 Teacher burnout

The concept of burnout which emerged in the early 1970's has been defined in various ways. For example, Gold and Bachelor [14] defined it as "a function of the many stresses felt by individuals in both their social life and their work experiences" (p. 546). Edelwich and Brodsky [15] defined burnout as a progressive loss of idealism, energy, purpose and concern as a result of work. Burnout has also been defined as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment which is a special risk for individuals who work with other people in some capacity" [13] p. 347. Where teachers are concerned, burnout was experienced as feelings of powerlessness in attempt to educate students and make school pleasant for students, lack of enthusiasm to prepare lessons, difficulty in motivating themselves to come to work, loss of energy, loss of memory and lack of interest in the subject [16] Teachers compared to other professionals, such as mental and physical health professionals, appear to be at high risk of burnout. Support for this assumption comes from the research studies. A study carried out in Europe for example, indicated that 60-70% of the teachers are under frequent stress and approximately 30% of the teachers have symptoms of burnout [17]. Schaufeli and Enzmann [18] also calculated that teachers (27%) alongside health professionals (34%) such as nurses, doctors and mental health psychologists are among the most frequently studied human service worker (cf., social workers - 7%, police officers - 4%) in relation to the topic of burnout.

Burnout has been shown to have serious negative repercussions not only on the teachers' wellbeing but also on the teaching-learning processes in which they are immersed. Prior

studies show that burnout negatively influences student performance and quality of teaching, and it might also lead to job dissatisfaction, work alienation, and teachers' leaving the profession [19]. Burnout also negatively affects interpersonal relations between student and teacher [20].

Chang [21] argued that the repeated patterns in teachers' evaluation of student behavior and other teaching tasks may contribute noticeably to teachers' repeated experience of unfavorable emotions, and those emotions may consequently precipitate burnout. She proposed that teachers should be helped understand and regulate their emotional status to diminish their burnout level.

Pas et al. [22] investigated the connection between teacher burnout and efficacy and student disciplinary actions (e.g., referrals to the principal and suspensions) and referrals for school-based support services (e.g., student support and special education) among 491 teachers and 9,795 students at 31 elementary schools during the fall and spring of a single school year. The findings revealed that having low teacher efficacy in the fall was associated with a reduction in student referrals to the student support team. Also teachers with high burnout in the fall were less likely to have students who received an out-of-school suspension by the spring.

Teacher burnout has also been studied with respect to demographic variables, especially age, gender and teaching experience. To start with, research has discovered 'age' being a personal factor correlated with teacher burnout. Some studies have shown significantly high level of burnout among the younger teachers as opposed to their older colleagues [23, 24]. Lackritz [23], for example, examined a sample of 265 university faculty members and identified age as a significant factor of burnout. The younger university faculty members experienced higher levels of burnout than their older colleagues, which were also supported by the results of Sünbül's [24] study.

In addition, gender has been considered to be a significant factor of predicting teacher burnout. Lippel [25] argued that women are more under stress since their work is considered to be banal, unimportant, or not unusual which was parallel to the finding of the study conducted by Van Dick and Wagner [26]. Still, certain studies have revealed no significant gender differences in main levels of stress and burnout [27, 28].

Teaching experience is another variable that might have an impact on burnout [29, 30]. In her study, Bivona [29] proposed that teachers with less than ten years of experience have more negative attitudes towards teaching as opposed to experienced teachers. They are more likely to experience burnout and leave their job. Leithwood et al. [30] also reported that higher levels of burnout occurred among teachers with little and quite extensive (more than 24 years) teaching experience.

1.2 Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:
1) Is there any relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their burnout?
2) Is there any relationship between each of EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout constructs and years of teaching experience and age?
3) Is there any significant difference among EFL teachers on their scores on self-efficacy and burnout with respect to teacher gender and marital status?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 112 EFL teachers (56 females and 56 males) aged between 20 and 47 years old (M= 28.36, SD= 5.16) with a range of between 1 and 19 years of teaching experience (M=6.48, SD=3.86). Fifty five (49.1%) were single and 57 (50.89%) were married. The participants were selected from 7 private language institutes in Tehran and Boukan, a city north-west of Iran. Teachers were teaching general English courses including all the language skills and sub-skills based on their institutes' pre-specified schedules in classes with 8-15 students whose ages ranged from 15-35 years. The teachers were B.A. or M.A. graduates in one of the following fields: English Language Teaching (62 teachers), English Literature (33 teachers) and, English Translation (17 teachers).

2.2 Instruments

An anonymous self-report questionnaire, comprising 2 scales and a demographic questionnaire, served as the research tool in this study. The 2 scales measured perceived sense of self-efficacy and burnout and the demographic form asked about the participants' demographic information including age, gender, marital status and years of teaching experience.

2.2.1 Teacher self-efficacy scale

Teachers' self-efficacy was measured by Friedman and Kass's [31] Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale. The rationale for utilizing this scale is twofold: First, it contains several aspects of efficacy beliefs, thus providing a higher resolution of this concept. Secondly, it contains an organizational aspect of teacher functioning, which was found to be an important factor in explaining burnout [32]. The scale includes 33 items. It measures teacher self efficacy in two domains of functioning, classroom context (pertaining to teaching, educating and motivating students, as well as controlling inter-relations with students) and school context (involvement in school activities, participation in decision-making and influencing school organizational politics). The classroom context subscale consists of 19 items and the school context subscale includes 14 items. The response options for the items ranged from 1 (never) through 6 (always) (see Appendix A).

2.2.2 Teacher burnout scale

Teacher burnout was measured using Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) [33]. The scale is a 22-item self report instrument described in the literature as "the most widely used operationalization of burnout" [34] p. 124. The MBI consists of three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). Participants respond on a seven-point frequency rating scale, ranging from "never" (0) to "every day" (6). High scores on the EE and DP subscales and low scores on the PA subscale (reduced personal accomplishment) are characteristic of burnout (see Appendix B). In this study overall burnout score which was the sum of EE, DP and reduced personal accomplishment scores was taken into account for data analysis.

2.3 Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researchers obtained approval from the head of each language institute. After the approval, the researchers along with institute secretaries and even in some institutes with the help of the head recruited teachers within the designated institutes. All subjects were informed of the purpose of the study, and the approximate time needed to complete the questionnaires (approximately 25 minutes). All teachers were assured that their participation would be anonymous and voluntary. It was also explained that the results would consist of group data and that individual participants and institutes would not be identified. This information was presented in an informed consent form that was handed out with the survey packet. The completion of the survey packet indicated implied consent and thus no signed consent form was returned. Participants were encouraged to keep the informed consent page for their records. Teachers were encouraged to contact the second author if any questions or concerns arose as a result of their participation in the study. The participants took the questionnaires home, filled them out and submitted them to the secretaries of the institutes within 10 days. After collecting the data, all the participants were thanked either in person or by sending letters of appreciation.

Finally, in order to answer the research inquiry, the responses obtained from the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed.

3. RESULTS

Table (1) presents categorization of sub-scales of burnout and self-efficacy scales and their related Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients, mean and standard deviation based on the data collected from the 112 participants of the study.

To examine the role of teachers' self-efficacy in their burnout, Pearson product–moment correlation was conducted. The results revealed significant negative correlations between self-efficacy and burnout ($r = - 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 2). To clarify further, Scatter Plots also showed that the higher teachers' self-efficacy, the lower their burnout (Fig.1). It was also found that, both components of teacher self-efficacy, namely classroom efficacy and organizational efficacy, were negatively correlated with teachers' burnout as follows: burnout and (1) classroom efficacy ($r = - 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), and (2) organizational efficacy ($r = - 0.50$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 2).

Table 1. Classification of different items of burnout and self-efficacy scales, Cronbach Alpha coefficients (α), means and standard deviations

Scales/sub-scales	Items	α	Mean/Std. D
Burnout			30.73/18.15
Emotional Exhaustion	1, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22	.93	14.69/11.47
Reduced Personal Accomplishment	3*, 6*, 7*, 12*, 13*, 17*, 19*, 21*	.87	11.06/6.48
Depersonalization	2, 5, 8 11, 14	.83	5.06/5.19
Self-Efficacy			132.33/19.62
Classroom Efficacy	1 – 19	.90	77.45/11.88
Organizational Efficacy	20*, 21, 22*, 23, 24*, 25, 26, 27, 28*, 29, 30*, 31*, 32, 33*	.88	54.44/10.63

* Scored in reverse order

Table 2. The results of correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout

	Burnout
Total Self-Efficacy	- 0.61**
Classroom Efficacy	- 0.58**
Organizational Efficacy	- 0.50**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To analyze the data further, linear regression analysis was conducted to find out to what extent self-efficacy might have predictive power in teachers' overall burnout. It should be noted that prior to running the regression analysis, preliminary data screening techniques were used to check the assumptions including Normality, Linearity, Homoscedasticity, Outliers and sample size. No assumptions were violated and therefore no data transformation techniques were required.
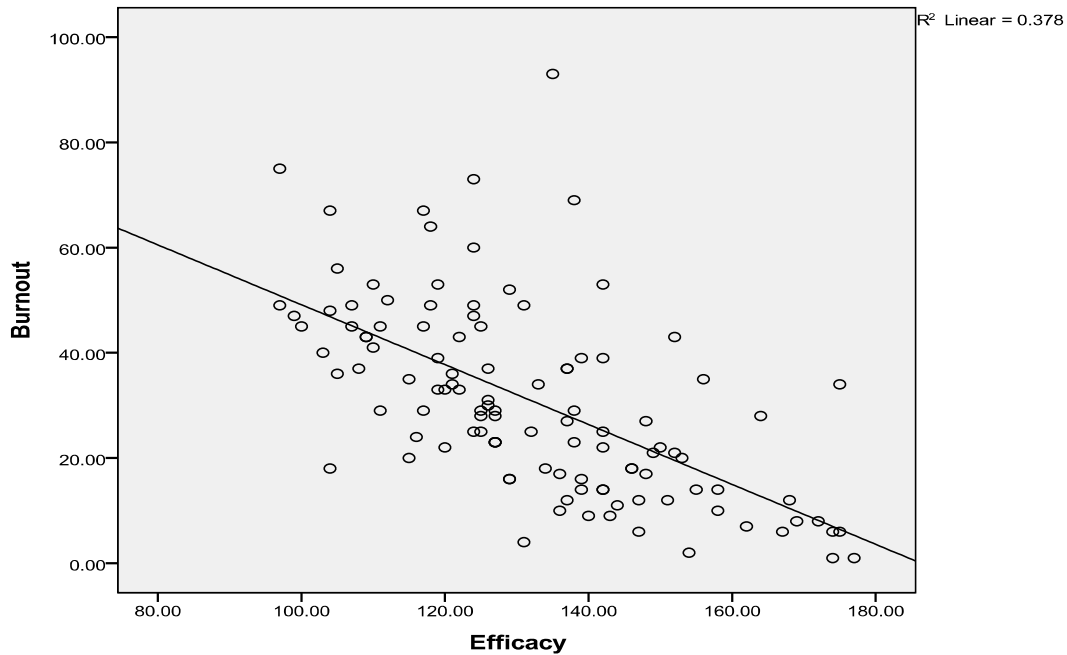

Fig. 1. The Relationship between self-efficacy and burnout

The results indicated that teachers' total score of self-efficacy was a negative predictor of the dependent variable. In this analysis, R^2 =.37, F (1, 111) = 66.96 and p < .01, indicating that 37 % of the variance in burnout is explained by the independent variable, self-efficacy (Table 3).

Table 3. Regression analysis summary for self-efficacy predicting burnout

Predictor	R	R^2	F(1, 111)	B	SEM	Beta (β)	t
Self-Efficacy	-.61	.37	66.96	-.56	.07	- 0.61	-8.18**

**p < .01

To determine the role of teaching experience in teachers' self-efficacy and burnout, Pearson product–moment correlation was used. The findings indicated that teachers' years of teaching experience was positively correlated with their total scores of self-efficacy (r = 0.54, p < 0.01) and negatively correlated with teacher burnout (r = - 0.34, p < 0.01) (see Table 4). To investigate the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and burnout and their age, Pearson product–moment correlation was run again. The results revealed significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and age (r = 0.38, p < 0.01) and significant negative correlation between burnout and age (r = - 0.30, p < 0.01) (Table 4).

Table 4. The results of correlations of teacher self-efficacy and burnout with years of teaching experience (YTE) and age

	YTE	Age
Self-Efficacy	.54**	0.38**
Burnout	-.34**	- 0.30**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, to explore whether there were significant self-efficacy and burnout differences among EFL teachers with respect to gender and marital status, two factorial ANOVA analyses were conducted for self-efficacy and burnout separately with independent variables of gender and marital status. This technique allowed us to look at the individual and joint effect of the two independent variables on the dependent variable.

Since all the prerequisite ANOVA assumptions (Independence of observations, Normality, and Homoscedasticity) were met, we confidently continued with checking the main results obtained. First, a 2X2 ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of gender and marital status on self-efficacy. The results revealed statistically significant main effect for marital status (F (1,108) =12.15, P =.001), and the effect size was (eta squared= 0.10). It was shown that married teachers' self-efficacy (M = 138.40, SD = 20.43) was significantly higher than that of single teachers (M = 126.03, SD = 16.72). However, the main effect for gender (F (1,108) =2.72, P = 0.10, Eta Squared = .02), and the interaction effect (Gender * Marital Status) (F (1,108) =3.37, P = 0.07, Eta Squared = .03) did not reach statistical significance (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics (dependent variable: self-efficacy)

Gender	Marital status	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Female	Married	131.66	19.88	27
	Single	126.68	15.62	29
	Total	129.08	17.81	56
Male	Married	144.46	19.27	30
	Single	125.30	18.14	26
	Total	135.57	20.94	56
Total	Married	138.40	20.43	57
	Single	126.03	16.72	55
	Total	132.33	19.62	112

To explore the impact of gender and marital status on burnout among EFL teachers, another two-way between-group ANOVA was run. The results indicated a statistically significant main effect for marital status (F (1,108) =18.50, P =.000, eta squared= 0.14) with married

teachers' burnout (M = 23.94, SD = 16.85) significantly lower than that of single teachers (M = 37.76, SD = 16.85). The findings also showed that gender has a significant main effect on teacher burnout (F (1,108) = 6.95, P =.01, eta squared= 0.06) with male teachers' burnout (M = 27.30, SD = 17.51), significantly lower than that of females (M = 34.69, SD = 18.24). But no significant interaction effect was noticed (F (1,108) = .69, P =.40, eta squared= 0.00). In other words, the effect of one independent variable on the dependent variable did not depend on the level of the second independent variable (Tables 7 and 8).

Table 6.Tests of between-subjects effects (dependent variable: self-efficacy)

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
Corrected Model	6635.56[a]	3	2211.85	6.61	.000	.15
Intercept	1946221.00	1	1946221.00	5819.07	.000	.98
Gender	909.68	1	909.68	2.72	.102	.02
Marital Status	4064.80	1	4064.80	12.15	.001	.10
Gender * Marital Status	1403.40	1	1403.40	3.37	.070	.03
Error	36121.21	108	334.45			
Total	2004025.00	112				
Corrected Total	42756.77	111				

a. R Squared = .15 (Adjusted R Squared = .13)

Table 7. Descriptive statistics (dependent variable: burnout)

Gender	Marital status	Mean	Std. deviation	N
Female	Married	29.62	16.60	27
	Single	40.41	17.50	29
	Total	35.21	17.77	56
Male	Married	18.83	15.62	30
	Single	34.80	15.92	26
	Total	26.25	17.56	56
Total	Married	23.94	16.85	57
	Single	37.76	16.85	55
	Total	30.73	18.15	112

Table 8. Tests of between-subjects effects (dependent variable: burnout)

Source	Type III Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
Corrected Model	7430.42[a]	3	2476.80	9.17	.000	.20
Intercept	106743.03	1	106743.03	395.27	.000	.78
Gender	1877.25	1	1877.25	6.95	.010	.06
Marital Status	4996.12	1	4996.12	18.50	.000	.14
Gender * Marital Status	187.96	1	187.96	.69	.406	.00
Error	29165.53	108	270.05			
Total	142376.00	112				
Corrected Total	36595.96	111				

a. R Squared = .20 (Adjusted R Squared = .18)

4. DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, the purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout among EFL teachers in private language institutes. Furthermore, demographic variables were investigated to determine whether these variables were moderating factors among self-efficacy and burnout. The results indicated significant negative relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout. The size of this correlation indicates that the higher the teachers' self-efficacy, the less likely they are to experience burnout. This is in accordance with previous theoretical studies on the role of self-efficacy in burnout, though these are limited where teachers are concerned, and quite sparse in the foreign/second language context altogether. According to Bandura (1997), a strong sense of self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways including the ability to cope with stress. Supporting the negative correlation of self-efficacy with burnout, Leiter [35] also argued that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to use active coping strategies, whereas those with low self-efficacy tend to employ avoidance strategies and have a greater tendency to worry about job-related stressors and, subsequently, experience higher levels of burnout. Similarly, when it comes to teaching in private language institutes, teachers who feel more efficacious in their profession are more likely to cope with different stressors (e.g., job insecurity due to lack of tenure status, work overload, student's low motivation and lack of sufficient time). On the other hand, when teachers doubt their own abilities, they cannot survive the demanding conditions in these institutes and tend to collapse under the burden of the stressors. They may look at things as if they are tougher than they really are. This belief engenders high levels of stress, and consequently precipitates teacher burnout. This finding concurs with the findings of other studies. Brissie, Hoover-Dempsey and Bassler [36], for instance, found that teachers who positively rated their teaching capabilities suffered less from burnout than teachers whose scores were lower. Chwalisz et al. [37] asked teachers to appraise their own capacities in dealing with the most stressful experience of the past year. The results indicated that high-scoring teachers used more effective strategies and subsequently appeared to have less burnout than low-scoring teachers. Further, in a cross-sectional study among teachers, Brouwers and Tomic [38] demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about classroom management were significantly related to their burnout level.

The results also revealed that both dimensions of self-efficacy, classroom and organizational efficacies, were reversely correlated with teacher burnout. By the nature of the construct of organizational efficacy, it is expected that teachers' positive perception of themselves as employees of an organization in which they are constantly interacting with others (e.g., colleagues, principal, and supervisors) will have a buffering effect on work related stress and subsequently reduce burnout. The findings of the present study corroborate Cherniss's [32] assertion that the organizational domain of the teacher functioning at school has a remarkable effect on the teacher as an employee. A positive school climate, one that is supportive, helpful, cooperative and respectful of teachers, was negatively related to teacher stress and burnout [39]. On the other hand, preventing teachers from participating in decisions on teacher-related issues will result in declining employees' morale, dissatisfaction and professional esteem [40]. Eventually, these cumulative effects could manifest themselves in job burnout [41]. On the other hand, teachers with a low sense of classroom efficacy, more specifically instruction efficacy, tend to become mired in classroom problems, are stressed and angered by student misbehavior, pessimistic about student potential to improve, and focus more on subject matter than student development [42]. Teachers with high sense of organizational efficacy believe that unmotivated students can be taught, given the extra effort and appropriate techniques; that family support can be enlisted; and that

negative community influences can be overcome through effective teaching [43]. This can either help buffer the deleterious effects of job stress and diminish teacher burnout, or directly improve teacher well-being.

The results also indicated a positive correlation between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and years of teaching experience, as well as age. In other words, teachers' self-efficacy tends to increase over time and with every year of teaching. This is consistent with findings of Chester and Beaudin [44] who found that beliefs are mediated by the teachers' age and prior experience i.e. age and prior experience were associated with changes in newly hired teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. According to their study, older novices were more self-assured and certain of their commitment to teaching than were younger novices. They believed that teaching allows them to contribute to the success of the community and to the future of the world at large by positively affecting learners. These results were also in accordance with those of Campbell [45] who assessed experience differences among teachers in the U.S. and in Scotland. His results were that teachers with more experience were more efficacious. He concluded that more experienced teachers are exposed to an increasing number of ideas and strategies that will assist in confidence development. One plausible explanation for the findings of the present study might be based on Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy's [46] argument that experienced teachers tend to resort to their mastery experiences, gained over years, to bolster their self-efficacy more than inexperienced teachers do. These promising experiences contribute to strengthening the teachers' self-efficacy in a cyclical nature, in that, upon succeeding in doing any task they gain more self-efficacy which leads to greater efforts and perseverance. This, in turn, results in teachers' improved performance which ameliorates self-efficacy [46]. Another reason for lower levels of efficacy among inexperienced teachers is that while experienced teachers make use of their accomplishments to enhance their sense of efficacy, their novice colleagues have to overcome the "reality shock" [47] p. 143, they endure in the early years of their career.

It was also found that there was no significant difference in the teachers' self-efficacy with respect to gender. It suggests that, regardless of age and experience, both male and female teachers can be successful in their profession. This finding was in line with those of Gencer and Cakiroglu [48], which indicated no significant self- efficacy difference with respect to teacher gender.

Further, findings of the present study indicated a significant negative correlation between EFL teachers' age and their burnout. In other words, teachers' burnout tends to decline over time. This is consistent with previous research that demonstrated that age is an important factor in predicting teacher burnout. Substantial evidence has shown that younger teachers have a higher propensity to experience burnout than older teachers [49]. One explanation for this result can be based on Huston's [50] additional finding that younger teachers, due to their age and lack of saleable skills, feel entangled with few alternative possibilities. Due to lack of experience, these teachers might get demoralized in a demanding situation. Consequently, their level of burnout might rise.

Regarding teaching experience, it was found that more experienced teachers were less vulnerable to burnout than less experienced ones. These findings were in line with those reported by Pierce and Molloy [51], while in conflict with the findings of Benham Tye and O'Brien [52] which contended older and experienced teachers were more prone to the accumulated effects of stress, and therefore, may suffer higher levels of burnout than the younger and less experienced workforce. Regarding the finding of the present study, one explanation is perhaps experience cures nervousness, disorganization and various stressors

associated with novice teaching in an EFL context which is replete with anxiety and feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt and apprehension for both teachers and learners. Moreover, more experienced teachers may have a comfort in what they do and, therefore, feel less negative and chronic stress that may lead to burnout.

Moreover, the results of the present study showed that there were significant burnout differences among EFL teachers with respect to gender. In other words, female teachers' burnout level was significantly higher than that of the males. This finding is in accordance with that of Borg and Riding [53], but in contrast with Anderson and Iwanic-hi's [49] result which indicated significantly higher levels of burnout among male teachers. In the present study, female teachers' higher burnout level may be attributed to work overload due to their double dose of responsibility both in language institutes as teachers and in the home as housekeepers. However, additional studies are warranted to further explore factors related to gender as possible influences on burnout ratings.

Finally, the results revealed significant self-efficacy and burnout differences with respect to marital status among the EFL teachers, such that married teachers' self-efficacy was significantly higher than that of single teachers, but their burnout turned out to be lower than that of unmarried teachers. Based on the abundance of research on burnout among human service professionals, marriage seems to have a stabilizing effect on job-related burnout. That is, unmarried individuals are more prone to burnout feelings [54]. One plausible explanation for these findings is that marriage may provide an emotionally fulfilling intimate relationship, satisfying the need for social connection, which could have implications for both physical and mental health. The most recent rigorous research suggests that marriage reduces depressive symptoms for both men and women [55]. As such, married teachers can more efficiently avail themselves of their emotional resources in coping with stressful situations in private language institutes, thereby avoiding teacher burnout by assuaging the mount of stress inherent to the nature of teaching a foreign language, say English. Moreover, the influence from the people in one's life; family, occupation or education, can determine the nature of self-efficacy in that person [2]. Delegation of various duties to an employee makes them realize what they are capable of doing. Likewise, married teachers' responsibilities on parenthood, marital life and occupational affaires yield a high self-efficacy.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings suggest that some EFL teachers, particularly older, more experienced and married ones, feel more competent and efficacious in their profession, and they could be more successful at reducing the level of burnout. This may have implications for teachers' well-being, pro-social behavior, motivation and teaching effectiveness and accordingly students' achievement. Thus, the findings underline the importance of establishing some courses for EFL teachers, especially young, less experienced and unmarried ones to focus particularly on Bandura's [2] four strategies for increasing efficacy providing opportunities for mastery experiences, physiological and emotional arousal, vicarious experience, and social persuasion. Also group-centered in-service training or peer coaching directed at strengthening teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may prove to be an effective means of burnout prevention.

To efficiently deal with teacher burnout, based on the finding of the present study, EFL teachers, should develop skills in monitoring their stress levels. Research by Cockburn [56] concluded that the first step for teachers in reducing stress is to develop their awareness of stress levels. Also teachers and language institute administrators should collaborate to

discuss the sources and consequences of teacher stress as well as ways to alleviate teacher stress. Some sources of teacher stress have been documented in the literature, but each language institute and institute district is likely to have unique sources of stress, specific to that district or building that needs to be addressed. Besides, it is recommended that school authorities and teachers do more to enhance and strengthen the organizational aspect of teaching, that is, the capacity to work as an employee receiving services, assistance and support from others (e.g., colleagues, supervisors, and chancellor). Social support within the organization and organizational support in general can reduce stress [57]. A positive and supportive school environment also assists teachers in becoming more successful and confident. This can have positive impacts on teachers' intention to remain in and give themselves to their profession as conscientiously as possible.

In addition, based on the findings of the present study, it is not fair to judge a teacher based on only one of his/her traits. Each teacher with certain kinds of demographics is unique and no over-general statements can be made about him/her. Therefore, teacher educators can assist teachers to overcome their problems better by knowing how varied teachers are and how these differences result in diverse performances and perceptions in the classroom.

Further research is needed to include a comparison of teachers in private and public settings. The teachers studied in this research were from private institutes. Issues that govern public school settings definitely differ from those of private settings. Also for obtaining a more precise estimate of teachers' self-efficacy and burnout, future study should combine self-reporting measures with other measures based on objective performance.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)

Instruction: Please indicate your answer to each item by circling the appropriate rate on the 6-point scale based on the scoring below.

Scoring: *Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Very often (5), Always (6).*

I. The classroom context

1. I believe my teaching produces a positive change in my students' lives.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
2. I think I know how to tie my teaching with my students' everyday interests.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
3. I feel that my students willingly comply with my requests and instructions in the classroom.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
4. I believe that I am a highly capable teacher.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
5. I think I know how to improvise in response to changing circumstances when I teach.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
6. I think that my teaching has an impact on the morals and values of my students.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
7. I know how to adjust the level of difficulty of my teaching to suit the students so that they can understand and learn.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
8. I think I can be very creative in my work with students.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
9. I think I have the capacity to encourage my students to express their thoughts and feelings freely in my class.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
10. I think I am an interesting and motivating teacher.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
11. If a student does not remember what was learned in previous classes, I know what to do to help.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
12. I think I know how to identify and deal with my students' problems before they get worse.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
13. I think I know when to involve my students in decisions concerning learning issues.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
14. I can handle student disturbances in the classroom without raising my voice.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
15. I think that my teaching is flexible and adaptive.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
16. I think that in conflict situations I can act in such a manner that would not lead to a crisis.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
17. I think I can joke with students without it affecting their respect for me.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6

18. I think I can let my students laugh or joke in the classroom without loosing my grip on the class.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
19. I can easily share my feelings with my students if I decide to do so.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6

II. The school context

20. I have difficulty in making demands of the school administration.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
21. I think that my principal would readily accept my plans or suggestions for promoting the school's educational and social goals.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
22. I feel that my school administrators are not sympathetic to me or my ideas for promoting the school's educational or social goals.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
23. I am actively involved in important decision-making processes at school.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
24. I do not think my school administrators are sufficiently familiar with me or my views.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
25. I think I can play an important role in solving serious school problems.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
26. I believe I can contribute to molding school educational and administrative policies and characteristics.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
27. I believe I enjoy a good rapport with the administrators at school.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
28. When I have problems at school, I do not know whom to turn to.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
29. I think I could get a better position in my school if I wanted.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
30. When faced with too many difficulties in my relations with colleagues or administration staff I prefer to retreat or give up.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
31. I do not know who really makes the important decisions in my school.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
32. I think I have friendly relationships with colleagues at school.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6
33. I feel I cannot establish good relations with colleagues at my school.
    0   1   2   3   4   5   6

APPENDIX B: Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES)

Instruction: Please indicate your answer to each item by circling the appropriate rate on the 7-point scale based on the scoring below.

Scoring: *Never (0)*, *A few times (1)*, *Once a month or less (2)*,
A few times a month (3), **Once** *a week (4)*, **A** *few times a week (5)* and Everyday *(6)*

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I can easily understand how my students feel about things.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I feel used up at the end of the workday.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. I don't really care what happens to some students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. I feel very energetic.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. I feel students blame me for some of their problems.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. I feel burned out from my work.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. I feel frustrated by my job.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
21. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	0 1 2 3 4 5 6

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