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# Effect of EFL Teachers' Experience and Empowerment on Their EFL Students' Achievement

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' years of experience and their empowerment on Iranian EFL students' achievement. To this end, 70 EFL teachers and 60 intermediate students were selected from different English language institutes in Shiraz, Fars province. The instruments used in this study include the Oxford Quick Placement Test, Demographics, and Teacher Empowerment Questionnaire. The results were analyzed using One-way ANOVA, frequency analysis, independent samples t-test, and Multiple Regression Analysis. The result from the descriptive analysis regarding the distribution of means based upon the responses provided by the participants of the present study indicated that highly experienced teachers view their most empowered subscale as autonomy, status, self-efficacy, impact, decision-making and professional growth, respectively. These results suggested that teachers perceive their highest level of empowerment to reside in their ability to make decisions on what is taught or about curriculum, and to have control over daily schedules. In addition, it is important to mention that low-experienced teachers view their most empowered subscale as self-efficacy, professional growth, status, autonomy, impact and decision-making. The findings of the current research suggest that teachers perceive their highest level of empowerment to reside in their ability to share their skills and knowledge with students to help them learn.

**Keywords:** Iranian EFL teachers, years of experience, teacher empowerment, students' achievement

## INTRODUCTION

According to Snodgrass Rangel et al. (2020), teacher empowerment consists of professional growth, decision-making, incentive, status, and their contribution to teachers' feelings of job satisfaction. Teacher empowerment as explained by Snodgrass Rangel et al. (2020) is a mixture of decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. Teacher empowerment has been viewed by many researchers as promoting collegiality, providing quality professional learning, and acknowledging the impact that teachers have on student achievement (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). Teachers are the most equipped to make decisions concerning teaching and learning, so it is imperative to research the conditions that will ensure that teachers are able to perform their jobs effectively (Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; Wan, 2005). According to Wynne (2001), the goal of teacher empowerment is learners'

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achievement. Empowerment includes several steps, with an emphasis on the need to continuously practice these steps to achieve the desired outcomes (Nunan et al., 2019). At a micro level, teacher empowerment can be conceptualized as providing teachers with the privilege to exercise professional reasoning with the daily curriculum and teaching subjects. On a higher level, it is conceptualized as the administration's investment in teachers by giving them the opportunity and freedom to be involved in the regulation of school objectives and policies (Bleumers et al., 2012).

A teacher is one of the main factors that have a lot of influence on students' achievement, performance, and success (Zainab Al Balushy, as cited in Melek Koc, 2012). They stated that in addition to the teacher's knowledge about the subject matter, other characteristics of the teacher such as teaching skills, teaching styles, and personal traits would also affect the students' learning attitudes, motivation, and learning outcomes to some extent. The teacher seems to take the key role in facilitating the student's learning and the characteristics of the teacher may influence the student's learning process to some extent well (Murray, 1991). Improving teacher quality will help ensure that more students reach their potential because they benefit from effective teachers every year (June C. Rivers & William L. Sanders, 2012). Research regarding experienced teachers has shown that experienced teachers generally know more about the content they teach, have different attitudes regarding their students, and behave differently in the classroom than novice teachers do (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). They added that teachers with additional years of the experience felt more confident in their ability to employ instructional and assessment practices that would benefit even the most difficult students. Blackburn and Robinson (2008) suggested that experienced teachers' mastery experiences should allow them to perfect their preferred learning styles. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) stated that experienced teachers may develop higher self-efficacy due to the real successes they experience with students in the classroom. According to Wolters and Daugherty (2007), experienced teachers, usually, tend to have a better knowledge of the subject-matter content they teach, and generally acts and behave professionally in their teaching and assessment practices. Such teachers are more confident in their ability to manage classes and prevent incidences and disruptions that can potentially make the teaching and learning process difficult. They are more tolerant and patient than their colleagues with few years of teaching. Novice teachers continue to develop subject-matter content knowledge, and classroom management and teaching skills, required to make them expert teachers. They spend a lot of time learning, trying to understand fully, teaching as a profession. The novice teachers would spend years building the rich store of knowledge the experienced teacher has already gained. Thus, the present study sought to promote the research into the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' experience, and empowerment on Iranian EFL students' achievement. By considering these considerations, this study aims to answer the subsequent analysis questions:

***Q1.*** *Do Iranian EFL teachers' years of experience have any significant effect on Iranian EFL students' achievement?*

***Q2.*** *Does Iranian EFL highly experienced teachers' empowerment have any significant effect on Iranian EFL students' achievement?*

***Q3.*** *Does Iranian EFL low experienced teachers' empowerment have any significant effect on Iranian EFL students' achievement?*

***Q4.*** *What are the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions towards the effects of their years of experience, and empowerment on Iranian EFL students' achievement?*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Years of teaching experience, described by Harris and Sass (2011) as on-the-job training, has been directly related to higher knowledge and understanding of educational practices. The key difference between teachers with more years of experience and beginning teachers has been found in the ways they have completed tasks or the types of tasks they have attempted (Tsui, 2009). As Harris and Sass (2011) noted, mentoring beginning teachers has been critical

to not only avoid turn-over costs associated with hiring new teachers, but to have been able to develop beginning teachers into productive, experienced teachers across time.

Huang and Li (2012) noted that knowing the relationship between years of experience and teachers' self-perceived competence levels could help better identification areas of effective teaching that need fostering at various stages of the teaching career, and Kunter, Baumert, Voss, Klusmann, Richter, and Hachfeld (2013) stated that more studies were needed that combined different aspects of competence over the professional career. Teachers with more years of experience have been more capable of comprehending and describing classroom occurrences and have been able to interpret students' behavior and offer possible solutions for problematic situations (Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein, & Berliner, 1988; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991). Instructionally, teachers with more years of experience have been more likely to (a) have an elaborate mental plan for lessons, (b) utilize students' questions and responses for classroom discussion and learning, (c) employ flexibility and improvisation during lessons, and (d) be concerned about students' understanding of taught material (Cleary & Groer, 1994). Additionally, Krull, Oras, and Sisask (2007) noted that experienced teachers have characteristically been more reflective, talkative, and more concerned with the classroom atmosphere and general teacher strategy.

It has been assumed that years of teaching experience increase a teacher's effectiveness. Evidence has suggested that teachers with 25 years of experience or more may be less productive and less effective than teachers with less experience (Ladd, 2008) or even teachers with no experience (Harris & Sass, 2011). Harris and Sass (2011) explored the relationship between years of teaching experience and productivity. Novice teachers are limited in their number of mastery experiences due to the lack of time spent in the classroom (Hartfield, 2011). However, research suggests that although novice teachers have lower self-efficacy in general, student teachers actually enter the profession with an enlarged level of efficacy due to the mastery experiences obtained during student teaching (Knoblock, 2006). Woolfolk-Hoy and Burke-Spero (2005) mirrored these findings by suggesting that teachers raise their level of self-efficacy because of the student teaching process. A vast array of research exists to suggest that novice teachers actually exhibit high levels of self-efficacy the first few years of teaching (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008; Epps, Foor, & Cano,2010; Whittington, Mcconnell, & Knoblock, 2006).

Wolff, van den Bogert, Jarodzka, and Boshuizen (2014) showed that expert teachers were significantly more effective at predicting classroom management events than novice teachers. This suggests that with years of experience, teachers develop a better understanding of classroom management, which enables them to anticipate issues and to adapt their classroom management practices accordingly. Along the same line, Morris-Rotschild and Brassard (2006) reported that years of teaching experience were positively associated with compromising and integrating—two positive conflict strategies within classrooms that are conceptually close to autonomy support—and negatively associated with obliging, which is conceptually close to control.

Empowerment is a means to gain individual dominion (Cattanoe & Chapman, 2010). That is, to achieve personal power over their environment. Empowerment grants people, groups, and society the means to gain and maintain control over all matters (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). Empowerment is a realization of the connection between ambition and accomplishment (Cattanoe & Chapman, 2010). It is an emphasis of personal values and must encompass both the desire to move toward positive change and the admission of the ability to do so (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010). House and Frymier (2009) asserted that students should remain focused on specifics goals in order to succeed. According to Bogler and Nir (2012), empowerment suggests real changes in one's professional expertise, rising autonomy, and involvement in decision making processes. Similarly, Bolin (1989) emphasizes that empowerment is participating in decisions about school goals and practicing these decisions

in the educational field. Kimwarey, Chirure and Omondi (2014) assert that an empowered individual has the skills and knowledge to act or improve in a positive way. Through teacher empowerment, teachers develop their own competence and self-discover their potential and limitations.

Teacher empowerment has been conceptualized in various ways in education literature, but within the last two decades, there have been many attempts to integrate them (Boonyarit, Chomphupart, & Arin, 2010; Kahles, 2015; Lee & Nie, 2014; Maynard, Gilson, & Mathieu, 2012; Spreitzer, 2007). Following these scholars, it is possible to view teacher empowerment as a process in which certain organizational and social behaviors (Heck & Brandon, 1995; Short, 1994; Spreitzer, 2007), facilitate the generation of intrinsic motivation in a teacher (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), which may lead to teachers functioning at optimal capability as they bring out their inner potential (Bernstein, 2003; Harwell, 2003). This process is iterative, since positive empowerment outcomes may encourage more of the enabling organizational factors such as teachers' involvement in decision-making. This conceptualization of teacher empowerment closely follows the theoretical framework that Lee and Nie (2014) proposed, including both social structural and psychological empowerment, and outcomes.

Empirical research on teacher empowerment to date falls largely under four broad categories: First, there are studies that explore the relationship of teacher empowerment to a host of organizational variables such as job satisfaction (e.g., Amoli & Youran, 2014; Bogler & Nir, 2012; Cypert, 2009; Kirika, 2011; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Rinehart & Short, 1994). Secondly, there are studies that deal with the perceptions of empowerment, of teachers and/or school leaders (e.g., Coble, 2010; Gardenhour, 2008; Keiser & Shen, 2000; Weshah, 2012; Klecker & Loadman, 1998a, 1998b). Thirdly, there are studies that explore empowering leadership and other empowering/disempowering practices in schools (e.g. Leech, 1999; Kirgan, 2009; Maxfield & Flumerfelt, 2009; Sagnak, 2012). Finally, there have been sporadic studies in some non-western countries, critically evaluating teacher empowerment efforts in their cultural context (e.g., Boey, 2010; Dardjowidjojo, 2001; Kao, 2015; Tat, 1997; Wan, 2005; Wong, 2006). This last category of studies concluded that empowerment efforts were hindered to some extent by the strongly rooted cultural values of the study context.

Azimi, and Youran (2014) carried out a study to examine the relationship between teachers' empowerment and job satisfaction. The surveys used in this study contained School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) which measured teacher perceived empowerment, the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) measured teacher job satisfaction, and a demographic survey including age, educational background, and gender. SPES measured six different dimensions of empowerment: Decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact, along with an overall total and TJSQ included nine factors of satisfaction: Supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, and responsibility. The result indicated that significant correlations were found between total teacher empowerment and total teacher job satisfaction. However, there was no correlation between factor of security in the job satisfaction scale and the three teacher empowerment scales of professional growth, status, and autonomy. There was also no correlation found between the teacher job satisfaction factor of recognition and the three teacher empowerment dimensions of decision-making, self-efficacy, and impact. On the other hand, there were significant differences in the demographic variables of educational background and gender with regards to teacher empowerment and job satisfaction.

Veisia, Azizifara, Gowharya, and Jamalinesaria (2015) conducted a study to focus on the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher self-efficacy. The research was a quantitative study in which the data was obtained to get a great understanding the relationship between empowerment and self-efficacy of Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The sample consisted

of 60 teachers in Ilam and Eyvan high schools. Participants in this study answered the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) questionnaire (Short and Rinehart, 1992). The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was used to measure teacher self-efficacy and differences in teachers on age, gender, and years of teaching experience. Pearson Product-Moment correlation was computed to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher self-efficacy. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between teacher empowerment and teacher self-efficacy. Independent sample t-test revealed no statistically significant differences in empowerment or self-efficacy based on age and empowerment based on years of teaching experience or gender. In addition, a statistically significant difference was found between teachers' self-efficacy and gender.

Aliakbari and Azimi (2016) examined the effect of teacher empowerment on teachers' commitment and student achievement. A sample of 356 teachers at Payam-e-Noor University, Ilam branch completed two questionnaires, i.e., School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) developed by Short and Rinehart (1992) and Organization Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al.'s (1979). The results of structural equation modeling indicated the six dimensions of decision-making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact played a significant role in teacher commitment and student achievement. Teacher empowerment was found to be important in the classroom and instructional decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness and improve student performance. These outcomes may be beneficial for policy-makers in directing teachers to a high level of competency, high status, and self-esteem and help them to achieve professional growth.

The primary aim of Balyer, Özcan, and Yildiz's (2017) research was to determine school administrators' roles in empowering the teachers at their schools. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design. The data were analyzed in accordance with the content analysis method. The researcher interviewed 20 teachers through over the course of this study. The researcher chose the respondents according to the purposive sampling method. The results reveal that administrators have empowered these teachers by providing opportunities for shared decision-making, improving their status, making schools more attractive places, building relationships on principles of trust and creating good communication among teachers. However, administrators do not adequately support their professional development, develop their self-efficacy, support their autonomy or employ them in some managerial roles. One main conclusion arising from the research is that administrators empower teachers by providing shared decision-making, improving their status, making schools more attractive places, building relationships depending on trust, and creating good communication among teachers. However, administrators do not support their professional development adequately, develop their self-efficacy, support their autonomy or employ them in some managerial roles.

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants in this study were 70 EFL teachers from different English language institutes, ILI, Fakher, Fazel, and Mad in Shiraz, Fars province, in the south of Iran. As the main focus of the current study was teachers' years of experience and their empowerment, the participants were chosen based on the research purposes and categorized into two groups Low (with less than 5 years of teaching experience), and High (with 6 years of experience and above). They were both males and females and their field of study was Teaching English as a Foreign Language (The selection was done from all available professional experienced teachers having university education without any consent form and information sheet. However, they were thoroughly aware of the main goal of the effectiveness questionnaire and demographic part prior to responding the items to on the given questionnaire, which was handed out via email to the participants. In addition, 60 out of 68 intermediate students

were selected to see the effects of teachers' years of experience, and empowerment on students' achievement in learning English.

**Materials**

The first instrument utilized to check the EFL learners' proficiency level is the Oxford Quick Placement Test (UCLES, 2001), developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL. The OQPT contained 60 multiple-choice questions, in two parts, intended to assess the learners' knowledge of English lexicon, grammatical points, and reading comprehension. A questionnaire was used to obtain demographic information from the participants prior to the distribution of the other questionnaires. This demographic part was added to the first part of the Teacher Empowerment Questionnaire. This instrument used to assess teachers' level of empowerment is the School Participant Empowerment Scale SPES (Short and Rinehart, 1992). They reported that "components of empowerment represented in the item's content include: knowledgebase, competence, status, influence, autonomy, control, responsibility, collaboration, involvement in decision making, impact, and choice" (p.954). It is a 38-item instrument on a 5-point scale that scored from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree that asked participants to describe how they felt about responsibility, participation, teacher selection, fiscal involvement, professionalism, student learning, empowerment, difference-making, control, innovation, and collaboration in their schools. At the end of this part, three open-ended questions are used. As the questionnaires included Likert items, the researcher ran the Cronbach's Alpha analysis to estimate the reliability of the questionnaires.

**Table 1**
**Reliability of Teacher's Empowerment Questionnaire**

| | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Teacher Empowerment Questionnaire | .881 | 38 |

According to Table 1, the reliability coefficients of the teacher empowerment Questionnaire (r= .88) is higher than .70. This reveals that the Questionnaire is reliable.

**Design of the Study**

The present study followed an ex-post facto design. which is examining how an independent variable, present prior to the study, affects a dependent variable. Moreover, since, there was a lack of clear sampling strategy due to time limitations and institute restrictions; the convenience-sampling method was made to get easy access to the respondents (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), which is most often used when the population is large and the researcher is unable to test every individual due to various circumstances. Convenience sampling is a matter of taking what is available, and the selection may be unguided.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Initially, OQPT was administered and the scores were analyzed statistically to represent the homogeneity of the participants (N=60) of the present study. Afterward, they were assigned to one low (N=30) and one high-experienced teacher's class (N=30). It is worth mentioning that for distributing questionnaires, teachers of the present study were assigned to two different groups: the high-experienced teachers (N=35) and the low-experienced teachers (N=35). The teacher empowerment questionnaires were administered to the teachers at the beginning of the fall semester of the academic year 2018-2019 and it took about 30 minutes to complete. The researcher gave brief instructions on how to respond to them. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers and they just answered the questions according to what they really thought. Also, they could ask the researcher immediately if they had any questions. The respondents were asked to complete the demographic part and then questionnaire items of the teacher empowerment questionnaire, then answer the open-ended questions. After administering the questionnaires, the final exam was run to see the effects of the above-mentioned items on learners' achievement.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

To ascertain the homogeneity of the participants of the present study (N=60) from the first steps, One-way ANOVA, frequency analysis, and independent samples *t-test* were conducted via SPSS 22 version. At the end of the study, an independent sample *t-test and* descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and to measure the differences between the homogeneity and final scores. In order to test the hypotheses of the present study, frequency analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis were utilized to test research hypotheses and examine the impacts of Iranian EFL teachers' years of experience, and their empowerment on Iranian EFL students' achievement.

**RESULTS**

**Quantitative Findings of Iranian EFL Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience**

The population for this study consisted of 70 teachers in two low and high-experienced teacher groups. Based on the obtained findings of the present study, frequencies and percentages of the gender of low and high-experienced teachers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 illustrated the number of male and female Iranian EFL teachers in both low and high experienced groups. The study included low experienced teachers, 15 males (10.0%) and 20 females (13.3%), and high experienced teachers, 13 males (8.7%) and 22 females (14.7%), which participated in the present research.

**Table 2**

***Frequencies and Percentages of Gender of Low and High Experienced Teachers (N=35+35)***

| Gender | Low Experienced Teachers | | High Experienced Teachers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Male | 15 | 10.0 | 13 | 8.7 |
| Female | 20 | 13.3 | 22 | 14.7 |
| Total | 35 | | 35 | |

As shown in Table 2, the total number of teachers in both the high and low-experienced groups was 35, respectively. Frequencies and percentages of the number of years of teaching experience in low-high-experienced teachers are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

***Frequencies and Percentages of the Number of Years Teaching Experience in Low and High Experienced Teachers (N=35+35)***

| | Low Experienced Teachers | | | High Experienced Teachers | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-2 Years | 3-4 Years | 5 Years | 5-7 Years | 8-10 Years | Above 10 Years |
| Frequency | 12 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 14 | 12 |
| Percent | 0.8 | 6.7 | 8.7 | 0.6 | 9.3 | 0.8 |

According to Table 3, 12 (0.8%) teachers had been teaching 1 - 2 years, 10 (6.7%), teachers had been teaching 3-4 years, and 13 (8.7) teachers had been teaching five years. The number of EFL teachers with 5-7 years of teaching experience was 9 (0.6%), and also, the number of teachers with 8-20 years of teaching experience was 14 (9.3%). As shown in Table 4.2, teachers with above 10 years of experience were 12 (0.8%). As the homogeneity of the groups was the most critical issue to consider, the Oxford Placement Test was administered, and the scores were analyzed. Descriptive statistics of the total number of students are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

***Descriptive Statistics of the Total Number of Students (N=68)***

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homogeneity Test | 68 | 59.00 | 76.00 | 69.6471 | 4.25937 |
| Valid N (Listwise) | 68 | | | | |

As illustrated in Table 4, mean score of total number of students (N=68) were 69.64 and the standard deviation was 4.25. Descriptive statistics of the prominent participants is reported in Table 5.

**Table 5**
***Descriptive Statistics of the Main Participants (N=60)***

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homogeneity test | 60 | 61.00 | 76.00 | 69.3667 | 4.27435 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 60 | | | | |

According to Table 5, 60 out of 68 participants were selected as the main participants of the present study. Based on the standard deviation in Table 5.6, students who scored between 65 and 73 (mean+2 or mean-2) were chosen as the main participants (N=60). Group Statistics of the participants in low and high-experienced teachers' classes are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**
***Group Statistics of the Participants in Low and High Experienced Teachers' Classes in Homogeneity Test (N=60)***

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low Experienced Teachers | 30 | 69.2667 | 4.08473 | .74577 |
| High Experienced Teachers | 30 | 69.4667 | 4.52376 | .82592 |

Table 6 presented the mean scores of students in both low (69.26) and high (69.46) experienced teachers' classes. Sixty students out of 68 were given odd and even numbers in a list of final scores of the homogeneity test to be divided into low experienced teachers' classes (N=30) and high experienced teachers' classes (N=30) and also the groups were homogenized before the treatment due to the means of both classes. The last step was analyzing the scores of the homogeneity test of 60 students of both classes between and within groups statistically. Thus, One-way ANOVA and independent samples *t-test* were conducted to show the homogeneity between and within low and high-experienced teachers' classes. Table 7 reports a One-way ANOVA analysis of low and high-experienced teachers' classes (N=30+30).

**Table 7**
***One-way ANOVA Analysis of Low and High Experienced Teachers' Classes (N=60)***

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .600 | 1 | .600 | .032 | .858 |
| Within Groups | 1077.333 | 58 | 18.575 | | |
| Total | 1077.933 | 59 | | | |

According to Table 7, the sig. level indicated that the groups were homogeneous groups (Sig=.858) and the sig. level was higher than the p-value ($p > .05$). In order to have a detailed analysis of the data in regard with the homogeneity of the groups, the sig. level in independent samples *t-test* is reported in Table 8.

**Table 8**

***Independent Samples T-tests of Low and High Experienced Teachers' Classes (N=30+30)***

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | T-Test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-Tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Homogeneity Test | Equal Variances Assumed | .802 | .374 | -.180 | 58 | .858 | -.20000 | 1.11280 | -2.42750 | 2.02750 |
| | Equal Variances Not Assumed | | | -.180 | 57.406 | .858 | -.20000 | 1.11280 | -2.42799 | 2.02799 |

As shown in Table 8, the sig. level (Sig=.858) indicated that the groups were homogeneous and the sig. level is higher than the p value (p > .05). Descriptive statistics of mean scores of homogeneity test and final exam of students in low experienced teachers' classes are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9**

***Descriptive Statistics of Mean Scores of Homogeneity Test and Final Exam of Students in Low Experienced Teachers' Classes (N=60)***

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homogeneity Test | 30 | 64.00 | 75.00 | 69.2667 | 4.08473 |
| Final Exam | 30 | 74.00 | 80.00 | 77.0667 | 2.01660 |

As it was reported in Table 9, mean scores were reported 69.26 and 77.06 in low experienced teachers' classes, respectively. Descriptive statistics of mean scores of homogeneity test and final exam of students in high experienced teachers' classes are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10**

***Descriptive Statistics of Mean Scores of Homogeneity Test and Final Exam of Students in High Experienced Teachers' Classes (N=30)***

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Homogeneity Test | 30 | 64.00 | 75.00 | 69.4667 | 4.52376 |
| Final Exam | 30 | 83.00 | 100.00 | 92.4000 | 5.50065 |

As it was shown in Table 10, mean scores were reported 69.46 and 92.40 in high experienced teachers' classes, respectively. However, in posttest the mean scores of both classes of low (M=90.53) and high (M=92.40) experienced teachers' classes were different. Table 11 reports Group Statistics of Mean scores of final scores in high and low experienced teachers' classes.

**Table 11**

***Group Statistics of Mean Scores of Final Scores in High and Low Experienced Teachers' Classes***

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low Experience Teachers' Classes | 30 | 77.0667 | 2.01660 | .40608 |
| High Experienced Teachers' Classes | 30 | 92.4000 | 5.50065 | 1.00199 |

Table 11 represented that the mean final scores in both low and high experience teachers' classes were 77.03 and 92.40, respectively. Table 12 reports Independent Samples *T-tests* of mean scores of final scores in high and low experienced teachers' classes.

**Table 12**

***Independent Samples T-tests of Mean Scores of Final Scores in High and Low Experienced Teachers' Classes***

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | T-Test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | f | Sig. | t | df | Sig (2Tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Homogeneity test | Equal Variances Assumed | 24.845 | .000 | -13.257 | 58 | .000 | -14.33333 | 1.08115 | -16.49749 | -12.16917 |
| | Equal Variances Not Assumed | | | -13.257 | 38.276 | .000 | 14.33333 | 1.08115 | 16.52149 | 12.14517 |

As the SPSS output shown in Table 12, the sig. level (sig=.000) of post-test scores in high and low-experienced teachers' classes was less than the alpha level ($p < .05$). Thus, it was concluded that there were statistically significant differences in the participants' post-test scores.

**Quantitative Findings of Iranian EFL Teachers' Empowerment and their Impacts on EFL Students' Achievement**

According to Short and Rinehart (1992), components of empowerment represented in the item's content include knowledgebase, competence, status, influence, autonomy, control, responsibility, collaboration, involvement in decision-making, impact, and choice" (p.954). It is a 38-item instrument on a 5-point scale that scored from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree that asked participants to describe how they felt about responsibility, participation, teacher selection, fiscal involvement, professionalism, student learning, empowerment, difference-making, control, innovation, and collaboration in their schools (Appendix C). Descriptive statistics of the empowerment sub-scale in low-experienced teachers' classes are reported in Table 13.

**Table 13**

***Descriptive Statistics of Empowerment Sub-Scale in Low Experienced Teachers' Classes***

| | Number of Items | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Status | 6 | 2.65 | 4.25 | 3.3483 | .57377 |
| Autonomy | 4 | 2.65 | 3.80 | 3.1917 | .44170 |
| Professional Growth | 6 | 2.54 | 3.48 | 3.0633 | .40844 |
| Decision-making | 10 | 2.54 | 3.11 | 2.7900 | .26796 |
| Self-efficacy | 6 | 2.14 | 3.37 | 2.7683 | .53319 |
| Impact | 6 | 1.48 | 3.05 | 2.4910 | .48964 |

As shown in Table 13, the impact had the lowest mean score (2.49) and status (3.34) had the highest mean score among other items in the empowerment sub-scale in low experienced teachers' classes of the present study. Descriptive statistics of the empowerment sub-scale in high experienced teachers' classes are reported in Table 14.

**Table 14**
***Descriptive Statistics of Empowerment Sub-Scale in High Experienced Teachers' Classes***

| | Number of Items | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Autonomy | 4 | 3.80 | 4.00 | 3.9350 | .09434 |
| Status | 6 | 3.45 | 4.48 | 3.9283 | .41126 |
| Self-efficacy | 6 | 3.51 | 4.51 | 3.8850 | .40869 |
| Decision- making | 10 | 2.60 | 4.48 | 3.8383 | .67845 |
| Impact | 6 | 2.77 | 4.11 | 3.6880 | .41803 |
| Professional Growth | 6 | 2.74 | 4.08 | 3.2183 | .47225 |

Table 14 displayed that professional growth had the lowest mean score (3.21) and autonomy had the highest mean score (3.93) among other items in the empowerment sub-scale in high experienced teachers' classes of the present study. To investigate if EFL teachers' empowerment has any effects on Iranian EFL students' achievement, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 15 shows the results of the ANOVA test on low experienced teachers' empowerment.

**Table 15**
***ANOVA Test on Low Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 2940.336 | 6 | 490.056 | 22.424 | .000 |
| | Residual | 1158.264 | 23 | 21.854 | | |
| | Total | 4098.600 | 29 | | | |

According to Table 15, the prediction model was statistically significant (F (6, 23) = 22.42, $p < .05$). Table 16 shows the results of the Model summary.

**Table 16**
***Model Summary on Low-Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | .847 | .717 | .685 | 4.67483 |

Based on the results in Table 16, the prediction model accounted for approximately 68% of the variance of students' scores. The results of multiple regression which depict the power of six sub-scales of teachers' empowerment in predicting the students' final scores are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17**
***Multiple Regression Analysis on Low Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | | Correlations | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | Zero-order | Partial | Part | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 47.030 | 6.743 | | 6.974 | .000 | 33.505 | 60.555 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision Making | 1.345 | 1.351 | .120 | .996 | .001 | 1.364 | 4.055 | .705 | .136 | .073 | .366 | 2.729 |
| Profes-sional Growth | 2.833 | 1.968 | .143 | 1.439 | .001 | 1.080 | 1.115 | .022 | .194 | .105 | .539 | 1.855 |
| Autonomy | 4.104 | 2.076 | .284 | 1.977 | .000 | .059 | 8.267 | .685 | .262 | .144 | .259 | 3.868 |
| Self-Efficacy | 1.529 | 1.479 | .098 | 1.034 | .306 | 1.438 | 4.496 | .415 | .141 | .075 | .597 | 1.675 |
| Status | 6.567 | 2.329 | .475 | 2.819 | .000 | 1.894 | 11.239 | .823 | .361 | .206 | .188 | 5.321 |
| Impact | .064 | 1.424 | .006 | .045 | .964 | -2.792 | 2.920 | .628 | .006 | .003 | .301 | 3.320 |

As displayed in Table17, status (beta=.47) received the strongest weight in the model, followed by autonomy (beta=.28), professional growth (beta=.14), and decision-making (beta=.12). Based on the self-efficacy and impact did not predict the students' final scores. In the next step, another multiple linear regression analysis was performed to explore whether high experienced teachers' empowerment has any effects on students' achievement. Table 18 shows the results of the ANOVA test on high experienced teachers' empowerment.

**Table 18**
***ANOVA Test on High Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Regression | 475.785 | 6 | 79.298 | 4.586 | .000 |
| | Residual | 397.681 | 23 | 17.290 | | |
| | Total | 873.467 | 29 | | | |

The results depicted in Table 18 revealed that the model significantly predicted the students' scores ($F (6, 23) = 4.58$, $p < .05$). The results of the Model summary are shown in Table 19.

**Table 19**
***Model Summary on High Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | .860[a] | .845 | .821 | .15602 |

As revealed in Table 19, six sub-scales of high experienced teachers' empowerment together explained 82% of the students' score (R2 = .84, adjusted R2 = .82). The results of multiple regression which show the power of six sub-scales of teachers' empowerment in predicting the students' final scores are presented in Table 20.

**Table 20**
***Multiple Regression Analysis on High Experienced Teachers' Empowerment***

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | | Correlations | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | Zero-order | Partial | Part | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | 76.825 | 8.728 | | 8.802 | .000 | 58.769 | 94.881 | | | | | |
| Decision Making | .218 | 1.797 | .144 | 2.122 | .001 | 3.937 | 3.500 | .410 | .025 | .017 | .523 | 1.912 |
| Professional Growth | .095 | 2.286 | .009 | .042 | .967 | 2.634 | 4.824 | .493 | .009 | .006 | .391 | 2.558 |
| Autonomy | 2.929 | 1.004 | .634 | 3.918 | .000 | .852 | 5.005 | .718 | .520 | .411 | .419 | 2.385 |
| Self-Efficacy | .981 | 2.432 | .216 | 2.403 | .000 | 2.011 | 4.050 | .331 | .084 | .057 | .349 | 2.868 |
| Status | 2.092 | 2.662 | .231 | 2.786 | .000 | 3.415 | 7.599 | .530 | .162 | .111 | .229 | 4.361 |
| Impact | .125 | 1.891 | .014 | .066 | .948 | 1.786 | 4.037 | .296 | .014 | .009 | .442 | 2.265 |

As can be seen in Table 20, the prediction model generated by the multiple regression indicated that autonomy (beta=.63) received the strongest weight in the model, followed by status (beta=.23), self-efficacy (beta=.21), and decision-making (beta=.14). According to the results, impact and professional growth did not predict the students' final scores.

**Qualitative Findings of Iranian EFL Teachers' Empowerment and Effectiveness and their Impact on EFL Students' Achievement**

Through the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, in regard to the empowerment section, the first question was why an English language teacher should be involved in making decisions about curriculum. Their responses included:

- Teacher empowerment refers to allowing teachers to be genuinely involved in the decision-making process.
- Teachers are specialists in their field. They are prepared for their new role.so they feel that they are important.
- Teachers feel more comfortable when are involved in the decision-making programs. They will be motivated and encouraged to share their knowledge.
- When curriculum designers cooperate with teachers, they can cope with the content problems better.
- Administrators have to create an atmosphere that encourages teachers to participate in the process. They need to feel confident about their abilities.
- Main changes occur in educational system when teachers are involved in decision making process.

In addition, to see how a teacher can be empowered by the principal or the institution, they mentioned that:

- Teachers and principle cooperation's lead to improved teachers' self-esteem, creativity,

abilities, and innovations. So, they can be empowered when the institute provides an opportunity for teachers to show their creativity.

- Best teachers in the language institutes should be chosen to teach other teachers.
- Principles should provide a situation for teachers to perceive that they can make a difference. They also need to perceive that they have the opportunity to influence others.
- Teachers will be empowered if they feel free to decide on what is taught.
- They need to have responsibilities to monitor the programs at school.
- Teachers make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the institute.

Finally, in order to see the effects of teacher empowerment on learners learning outcomes, they added that:

- Teacher empowerment can help kids become independent learners. It can be helpful in empowering students as well.
- An empowered teacher can see students' learning and help them to continue learning.

## DISCUSSIONS

The present study sought to promote research into the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' experience, and their empowerment on Iranian EFL students' achievement. First, this research aimed to delineate the effects of Iranian EFL teachers' experience on Iranian EFL students' achievement. To show the impacts of the mentioned variables, One-way ANOVA, frequency analysis, and independent samples *t-test* were conducted. As reported in pretest and post-test scores of high and low-experienced teachers, the mean scores of students' final test in high experienced teachers' classes were significantly higher than students' scores in low- experienced teacher classes. The second research question aimed to see whether high experienced teachers' empowerment has any effects on Iranian EFL students' achievement. As reported, high experienced teachers viewed their most empowered subscale as autonomy with the highest mean score of 3.93 and the last one was professional growth with a mean score of 3.21. In order to test the hypotheses of the present study related to the impacts of high and low teacher empowerment on students' achievement, Multiple Regression Analysis was utilized. The findings of ANOVA test on high experienced teacher empowerment showed that the model significantly predicted the students' scores ($F (6, 23) = 4.58$, $p < .05$). It was shown that six sub-scales of high experienced teachers' empowerment together explained 82% of the student's score ($R2 = .84$, adjusted $R2 = .82$). Moreover, the prediction model generated by the multiple regression indicated that autonomy (beta=.63) received the strongest weight in the model, followed by status (beta=.23), self- efficacy (beta=.21), and decision making (beta=.14). The third research question stated that whether low experienced teachers' empowerment has any effects on Iranian EFL students' achievement. As it was shown, the impact had the lowest mean score (2.49) and status (3.34) had the highest mean score among other items in the empowerment sub-scale in low experienced teachers' classes of the present study. Additionally, According to findings, the prediction model was statistically significant ($F (6,23) = 22.42$, $p < .05$). Based on the results, the prediction model accounted for approximately 68% of the variance of students' scores. As illustrated, status (beta=.47) received the strongest weight in the model, followed by autonomy (beta=.28), professional growth (beta=.14), and decision-making (beta=.12). Based on the self-efficacy and impact did not predict the students' final scores.

The results of the present study can support the findings of prior studies that the dimensions of teacher empowerment had varied impacts on student subject matter achievement (Archbald & Porter, 1994; Gamoran, Porter, & Gahng, 1994; Rowan, Raudenbush, & Kang, 1991). Aliakbari and Azimi (2016) claimed that teacher empowerment was found to be important in the classroom and instructional decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness and improve student performance. The results of Balyer, Özcan, and Yildiz's (2017) research revealed that administrators have empowered these teachers by providing opportunities for shared decision-making, improving their status, making schools more attractive places, building relationships on principles of trust, and creating good communication among teachers.

## CONCLUSION

This research took into account the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' experience and empowerment, on Iranian EFL students' achievement. Prior studies indicated that for teachers to feel empowered, they must be involved in the decision-making process and given autonomy to make decisions (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Results from these studies also indicated that when teachers were empowered; there was a correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). It appears that high experienced teachers in this study perceived that their empowerment positively influences students' achievement. Results from the descriptive analysis regarding the distribution of means based upon the responses provided by the participants of the present study indicated that high experienced teachers view their most empowered subscale as autonomy, status, self-efficacy, impact, decision- making and professional growth, respectively. These results suggested that teachers perceive their highest level of empowerment to reside in their ability to make decisions on what is taught or about curriculum and to have control over daily schedules. In addition, it is important to mention that low experienced teachers view their most empowered subscale as self-efficacy, professional growth, status, autonomy, impact and decision-making. The findings of the current research suggest that teachers perceive their highest level of empowerment to reside in their ability to share their skills and knowledge with students to help them learn. Besides that, it is hoped that this study can also add more in-depth literature review in academia about the effect of Iranian EFL teachers' experience and empowerment on EFL students' achievement. It can help the new researchers to conduct more comprehensive and complete studies in years to come.

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