Original Article

Investigating the Relationship between Teacher Resilience, Teacher Immunity and Emotional Intelligence among Iranian EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Teacher resilience and teacher immunity are important qualities which are of high significance in today's scope of EFL teacher education and teacher psychology. The present study explored whether there are any correlations or associations between teacher resilience, teacher immunity and emotional intelligence among Iranian EFL teachers. So, 90 EFL teachers from different English language institutes in Gorgan, Iran were chosen through convenience sampling procedure. To collect the data, three instruments: Teacher Resilience Questionnaire, Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire, and Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire were used. The correlation test, Pearson, was run in order to examine the relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and teacher immunity, teacher emotional intelligence and teacher resilience and the relationship between teacher immunity and teacher resilience. The results indicated a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and teacher immunity. In addition, findings revealed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher resilience too and also a positive and significant relationship between teacher immunity and teacher resilience as well. As pedagogical implications, teachers who suffer from lower resilience and immunity should be informed on various ways of improving them including increasing their practicing on emotional intelligence.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, Teacher Immunity, Teacher Resilience

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1. Introduction

Around one third of teachers interviewed from all around the world were reported to believe that teaching is a stressful job (Borg, 2011). Reaction to this stress is different among teachers, as some can cope with it and survive, while some others leave their jobs or fall into fossilization or burnout (Haberman, 2004). This phenomenon has been partially addressed by some terms such as teacher burnout (Maslach, 1982), or teacher resilience (Paterson et al., 2004). Teacher burnout happens when a teacher fails to emotionally function properly and is determined by the three aspects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal achievement (Maslach, 1982). Though it takes into account negative reactions of teachers to stress and threats exerted from workplace, it fails to provide us with some explanations on the other side of the coin when a teacher can handle this stressful situation properly and effectively. On the contrary, teacher resilience deals with the positive reaction of the teacher to challenges and dangers he receives from the profession of teaching. It is specified as "the ability to spring back, rebound and adapt facing adversity and improve social, academic and professional competence despite exposure to severe stress or to the stress that is inherent in today's world'' (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012, p.107).

As seen, teacher's negative feedback to the stressful condition is not discussed in teacher resilience which makes it a less comprehensive concept. Besides, teacher resilience suggests some defensive and protective mechanism which can be harmful in some cases and lead to damaging some teacher's psychological and mental well-being. Thus, neither teacher burnout nor teacher resilience can take a comprehensive image of what really happens to a teacher at work while facing with threats and difficulties from various sources. Therefore, a new term is needed to cover all the missing parts of above concepts and gives out a much more comprehensive account of teachers' reaction in the threatening and stressful conditions of teaching. Teacher immunity is the required new term. Language teacher immunity is characterized what a teacher resorts in order to manage stress, pressure, or crisis he receives from his students, system of education, syllabus, official regulations, and other related sectors in his career which can lead to either survival and success in teaching or fossilization, attrition or burnout (Hiver & Dornyei, 2015). Teacher immunity was first put forth in a paper by Hiver and Dornyei (2015) who conceptualized this construct regarding other similar traits such as teacher burnout and teacher resilience.

As mentioned, teacher immunity is a newly approached term in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Since its introduction, researchers in the Iranian EFL context (Maghsoudi 2021, Rahmati et al., 2019) have explored to detect its different aspects such as its dynamics, developmental processes and correlations with other psychological traits and various intervening variables. However, few studies have been conducted to draw on any methodical research into the connection between language teachers' immunity and their emotional intelligence and self-resilience in the Iranian EFL context. Accordingly, little is known about the existence of any potential connection between these variables. Therefore, as few studies were focused on the correlations among the mentioned variables in this study, it is a good idea to conduct a research study on this issue. It means, the present study enjoys from enough novelty to be done especially in the Iranian EFL context and can make great contributions to the existing literature by adding up the new findings to the body of the related literature.

As teachers are prone to a wide range of feelings such as opportunities, hopes, encouragements, and enjoyments; on the other hand, they encounter threats, dangers, problems, and challenges. The degree and severity of these problems may vary from country to country and from culture to culture or even person to person, but the truth of the matter is that they do exist. These problems have been the main concern of research in ELT teacher education which was chiefly focused on some concepts such as: teacher burnout, teacher professional development, teacher identity, teacher resilience, teacher self-efficacy and teacher coping and stress. The two concepts which are mainly concerned with how a teacher treats with threats, dangers and pressures received from various facets of his profession are teacher immunity and teacher resilience. Nevertheless, neither teacher immunity nor teacher resilience have not been studied in order to see whether they are related to emotional intelligence. This gap can be filled by doing the present research and find out whether these terms are related or not. Therefore, in addition to opening a new horizon to the eyes of Iranian researchers to recognize the areas in teacher immunity and teacher resilience which not worked in Iran, the present study can be considered as a voice from Iran and make great contributions to the body of the international literature.

1.Literature Review

As the main variables of the study the following sections specify definitions for teacher immunity, teacher resilience and Emotional Intelligence, respectively.

1.1.Teacher Immunity

According to Hiver (2017), teacher immunity is different from teacher resilience in three grounds. Firstly, teacher immunity is self-organized and adaptive in the process of its development. Secondly it can function both positively and negatively; that is, it may help teachers cope with stress and continue successfully and for some other teachers it can have some damaging effects on their career and make them oversensitive to some healthy entities in their profession and hurt them. Finally it is a more globally integrated concept regarding professional identity. As teacher immunity is different from even the most similar concepts to it, it can be concluded that there are some areas which require teacher immunity to be covered.

Immunity is probably the closest and the most suitable metaphor to adopt in order to reflect the reality of teachers' reaction system to the threats and dangers received from their workplace. It is dual and similar to the situation that can either help save the body organs from viruses and microbes, or make them weak and vulnerable to some healthy and benign conditions, a teacher can develop a protective system which can either help or hurt him. All in all, immunity seems a suitable metaphor as the name of this construct (Hiver, 2017).

This construct draws on Chaos Theory (CT) (Larsen-Freeman, 2012) as its theoretical underpinnings. CT has been implemented in explaining social phenomena dealing with unsystematic patterns of change and particularly in sociolinguistic concepts (Hiver and Dornyei, 2015). It has been used as the theoretical basis for the construct of teacher immunity since self-organization and emergence are in the essence of its developmental process.

According to Hiver and Dornyei (2015), the development of this construct contains four stages. The first stage is triggering which refers to the initiative threats such as management of a highly disturbing and disobeying class or some crisis in extension of employment that trigger the teacher to develop such a system. In CT, these disturbances are called perturbations (Kubanyiova, 2012). If these disturbances are taken into account at this stage, positive reactions may be shaped if not they will be built up on each other and lead to

fossilization and burnout. In the second stage, named linking stage, the teacher adopts coping strategies to integrate the elements of the system and personal features so that undesirable stimuli are factored out and reconfiguration of the strategies happen repeatedly. In CT, this stage is called coupling (Hiver and Dornyei, 2015).

Realignment is the third stage in which the teacher keeps developing positive strategies despite adversity and aggression received from the profession. At this stage, some symptoms of teacher resilience and teacher self-efficacy are observed for the teacher evaluates his previous measures and tries to adopt more effective techniques and reaches equilibrium. This stage is close to phase change in CT. The final stage is named stabilization in which the teacher solidifies the strategies developed in the previous stages. This stabilized state of teacher immunity can be either productive or maladaptive since it was determined in the first stage. This stage is equal to attractor state (Larsen-Freeman, 2012).

Like biological immunity, teacher immunity has ''both benign and malign effects on teaching'' Dornyei (2015, p. 12). Therefore, it is either productive or maladaptive immunity. Productive immunity means ''adopting effective strategies to confront with threats from different sources of the profession'' Dornyei (2015, p. 12), improving the quality of teaching and reaching to self-efficacy and successful continuation of their job. In maladaptive teacher immunity, the teacher adopts a defensive and conservative approach toward his job and ''rejects any innovation in his methodology, behavior and policy in class management which leads to job attrition or burnout'' Dornyei (2015, p. 12). Finally, in Hiver and Dornyei (2015, p. 13), three stages are proposed to transform maladaptive teacher immunity type into productive one:

"a) Triggering dissonance in the process through awareness-raising of the fact that the existing form of immunity is counterproductive. b) Making available a repertoire of alternative coping strategies that might provide teachers with possible new answers to old questions. c) Lastly, assisting in the creation of narratives of resolution that teachers can subscribe to and personalize in order to stabilize the new identity."

Since Hiver and Dornyei (2015) is considered as the pioneering work conducted on teacher immunity, it is not weird to finish reading it with many unanswered questions in mind and several uncertainties on various aspects of this newly-proposed construct. Initially, it was expected to see whether there is any instrument to measure it which is apparently provided in Hiver (2017). Furthermore, this study failed to explain whether this construct is a fixed trait which does not vary with place or even time. Although it was emphasized that emergence and self-organization are the two indispensable elements of essence of teacher immunity, doubts remain on whether there can be global teacher immunity which is fixed in all places and situations or situational teacher immunity which varies in different situations.

Another area which was not marked in Hiver and Dornyei (2015) is dealing with the developmental process stages. It was stated that teachers develop teacher immunity in four stages. What is missing is the prominence of the elements that have positive or negative effects on developmental processes of teacher immunity. To put it in another way, there is a gap about the factors building language teaching immunity.

In the Iranian context, Rahimpour, et al. (2020) proposed a model on the indicators of this new concept so that some characteristics of six HEXACO Personality Inventory, job insecurity and reflective teaching were determined as predicting elements. Path Analysis using AMOS with Maximum Likelihood Estimate was run on the data achieved from 483 EFL teachers. Accordingly, agreeableness, extroversion and emotionality demonstrated indirect effects on language teacher immunity via job insecurity. Moreover, reflective teaching was proved to affect teacher immunity directly.

Dobakhti, et al. (2022) specified to what extent teacher immunity was shaped by affective factors among Iranian EFL instructors. 129 (61 male & 68 female) EFL teachers at different schools, and universities participated in the study. Two questionnaires of emotional intelligence and teacher immunity along with a personality scale were used in order to explore their emotional intelligence, personality traits, and teacher immunity. The findings indicated the teachers' emotional intelligence, neuroticism, openness to experience, and conscientiousness personality traits contributed to explain their teacher immunity. Obtained results showed a close relation between affective factors and teacher immunity.

Haji Jalili, et al. (2023) probed the connection between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and teachers' immunity in the EFL context of Iran. 100 EFL teachers, 50 teachers

who teach in public schools and 50 in language centers, in Isfahan, were selected through the convenience sampling method. Three questionnaires on self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teachers' immunity were used. The results revealed that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence could not predict the immunity of the teachers, instead some external factors such as teaching condition, salary, and insurance affect the teachers' immunity. Nevertheless, a significant correlation between the teachers' scores obtained from three questionnaires was reported.

1.2.Teacher Resilience

Teacher immunity is composed of some psychological traits and constructs among which the most important is teacher resilience. It is characterized as the capability to handle and manage difficulties, stresses and threats received from the profession of teaching and requires individual power and skill to overcome these challenges (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012). Pattersons, et al. (2004) defines it as when a teacher uses his energy fully to reach school aims despite all adversity and challenges existing at his workplace.

Beltman, et al. (2011) in a study reviewing the related literature on teacher resilience maintained that even though a good proportion of characterizations of teacher resilience have been developed, there is substantial missing of investigation on teachers' ideas on what teacher resilience is. Nevertheless, the main trend in these studies seems to be orientated as three facets of teacher resilience; that is, individual or contextual factors and also teachers' attitudes on the work setting. Up to now, most of research studies concentrated on teacher resilience agreed on that teacher resilience means keeping teacher obligation and motivation in spite of adversity (Sammons et al., 2007; Sinclair, 2008). However, they are different on what components to take into account as important to the resilient outcomes. Positive outcomes mean working efficiently in a stressful setting and insisting on continuing. Positive outcome is characterized to be adaptive rather than predictive. Useful flexibility in threatening conditions implies that one is either not tired at all, works energetically or immediately survives from any challenging situations.

Reviewing some recent and the most important empirical studies, Johnstone, et al. (2017) is as the first one conducted a project supported by the International Positive

Education Network (IPEN). They launched a program for a podcast approach to teaching resilience to teachers. This project was consisted of some strategies based on some empirical data and some interviews with teachers. A podcast platform was selected since it was comfortable to produce it, it was cheap and everybody could have access to it and exert an impersonal feeling.

Team Indigo (the real teachers interviewed in this study) have suggested, planned, and developed three sample podcasts, which function as part of a pedagogical podcast series on resilience that can be freely and comfortably approached online by teachers. *Team Indigo* have suggested that this series is developed on teachers' own strategies used in their professions and found useful and effective. The project done by Johnstone, et al. (2017) can be taken into account as a pedagogical reflection of all literature on teacher resilience.

The discussion is whether teacher related qualities such as teacher resilience can be trained and educated to teachers especially novice teachers. Johnstone, et al. (2017) proved that it can be possible to be done. This may be done for teacher immunity too. As teacher immunity is a more comprehensive concept compared to teacher resilience, developing a pedagogical course based on teachers' attitudes and views can help novice teachers be aware of the stressful conditions expecting them in the close future.

Abdul Razak (2013) state that educational leaders could help teachers a lot to cope with the challenges and threats in order to develop their resilience by providing convenient working situation which exerts little stress on teachers, simplifying teachers' jobs to follow the educational policy, encouraging monitoring, continuing appreciation, and easy access to the place of school.

In the Iranian EFL context, Razmjoo and Ayoobiyan (2018) tried to study the association between EFL teachers' resilience and self-efficacy. Therefore, 92 teachers finished Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) and resilience scale. Results revealed the positive effect of various scopes of self-efficacy on resilience. In addition, all self-efficacy sub-components had a significant relationship with educators' resilience. The outcomes also proposed that, other than classroom management, two other sub-components of efficacy; that is, student involvement efficacy and instructional plans efficacy were the worthy analysts in teacher resilience.

In a mixed-method study by Ghaslani, et al. (2023), Iranian EFL teachers' resilience was explored. In the quantitative section, 65 EFL teachers completed Multidimensional Teachers' Resilience Scale (MTRS) questionnaires. Out of them, 36 teachers with low and high scores, participated in the qualitative section. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, journal keeping and classroom observation, were applied as well. The results indicated interconnected dimensions of personal, professional, organizational, social, and economic aspects.

1.3.Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Mayer and Salovey (1997) described emotional intelligence as determined by the abilities to control and comprehend emotions. As basic fundamentals of emotional intelligence, emotions play an undeniable role on learners' educational success. Several proposals were stated by Goleman (1998) and Mayer and Salovey, (1997), in emotional intelligence theory. Daniel Goleman (1998) characterized emotional intelligence as skills like being capable of encouraging oneself, continuing encountering prevention, regulating desires, delaying satisfaction, adjusting one's tempers , keeping relaxed in changing thinking, and giving emphasis to hoping. Goleman (1998) based on these descriptions introduced a framework containing knowing, managing motivating, and recognizing emotions. Later by the introduction of some other models, Goleman (1998) redefined the first definition and divided emotional intelligence into dissimilar emotional proficiencies, such as political awareness, service orientation, self-confidence, consciousness, and achievement drive.

Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) explored emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers. 89 EFL teachers completed the teachers' efficacy scale and the emotional intelligence questionnaire. The findings showed correlations between the teachers' emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Different subcomponents of emotional intelligence such as emotional self-awareness, interpersonal-relationship, and problem solving proved as indicators of teacher self-efficacy.

Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2014) studied teachers' burnout, emotional intelligence, and reflectivity. So, 125 Iranian EFL teachers from language institutes participated. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Teacher Reflectivity Questionnaire, and Bar-On EQ-

I Scale were applied. The results indicated that emotional intelligence and reflectivity were interrelated with burnout reversely. The findings also showed significant differences in teachers' emotional intelligence according to their teaching years of experience. Nevertheless, no significant differences were reported in teachers' burnout and reflectivity according to their teaching years of experience.

Since teacher emotional intelligence is a concept which is dealt with teacher' affection, the present study can orientate researchers' attention towards teachers' emotions. This is considered as another area of significance which the present study enjoys. Besides, against the fact that most teachers in ELT deal with the problem of teacher attrition, EFL teachers especially in the context of Iran have always had problems with scarcity of pedagogical implications in order to develop a stable state of resilience or immunity against all the various challenges and threats they encounter in their career, Maghsoudi (2021). So, it seems to be a good idea to do research to identify the relationship between these variables to find out their potential difference in different contexts of teaching such as public schools or language institutions.

Due to the fact that the two mentioned concepts: teacher resilience and teacher immunity are theoretically related to excitement, emotion and other human feelings and affection, emotional intelligence can be considered to be correlated with these two terms. Despite this fact, further investigation for any potential inter-relatedness among these concepts seems important. As a result, this study sought to see any correlations between these three variables. That is, the present study aimed to detect whether the two teacher-related qualities of teacher resilience and teacher immunity are correlated with emotional intelligence among Iranian EFL teachers. In sum, the findings of this study can make great contributions to the local body of research in Iran. Likewise, a wide range of stakeholders including teachers, learners, researchers and material developers can be addressed by the results of the present study.

Accordingly the research questions are as follow:

1. Is there any significant relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and teacher immunity among the Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Is there any significant relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and teacher resilience among the Iranian EFL teachers?

3.Is there any significant relationship between teacher immunity and teacher resilience among the Iranian EFL teachers?

2.Methodology

3.1. Design of the Study

It was attempted to examine any associations between teacher emotional intelligence, teacher immunity and teacher resilience. So the design for this study was correlational with the purpose of finding the correlation between teacher emotional intelligence, teacher immunity and teacher resilience.

3.2. Participants

EFL teachers taught at language institutes were the target population of this study. To this end, 90 teachers selected by convenience sampling procedure due to availability and geographical accessibility participated from some English language institutes in Gorgan, Iran. The sampling method was partially purposeful as teachers were chosen according to some characteristics. They were from both genders and the same mother tongue, ranging from 30 to 50 years old. In addition, through some demographic questions from the managers of the institutes such as income level, education, employment and marital status, it was attempted to select teachers from the same social and cultural background so that other variables were controlled. Also, their job experience was considered from a shorter range not to damage the findings.

3.3. Instruments

Three instruments were used in the present study:

3.3.1.Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed by Hiver (2017) in order to estimate teachers' immunity type. It includes 39 items in 7 scales developed in the Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly

disagree). The scales were: self-efficacy, burnout, resilience, attitudes to teaching, openness to change, class activity and coping. The reliability of the seven scales through data from the pilot study among 15 participants was analyzed in SPSS by Cronbach Alpha: teaching self-efficacy (α = .82), burnout (α = .80), resilience (α = .82), attitudes to teaching (α = .85), openness to change (α = .74), class activity (α = .81) and coping (α = .78). Moreover, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for all scales was calculated and turned up to be .95. The questionnaire was not translated to participants' native language as they were fluent in English. To check the face and content validity, the questionnaire was analyzed by three experts in applied linguistics. The items were examined by the experts and three items were modified.

3.3.2.Teacher Resilience Questionnaire

To measure teacher resilience, an open-ended questionnaire (Danilidou and Platsidou, 2022) containing two main parts was utilized. First, participants wrote their demographic information, such as gender, age, and academic degree. In the following section, they answered open-ended questions regarding the difficulties of having sustainable teacher resilience. The Cronbach alpha coefficient.84 was achieved through the data received from the pilot study with 15 participants. Three applied linguists who had the experience of several studies into teacher resilience reviewed the items of the questionnaire for their linguistic transparency and content pertinence. After few modifications needed to the language of the items, they were finalized and in this way, their content and face validity was ensured.

3.3.3.Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Bar-On, 2004)

To measure teachers' EI, the Bar-On, 2004 standardized emotional intelligence questionnaire was employed. Bar-On emotional intelligence questionnaire, a self-report measure for emotional and social intelligent behavior is named the Emotional Quotient Inventory. It contains five categories of Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability, and General Mood Scale, arranging on a Likert scale (completely agree to completely disagree). The participants' replies indicate a total Emotional Quotient score and scores on five scales that include fifteen subscales: Intrapersonal (including Self-Regard,

Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence and Self- Actualization); Interpersonal (including Empathy, Social Responsibility and Interpersonal Relationship); Stress Management (including Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control); Adaptability (including Flexibility and Problem Solving); and General Mood (including Optimism and Happiness). The data obtained from the pilot study showed the Cronbach alpha coefficient.81. For checking the content and face validity, three experts in applied linguistics evaluated the items, so eight of them were modified.

3.4.Procedure

First, the participants were given the questionnaires which were filled out by them. The next step was collecting the questionnaires and checking to see whether they were answered fully. If any of the questionnaires had some missing information, they were given back to them to complete them. Out of 90 participants who received three questionnaires which became 270 questionnaires, 45 questionnaires were incomplete which had some unanswered items. Thus, the questionnaires were given back to the participants to fill in again more carefully. However, some questionnaires had some missing items that were screened out. Then, the data were gathered and analyzed in the software SPSS version 23.

3.5.Data Analysis

Assumptions related to correlation analysis were evaluated. Considering that the variables were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire tool, so the assumption of quantitative values was confirmed. The existence of a linear relationship between the variables was also evaluated by drawing a scatter plot. The linear relationship showed the presence of outlier data within 3 standard deviations from the mean was evaluated using a box plot. The condition of independence of the residuals and constant variance of the residuals was also established by drawing a scatter plot.

To test data normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov was run. As the data were normal, so Pearson correlation test was applied for any associations between the teacher emotional intelligence, teacher immunity and resilience. The correlation test, Pearson, was run for all three questions.

4. Results

As mentioned above, the data were analyzed through some statistical procedures in SPSS. First, the descriptive statistics of the participants was analyzed and then K-S and Shapiro tests were run to see whether the data were normal. As they were normal, Pearson correlation test was run for correlation. The results are reported respectively.

4.1. Normality Tests

Data normality was checked through K-S and Shapiro tests. Table 1 indicated the obtained results. Table 1 clarifies that the data attained from the questionnaires measuring the participants' resilience and language achievement and mindset were normal as the p values (.07, .31, .14 for K-S) (.14, .25, .78 for Shapiro Wilk) were greater than .05.

Table 1

Tests of Data Normality

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Resilience	.187	90	.07	.920	90	.14
Immunity	.157	90	.31	.960	90	.25
Emotional intelligence	.154	90	.14	.741	90	.78

Since the data were normal, parametric statistical analysis was utilized for comparing the two groups of scores. Therefore, Pearson correlation test was applied.

4.2. Pearson Correlation Test Results of Research Question One

Research question one explored if there was any significant association between teacher emotional intelligence and teacher immunity among the Iranian EFL teachers.

To calculate the association between variables of the research question one, a Pearson

Correlation was applied. The level of significance was at 0.05, meaning that if sig is lower than 0.05, then the relationship is significant and there is an association between the two variables, i.e., Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and immunity.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation between the Participants' Emotional Intelligence, Immunity and Resilience

Variable	Emotional Intelligence	Immunity	Resilience
Emotional intelligence	1	0.814*(0.032)	0.795*(0.025)
Immunity	0.814*(0.032)	1	0.897*(0.027)
Resilience	0.795*(0.025)	0.897*(0.027)	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

R (sig) is shown in table.

According to Table 2, there is a significant correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and teacher immunity among the participants, since sig (.032) is lower than .05 and r=.814 that indicates correlation is positive and nearly large. That is, there is a positive and significant relationship between the participants' teachers' emotional intelligence and teacher immunity.

4.3. Pearson Correlation Test Results of Research Question Two

The research question two probed if there was any significant relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and teacher resilience among the Iranian EFL teachers.

To measure the degree of relationship between these two variables, a Pearson Correlation was run. The level of significance was at 0.05, meaning that if sig is lower than 0.05, then the relationship is significant and there is a relation between the two variables, i.e., Iranian EFL teacher emotional intelligence and teacher resilience.

According to Table 2, there is a significant relationship between resilience and emotional intelligence among the participants since sig (.025) is lower than .05 and r=.795 which means correlation is positive and nearly large. That is, there is a significant relationship between the participants' emotional intelligence and teacher resilience.

4.4. Pearson Correlation Test Results of Research Question Three

The research question three sought whether there was any significant relationship between teacher immunity and teacher resilience among the Iranian EFL teachers.

To measure the relationship between variables of the third research question, a Pearson Correlation was applied. The level of significance is at 0.05, meaning that if sig is lower from 0.05, then the relationship is significant and there is a connection between the two variables, i.e., Iranian EFL teacher immunity and teacher resilience.

According to Table 2, there is a significant relationship between teacher resilience and teacher immunity among the participants, since sig (.027) is lower than .05 and r=.897 that indicates correlation is positive and nearly large. It means there is a significant relationship between the participants' immunity and teacher resilience.

5. Discussion

The present study indicated that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with resilience and immunity among the Iranian EFL teachers. Additionally, resilience is positively correlated with immunity. Since immunity is theoretically inter-related with the psychological constructs including motivation, attitude, autonomy and resilience, it can be possible to find out empirical data for this correlation. The present study proved that this possible theoretical relationship exists in reality and teachers with higher amount of resilience can have better immunity. So, the present study provided empirical support for this theoretical issue.

The findings of the current study increase the scope of contributing the factors in emotional states teachers' experience. They also broaden our view regarding raising awareness and reinforcing positive traits in teacher education. Moreover, the results from

the data analysis of the current study are in line with Hiver (2017) stating resilience among one of the contributing factors to language teacher immunity as this study indicated that teacher resilience and teacher immunity are tied together. Teachers experience a variety of unexpected emotional problems in their profession to achieve stabilization and a state of equilibrium (Larsen-Freeman, 2012; Hiver, 2015, 2017), so the findings of studies of this kind can help them be thoughtful of caring the constructs in language teacher psychology such as EI, immunity and resilience. Additionally, it can be good a way to immunize EFL teachers productively when encountering tensions and challenges of the working conditions.

In other words, resilience and immunity are from the same theoretical underpinnings since both of them are grouped into positive qualities of a successful teacher. As a result, it is expected to see correlation between teacher immunity and resilience theoretically. This finding can function as evidence for supporting this theoretical correlation. As a result, the findings of the present study support theoretical issues. Moreover, the positive correlation between emotional intelligence and teacher resilience and immunity can be expected theoretically since emotion and affection shapes a great amount of teacher resilience and also immunity. So it is logical to have a positive correlation between teacher emotional intelligence with teacher resilience and immunity. All in all, all three positive correlations obtained from the findings of this study are supported theoretically and provide empirical evidence for these theoretical issues.

Following the studies conducted on the association between emotional intelligence and teacher immunity, the results of the present study are conform to Dobakhti et al. (2022), Haji Jalili, et al. (2023) and Rahimpour, et al. (2020). They proved EI to be correlated positively with teaching success generally and teacher immunity particularly. Similarly the present study revealed that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with both teacher immunity and teacher resilience which are part of positive psychology. So, there is ample evidence that positive psychology concepts are positively correlated with the teachers' teaching success.

This study is also in line with Razmjoo and Ayoobiyan (2018) and Ghaslani, et al. (2023) that showed a positive correlation between EFL teachers' resilience and self-efficacy. In the same vein, the present study revealed that there exists a positive relation between teacher resilience, teacher immunity and teachers' emotional intelligence belonging to the

same psychological traits like self-efficacy. Since both teacher immunity, teacher resilience and teacher self-efficacy are among the various components of positive psychology, it means that both Razmjoo and Ayoobiyan (2018) and Ghaslani, et al. (2023), and the present study proved that teacher resilience is correlated with two different concepts of positive psychology. Finding a positive correlation between theoretically related traits shows that the present study provided empirical data for this theoretical issue. Moreover, the findings of the present study support the results of, Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) and Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2013) in reporting the significant correlation among emotional intelligence and some other psychological traits like self-efficacy and reflectivity.

Since the interrelatedness of these three variables has not been previously investigated in the Iranian EFL context, this line of research gains importance as teaching is a psychologically challenging occupation. So awareness can be raised in this regard among pre- and in-service teachers. Along with the focus on content knowledge Teacher educators should attend to informing about the existence of these variables in teacher training courses.

6.Conclusion

In summary, this study indicated that there is a significant relationship among the three concepts of teacher resilience, teacher immunity and teacher emotional intelligence. This study revealed the significance of teachers' emotional intelligence in teachers' practice of teaching. Since positive psychology and teacher-related constructs like resilience, immunity, motivation, reflectivity and self-efficacy etc., play an important role in education, more exploration into these areas can cast more light on the bury facets of teacher positive psychology. Likewise, the results of this study proved the significant association of emotional intelligence in teacher immunity and resilience in developing teachers' teaching success. Consequently, what is added to the existing literature is the positive correlations between teachers' emotional intelligence, resilience and immunity which can be considered as the main findings of this study.

Besides, since teachers are of the utmost important factors in any type of education, especially in EFL, this study revealed that teacher emotional intelligence can lead to enhancing teachers' immunity and resilience. Thus, it is expected that this study was taken

into account by EFL education official authorities to get the idea that teachers' immunity can be improved by empowering their resilience and emotional intelligence. This can be inserted in their educational master plans based on which language schools design their syllabuses and curriculums. Finally, this study could open new horizons in front of teachers' and researchers' eyes by proving the relationships among teachers' emotional intelligence, immunity and resilience. As pedagogical implications, teacher training courses and teacher educators need to instruct teachers how to enhance their own resilience.

Material developers can be the other group who are the audience of the current research. They should insert some parts in which there are some instructions addressing teachers how to improve their own immunity and resilience. If it happens, teachers can follow a model to learn how to enhance their own immunity and resilience.

Other research works are suggested to focus on a bigger range of age, experience and population to increase validity and generalizability of this research. It is also suggested more research conducted on the association between teacher emotional intelligence and other aspects of teacher's personality traits or factors influencing emotional intelligence such as professional development and identity.

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