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Articles

An extended literature review on in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs

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Abstract: Self-efficacy (SE) plays an important function for a teacher in boosting teacher-student engagement which may lead to positive outcomes. To investigate the different SE-related concerns among teachers, meta-analysis studies, systemic reviews, and many other sorts of studies in the field of education have been undertaken. In this study, an extended literature review was conducted to particularly investigate the issue of in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs. To this end, using terms such as “self-efficacy in general teachers,” “self-efficacy in EFL teachers,” and “self-efficacy in language teachers,” the researcher searched several important databases and found 31 relevant academic journal articles published over the past six years (2015–2021). These papers were derived from the following databases: Elsevier, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar, the JSTOR digital library, Education Source, ERIC (EBSCO), Sage Journal, Cambridge Core, Research Gate, and Research Online. This literature review reveals that research in this field is required to demonstrate how elements in the surroundings of teachers might predict changes in and build teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, this study is believed to have significant implications in understanding the need for research on self-efficacy via a complex dynamic system theory (CDST) perspective as well as an enhancement in the future of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs.

Keywords: self-efficacy beliefs, EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs, in-service EFL teachers, extended literature review, complex dynamic system theory (CDST).

Introduction

The term "self-efficacy" (SE) relates to the teachers’ confidence and belief in their capacity and value; it is also considered a cognitive process of one’s feelings. Bandura (2003) states that SE is the personal confidence of a person in controlling different events that have happened in his/her life. Confidence in the ability of activities to be completed successfully and efficiently will influence several factors, including: 1) control of action and behavior; 2) choice of environment and situation, and 3) persistence in performing specific assignments (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1982) discusses broadly that SE is an essential component of one's behavior if it is based on several phenomena like behavioral imitation, stress psychology, self-management, and self-actualization rather than negative behavior, lack of resignation, and perseverance in achieving something and getting the desired work. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) describe self-efficacy as a natural cycle with a high level of efficacy that seeks to enhance performance, resulting in great effectiveness.
Self-efficacy (SE) is also characterized as a cognitive process for controlling behavior, increasing self-competence and ability, and making people more competent and efficient (Shoulders & Krei, 2016). Self-efficacy plays an important function for a teacher in boosting teacher-student engagement as well, which may lead to positive outcomes. Most research has been implemented to gauge the representation of self-efficacy beliefs in the field of education. To investigate the different SE related concerns among teachers, meta-analysis studies, systemic reviews, and many other sorts of studies in the field of education have also been undertaken. As for research on teachers and teacher education since 1985, Klassen and Durksen (2014) undertook a systemic review on self-efficacy by focusing mainly on the tools employed, analytical parameters, culture, sample, content, teacher control, and teachers’ wellbeing. In a meta-analysis study, Steven and Hansel (2015) explore the extent to which SE influences teachers’ commitment to teaching. Zee et al. (2016) carried out a 40-year systematic review on teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs concerning class performance, students’ academic success, and the teachers’ wellbeing. The findings of the study show the direct and indirect impacts of teachers on SEs in the classroom environment. However, the results also indicate that the relationship between SE and the parameters in question was considered significant. As for language teachers’ self-efficacy (LTSE) beliefs, Wyatt (2016) proposes a domain-specific branch of research for teachers’ self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs over the last 16 years, emphasizing the qualities of the study area of LTSE beliefs. Similarly, another systematic review on self-efficacy was conducted by Ramakrishnan and Salleh (2018) between the years 2014 and 2018. The findings of the study show that there is a positive relationship between the studies that affect teachers’ self-efficacy in pedagogy, experience and management, the participation of students, instructional policies, and instructions in the classroom. The negative factors identified in the studies include occupational stress and job satisfaction, which are both key components in the reduction of teachers’ self-efficiency. Furthermore, it was found that a lack of teachers’ training or skills would lead to low self-efficacy in teachers who have taught students with special needs in inclusive courses. Likewise, the present paper aims to focus on EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in the form of an extended literature review to offer some possible new insights into the psychology of language teaching.

Methodology

In this study, the extended literature review was carried out systematically. The purpose of this study was to discover numerous essential factors that had always been employed in each of the previous studies. Theories, instruments, and variables influencing teachers’ SE are among these determining factors. A few factors have been highlighted, including authors, years, location, samples, instruments, and study findings. The present extended literature review attempts to delve into the concept of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in various EFL contexts around
the world. To this end, using terms such as "self-efficacy in general teachers," "self-efficacy in EFL teachers," and "self-efficacy in language teachers," the researcher searched several important databases and found 31 relevant academic journal articles published over the past six years (2015-2021). These papers were derived from the following databases: Elsevier, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar, the JSTOR digital library, Education Source, ERIC (EBSCO), Sage Journal, Cambridge Core, Research Gate, and Research Online. An in-depth analysis was then performed to particularly investigate the issue of in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in this paper. This study was limited in several ways, including studies focused specifically on "language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs," which may merit a separate review, and being limited to studies published in English; it is also possible that limitations in this study hampered the ability to delve into all available studies. In addition to these constraints, while there are studies about LTSE, it is preferable to formulate the latest publications relevant to this concept, and then the year 2015 was chosen as a starting point for convenience. This review thus spans 6 years, and this period (2015–2021) facilitates the comparisons made below.

As Norris and Ortega (2006) suggested, it was attempted to be as broad as possible in examining the literature within the limits specified, leaving the “quality” of the studies to be addressed in the review itself; extensive sampling was therefore used. This study evolved through many stages while producing it, just as Wyatt (2018) did in his literature review study. When finding possibly relevant sources as mentioned above, first double-check that the concept was implemented in the abstracts or full-texts by another colleague who is familiar with the concept to ensure that the emphasis was truly on in-service LTSE views (rather than on learners, the teachers of other subjects, other levels of language teachers, or other constructs). The table was then generated to include additional details like the author, the topic of the studies, participants, methodology, and major findings. After labeling this table, studies were categorized in various ways, and then the table was reread by the researcher and the double checker in light of these classifications. Comments were expanded by reflecting on the literature. Categories included the location where the study was carried out, the year it was published, and the methodological techniques and instruments used in connection to LTSE beliefs. In this way, Norris and Ortega’s (2006) suggestions were followed and concentrated on "the actual variables, features, and data given in the original studies rather than on only the study-specific findings supplied by the primary researchers" (p. 6). Exploring the studies in this manner seems necessary if the review was to be comprehensive, capable of providing new insights, and assisting the analytical effort of developing a systematic portrayal of the research area.

After synthesizing the given literature to come up with some possible new perspectives, a few important factors were identified. They included some shared elements in the theories, tools, and variables of the studies
in question. With this in mind, three main questions were thus raised to meet the goal of the study:

1. What is the literature on in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy (2015–2021)?
2. What are the common self-efficacy theories and instruments used in in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs (2015–2021)?
3. What are the most frequent self-efficacy variables explored in the literature on in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs (2015–2021)?

Eligibility Criteria

The Inclusion and exclusion criteria eligible for this study were constructed based on the research questions guiding the present study. Numerous research has been published about self-efficacy (SE) since 1960, including systematic reviews, literature reviews, and meta-analysis. In this regard, the researcher intended to come up with the latest excellent articles published in the last six years, because there are a few research papers on self-efficacy in the field of education. By determining the specific keyword through abstract reading, the papers were narrowed. First, the articles were classified by years, and 61 articles on the self-efficacy of teachers were received. Then, through selected studies that exclusively pertain to the self-efficacy beliefs of in-service EFL teachers during the last six years, the articles collected have been refined. The abstracts were reexamined again until the number of articles for in-service EFL teachers was reduced to 31.

Results and Discussion

Articles about Self-Efficacy Beliefs of in-service EFL Teachers

This part is a discussion of articles related to the self-efficacy beliefs of in-service EFL teachers. As it is shown in Appendix 1, the study of articles covered authors, titles, years, context, participants, data collection tools, and findings for each article. 31 self-efficacy (SE) articles were identified including in-service EFL TSE beliefs. These articles cover the last six years. As seen in Figure 1, the study included different countries around the world including Turkey, Iran, Oman, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, Israel, and Pakistan participating in 2,959 in-service EFL teachers (See Figure 2). This shows the relevance of the self-efficacy of teachers in the field of education. Rawahi et al. (2019) concluded that the relationship between the academic outcomes of students and self-efficacy is significantly good. High SE affects learners’ motivation, students’ achievement, and teachers’ teaching practices. It also affects teachers’ job satisfaction and burnout levels, as well as their psychological wellbeing (Alibakhshi et al., 2020). Sabet et al. (2018) also indicate that teachers with high self-efficacy
motivate their students more successfully and enhance their cognitive growth. However, those with a weak perception of efficacy prefer a “custodial orientation that relies heavily on negative sanctions to get students to study” (Bandura, 1994 as cited in Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012, p. 489). Language teacher education can have a positive influence on language teacher self-efficacy beliefs, in both pre- and in-service contexts. Regarding this matter, Wyatt (2016) indicates how Omani English teachers, reflecting and trying, developed practical knowledge and long-term LTSE convictions via focusing on self-oriented action research activities. Wyatt and Dikilitaş (2016) state that engaging in teachers’ research as a continuous profession allowed Turkish English teachers to gain higher efficiency concerning their actual tasks.

![Figure 1]
Figure 1
Distribution of studies according to the countries between years 2015 and 2021

![Figure 2]
Figure 2
Distribution of the participants based on Countries

Two-thirds of all the studies (21/31) conducted between the years 2015-2021 are quantitative methods. Sabet et al. (2018) explored the relationship between Iranian EFL Teachers’ Self-efficacy, their Personality, and Students’ Motivation and they found that, unlike less efficacious teachers, highly efficacious teachers are good at motivating their students and improving their cognitive growth. Rawahi et al. (2019) found similar findings. There are other correlational studies including self-efficacy and job satisfaction, burnout, empowerment, etc. in our sample (Azizifar et al., 2020; Babaei & Abednia, 2016; Fuchs et al.,
As seen in Figure 2 above, the distribution of participants’ numbers also supports that most of the studies were conducted via correlational studies or used quantitative methods. When we analyze these studies we can conclude that they have a reductionist point of view. Their basic aim is to generalize so there is a linear type of interaction. As suggested by complexity theory the effect of dependencies among components cannot be fully represented by traditional approaches based on statistics. Those components are variables and they are dependent upon each other, so they cannot be fully represented by traditional methods like correlation because the system is changing. The growth of self-efficacy cannot be predicted. The relationships between the cause and effects do not easily determine the dynamic changes of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs.

Figure 3
Distribution of the methods used in the articles

In the 31 articles reviewed, it is also seen in Figure 3 above that only eight articles adopted a qualitative study, and two conducted a mixed-method study, which consists of EFL teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs. However, a mixed-methods study conducted by Lailiyah and Cahyono (2017) did not truly address the challenges of directly eliciting the self-efficacy of language teachers (LTSE), since qualitative research techniques were mostly applied to extract background or contextual information for other purposes and support the data collected from the questionnaires. This study examined the self-efficacy of technology integration (SETI) of Indonesian EFL teachers and their usage of technology for teaching EFL. The study looked for a linear relationship when we looked at the findings. Data analysis shows that the EFL teachers’ SETI is linked with their usage of technology in teaching EFL. Therefore, we could not accept this study as a mixed-method study. It is quantitative indeed. I would like to criticize it in this way.

However, Indahyanti (2016) used interviews as a data collection instrument in his research to explore Indonesian EFL teachers’ successful teaching performances and their beliefs in self-efficacy. The researcher maintained that he explored this influence in a classroom setting and discovered that experienced teachers have a higher perception of self-efficacy beliefs than novice teachers. We can conclude that generalizable...
results were found like in most other qualitative studies (Batool & Shah, 2018; Indahyanti, 2016; Listiani et al., 2019) in our study sample. Zonoubi et al. (2017) discovered self-efficacy to be a dynamic structure and to be nurtured via teacher reflection and collaboration opportunities like those provided by professional learning communities (PLCs). As Stoll and Louis (2007) describe, PLCs allude to collaborative activities that enhance “teachers critically interrogating their practice in ongoing, reflective, and collaborative ways” (p. 2) to support student learning. It can be claimed that the researchers were aware that self-efficacy is a complex structure, but their research method was not suitable to gauge this dynamism.

In contrast, some other researchers have succeeded in centralizing observations on various aspects of their research. In the framework of interviews, reflective assignments, etc. Phan and Locke (2015), Phan (2016), Wyatt (2016), and Wyatt and Dikilitaş (2016) attempted to incorporate and contextualize the knowledge they learned from them. The number one principle in designing research in a complex system perspective is including context as a part of the system under investigation, in which the researcher should consider the contextual factors and variables as a part of the research to get a holistic understanding of the issue in demand. Including the context means including any variable that has an impact on the issue under investigation. Although this research did not follow the principles of complexity perspective, there was a further step to be ecologically valid.

Theories and Data Collection Tools

This section examines the number of articles that are often used for 31 articles chosen from 2015 to 2021, depending on theories and data collection tools. Based on the articles evaluated, most of them employed the theory of Bandura (1982) and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001) in their articles or the context of the theory as well as to discuss their findings. Every article summarizes the need for self-efficacy (SE) of a teacher in detail, and its significance is also highlighted in depth. Bandura (1982) states that the SE of a teacher influences organization, the teacher’s academic appointment in classrooms, and the way a teacher evaluates a student based on his/her abilities.

The notion of a new theory of self-efficacy based on Bandura’s study was developed by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998). Four things are said to impact teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy is defined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) as a natural cycle of excellent efficacy, leading to scaffold and continuity to improved performance and returning to excellent efficacy. It is discovered that basically, all the papers debated in the last six years formed the basis of these theories.

The data collection tools used in 31 papers between 2015 and 2021 revealed that some tools were used extensively. For studies relating to in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy, The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was used for articles
In2, In5, In10, In18, In 20, In,22, In23, In28, and In31. Meanwhile, an adapted or modified version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was used in articles In3, In8, In11, and In25. On the other hand, Self-Efficacy Survey (Praver, 2014) was used in article In17 to gauge the Turkish EFL teachers' self-efficacy and burnout levels. The use of these tools in studies helps researchers analyze the amount and relevance of teachers' self-efficacy when used in classroom teaching and learning.

We can conclude that these mentioned researches above started with a claim and some assumptions, and the researchers tested them. So, in terms of research design, the contemporary approaches are mostly large-scale and cross-sectional studies. It includes a large group of participants because the aim is to make generalizations. However, as Wyatt (2016) mentioned, self-efficacy is a complex, dynamic and evolving construct. In this regard, the whole system and the pattern of its growth are studied, thus a transition from the objective of a causal explanation to a more descriptive, exploratory retrodiction is needed. We have to make comments on what we observed. Self-efficacy is needed to minimize the stress and concerns of teachers in carrying out their assigned tasks. To achieve this, we need to know the causal mechanisms of their self-efficacy levels.

**Research variables in Teachers' Self-efficacy (TSE)**

From 2015 to 2021, this section will discuss frequent research variables in 31 papers. There are several self-efficacy variables studied in the 31 research articles over six years from 2015 to 2021. The self-efficacy is investigated to see whether there is a relationship with these variables or not. Variables selected by researchers for these groups of teachers include age (Özkara, 2019), teacher motivational strategies, teachers’ general beliefs, student’s motivation and achievement, classroom management, teaching practices, (Al Rawahi et al., 2019; Alibakhshi et al., 2020; and Sabet et al., 2018), cultural context (Barabadi et al., 2018; Phan, 2016; Phan & Locke, 2016), various instructions, and professional development programs (Lailiyah & Cahyono, 2017; Ravandpour, 2019; Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2016), job satisfaction (Safari et al., 2020), burn-out (Fathi, & Saeedian, 2020; Roohani & Iravani, 2020), psychological wellbeing (Fathi et al., 2020), teachers’ empowerment (Azizifar, et al., 2020), self-regulation (Noughabi & Amirian, 2020) and online teaching Lee & Ogawa, 2021). The self-efficiency of teachers depends heavily on these variables since they help increase teachers' confidence in their capacity and competence to carry out tasks without giving up (Bandura, 1997). Studies focused on these variables should thus be pursued with a view to the theory of complexity to receive positive feedback from teachers and to ensure a high level of self-efficacy.
Conclusions

This extended literature review addresses in-service EFL teachers’ self-efficacy since 2015. There is a great possibility for quantitative and qualitative designs for methodological choices. Research in this field needs to understand the real causal mechanisms of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs during their instructions and their self-efficacy trajectories. We need to start from inside. Understanding things from the inside is more important than trying to put everything in a framework that is brought to us by external theories. Thus, this does not seem to be a puzzle in which we put the pieces together to reach that complete picture which is predetermined because there is no predetermined picture. It emerges, and it is incidental. Individual differences and the diversity of teachers, diversity of learners and context, are always an issue in complexity theory.

Additionally, the common research in our field tries to see the picture from the lens of the approach or theory presented and we try to fix or match the pieces to those theories that are not correct in the understanding of complexity perspective.

In brief, this extended literature review demonstrates the challenges in this field, which require further research, are of tremendous importance and significance to language teachers. New variables rather than predetermined ones may emerge. All in all, future studies regarding self-efficacy beliefs can be conducted with instruments and methods of Complexity theory as Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2019) aim to explain in their book “Research Methods for Complexity Theory in Applied Linguistics”. This literature review reveals that research in this field is required to demonstrate how elements in the surroundings of teachers might predict changes in and build teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, this study is believed to have significant implications in understanding the need for research on self-efficacy via complex dynamic system theory (CDST) perspective as well as an enhancement in the future of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs.

References


## Appendix 1

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<td>International Journal of Academic Research on Progressive Education and Development: Talal AlRawahi, Norhash C. Hassan and Amin Isma</td>
<td>Quantitative Teacher Motivational Strategies Questionnaire (TMQS)</td>
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<td>In2</td>
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<td>Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education: Goudarz Albekhshi, Fariborz Nikzad and Akram Labiefi</td>
<td>Qualitative phenomenological inquiry: Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (long form) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2007) and interview checklist</td>
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<td>The Effects of a Professional Development Program on English as a Foreign Language Teachers’ Efficacy and Classroom Practice, 2015</td>
<td>TESOL Journal: Deniz Ortaylepe, Ayse S. Akyel</td>
<td>Quantitative ‘English Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. The adapted version of TSES (Tschannen-Moran &amp; Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001), Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching observation scheme and The questionnaire version of COLT.</td>
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<td>“Are they becoming more reflective and/or efficacious?” A conceptual model mapping how teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs might grow 2016</td>
<td>Educational Review Mark Wyatt</td>
<td>Qualitative 27 classroom observations, 35 semi-structured interviews, reflective assignments and feedback on these as well as field notes</td>
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<td>Investigating the Relationship between Iranian EFL Teachers’ Empowerment and their Self-Efficacy as a Consequence for their Educational Improvement 2020</td>
<td>Journal of Education and Health Promotion Albor Azizifar, Selunch Naghpour, Fatemah Mohammadi, Yousef Neissi, Fariba Cheragh and Saeid Shoko</td>
<td>Quantitative School Perception, Empowerment Scale (SEES), Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)</td>
<td>Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesian EFL Teachers Self-Efficacy towards Technology Integration (ETI) and Their Use of Technology in EFL Teaching 2017</td>
<td>Studies in English Language Teaching Masooma Lajiyah &amp; Bambang Yudi Cahyono</td>
<td>Mixed Method. This study used both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from a Survey and Interviews, Computer Technology Integration Survey (CTIS) questionnaire developed by Wang, Emmer and Newby (2004) the interview focused on three aspects of teachers' self-efficacy; efficacy in instructional strategies, efficacy in classroom management, and efficacy in student engagement (Technmian &amp; Hoy, 2001) 2001. The</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Relationship Between Burnout and Self-Efficacy among Iranian Male and Female EFL Teachers 2020</td>
<td>Journal of Language &amp; Education Ali Roohani, Mohdi Iraeei</td>
<td>Quantitative Measure, Burnout Inventory-Educator’s Survey (MIE-ES) and a modified version of Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)</td>
<td>Iran</td>
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<td>Influential Factors behind an Effective Teacher: Evaluating Teacher Efficacy 2018</td>
<td>Journal of Human Psychology Saleh Ebad, &amp; Syed Mubarak Abbas Sheh</td>
<td>Quantitative Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) form developed by Moran &amp; Woolfolk (2001)</td>
<td>Iran</td>
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### Declaración de intereses

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### Información adicional