
On the Effectiveness of TESOL/ CELTA Certification Course on Self-Efficacy Perceptions of Iranian Non-Native English Teachers

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Abstract

Different teacher characteristics affect their teaching in the classroom. Among these characteristics, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) can be mentioned. This study aimed at exploring the impact of different forms of TESOL/CELTA certification course (i.e., face to face and online) on Iranian non-native English teachers' self- efficacy (TSE) perceptions. In so doing, a quasi-experimental pretest and posttest design was used. The participants, who were selected through convenient and snowball sampling methods, consisted of 50 male and female Iranian EFL teachers whose majors were Translation and literature in English as well as Teaching in 30 to 40 age range, with one to more than ten years of experience in teaching. To measure the participants' TSE perceptions, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), an extended model of the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), was utilized (Tschannen Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Data analysis was conducted at descriptive and inferential levels. As proved by the results of data analysis, the participants significantly improved in terms of their overall TSE perceptions as a consequence of exposure to the CELTA or TESOL certification course. Moreover, the findings revealed that although both face to face and online groups showed a remarkable improvement in their TSE perceptions after CELTA/ TESOL certification course, there was a significant difference between the two groups' TSE perceptions after the course in favor of the face to face group. The findings have some implications for in-service teacher training programs.

Keywords: Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE), TESOL/CELTA Certification Course, Face to Face, Online, Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

The process of language teaching is a complex one wherein different factors are more or less effective. Teacher is considered as one of the important factors as an active decision-maker (Freeman, 2002). In fact, different teacher characteristics affect their teaching in the classroom. Among these characteristics, teacher self-efficacy (TSE) can be mentioned (Marashi & Azizi-Nassab, 2018).

The source of TSE can be endeavored in Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy ideas to academic circles (Marashi & Azizi-Nassab, 2018). Self-efficacy adverts to one's ideas in productive accomplishment a task (Bandura, 1977). Schunk (2003) described it in the role of "ideas about one's potentialities to respond or gain an understanding of manners at denominated levels" (p. 126). As stated by social learning assumption, a particular's

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identified efficacy in a specific district impacts the amount of attempt that will be thrown off, regardless of having the existence problems (Bandura, 1977). As claimed by (Bandura, 1977) a high point of self-efficacy in particulars lead them to coordinate testing plans, last in accomplishing them and arriving at academic capability in a variety of academic courses. In the opinion of Bandura (1997), particulars' powers of reasoning for appropriately employing the cognition and abilities to represent the performance sufficiently under a variety of conditions is named perceived self-efficacy and this is named TSE in teachers. Bandura (1997) described teachers' perceived self-efficacy in the same way that teachers' opinions in their capability to impact student success and considered it in the character of connecting with a great deal of practical teacher's way of behaving and views along with student acquirement and views (Amirian & Behshad, 2016). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001, p. 783) described TSE in the same manner that "a teacher's powers of reasoning for his or her capacities to take required consequences of student participation and learning, even among those pupils who may be firm or unenthusiastic."

TSE perceptions are inextricably tied to student engagement, classroom management and instructional strategies which are directly addressed by CELTA and TESOL certificates in an EFL environment (Chung & Choi, 2016). In the same vein, the impact of international certification courses including CELTA and TESOL on experienced English teachers' classroom practices has been noted in the literature (Anderson, 2020). According to Anderson (2020), initial certification courses (ICCs) such as CELTA and the TESOL aim teaching English as a foreign or second language around the world to teach teachers the basic teaching skills so that they can work appropriately with learners.

However, it is seen that although some studies have dealt with the effect of different task types on English skills, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) TSE perceptions, the effect of international certification courses including CELTA and TESOL on TSE

perceptions is among the least studied areas in the field. Given that teachers are one of the main players in the game of language learning, this scarcity of research is not accepted. More particularly, reviewing the existing literature, the researcher noticed that although some studies (e.g., (Liu, Mishan, & Chambers, 2018) dealt with TSE perceptions, so far, no study has touched the impact of CELTA and TESOL certification on self-efficacy perceptions of Iranian non-native English teachers.

To shed more light on this issue, the present study attempted to explore whether CELTA and TESOL certification is of the potential to significantly affect self-efficacy perceptions of Iranian non-native English teachers. In so doing, the following research questions were proposed:

RQ1. *Does CELTA/ TESOL certification course make a difference on Iranian NNETs' TSE perceptions?*

RQ2. *Does the format for instructional delivery (online or face to face) of CELTA/ TESOL certification course make a difference to Iranian NNETs TSE perceptions?*

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Theoretical issues

TSE beliefs can be defined as beliefs of teachers in their abilities to promote learning in different task-specific, domain-specific and context-specific cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social ways (Wyatt, 2016). As stated by Wheatley (2005), in a TSE belief, a central belief in one's ability to take action exists coupled with an outcome expectation about the result of action. Alignment of these two beliefs is not inevitable and this can have some implications for teacher education. A potential implication is that in case the former belief is low, practical teaching skills should be raised or theoretical awareness should be promoted if the latter is high (Wyatt, 2015b).

The argument made is that when teachers seek to develop different TSE beliefs in different pedagogical tasks, they resort to different kinds of experiences their cognitions are under their impact in different ways (Fives & Alexander, 2004). Among these experiences,

those related to success or failure in similar tasks, experiences of others' success or failure, and feedback related to one's performance can be mentioned (Albert Bandura, 1986). Another feeling which can also contribute to TSE beliefs is physiological arousal, and varying anxiety levels (Albert Bandura, 1986). The recognition is that TSE beliefs change over time and context, and therefore they are not fixed (Wyatt, 2016).

However, self-efficacy beliefs related to specific tasks are generalizable over time (Albert Bandura, 1977), therefore, they can contribute to the development of global self-efficacy (GSE) beliefs (Wyatt, 2016). These kinds of beliefs are not much concerned with specific strategies or techniques but are related to broader constructs such as language class management or language learners' engagement (Wyatt, 2016).

TSE beliefs have interaction with the other self-beliefs, including growth and fixed mindsets and operate within wider frameworks including 'self-determination theory' (SDT) (Wyatt, 2013). In this theory, TSE beliefs lead to self-competence as a feature of intrinsically-motivated teachers and cause them to be autonomous in approaching their work, and to be fulfilled in having a strong sense of relatedness for their learners and teaching environments more generally (Wyatt, 2015a).

As stated by Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier and Ellett (2008), TSE beliefs are teacher's individual beliefs in their capabilities to conduct specific teaching activities at a specified quality level in a particular context. They continued that teacher self-efficacy was defined and measured by RAND Corporation researchers for the first time. In RAND measurement, teachers' self-beliefs in their ability to influence students' action, taking teachers' inputs and parental involvement into account, were measured (Henson, 2001). According to Viadero (2005), TSE beliefs are implicit in the amount of involvement of parents in their children's academics. Key factors in teachers' self-efficacy include teachers' impact on students' achievement, the result of successful teaching practices, student behaviors, etc.

Empirical studies

Several studies have reported the effectiveness of professional development programs on TSE (K. Anderson & Hirschkorn, 2012; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Woodcock, 2011). For instance, Ingvarson et al. (2005) probed the effect of 40 teacher education courses on the understanding, effort and self-efficacy of several teachers. The findings indicated that programs whose understanding basis and hypothetical considerations were rich affected teachers' activities and improved TSE.

Wyatt (2008) conducted a study on TSE during TESOL program in England. The results suggested that in-service instructor training can improve the growth of teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy. It was justified by arguing that there is association between teachers' practical knowledge attained via the TESOL program as well as growth of teacher's self-judgment beliefs.

Faez and Valeo (2012) studied some certified TESOL teachers with fewer than three years of teaching experience. The findings confirmed a significant increase in teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy. This proved that TESOL can be positively used in educating qualified English teachers.

Aydin, Sağlam, and Bülent (2016) explored the amount of effectiveness of CELTA in pre-service and in-service teacher education. It was uncovered by the findings that non-ELT trainees were provided by a high amount of theoretical and practical knowledge as a consequence of CELTA training. ELT graduates improved in terms of practical, real teaching, meaningful learning and professional development.

Another research by Gülcan and Dollar (2016) aimed to examine applicability and necessity of CELTA in Turkish educational context. The teachers in this study were pleased to take the CELTA course since it aided their professional development in a variety of ways. Participants also noted that implementing all of the CELTA concepts in their courses is challenging. Companies may find the CELTA to be an essential method for instructional

supervision, although it is not required for hiring instructors.

In a recent study by Campbell (2020), the impact of TESOL/TEFL programs on EFL teachers' TSE in online and face to face contexts. As revealed by the results, TSE perceptions of teachers were significantly increased in regard with classroom management, teaching strategies, and student engagement under the effect of TESOL/TEFL programs. Regarding the difference between online and traditional face to face format of TESOL/TEFL, no significant difference was found in terms of instructional strategies and student engagement. In the case of classroom management, however, the online format of the program had a greater impact on TSE improvement than the face-to-face format. Thus, the researcher suggests that TESOL/TEFL programs are efficient for native English teachers whereas the format of delivery may only matter in classroom management.

METHOD

Design

In line with the objectives of the present study, a quasi-experimental pretest posttest design was used. This type of design examines the effect of an independent variable (i.e., different forms of CELTA or TESOL certification course) on a dependent variable (i.e., TSE) (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018).

Participants

Given that this study was concerned with Iranian non-native English teachers (NNETs) who have passed a CELTA or TESOL certification course, the participants of study were picked up from ITTC, an internationally accredited centre for TESOL certification in Istanbul and ITI, an internationally recognized Cambridge English teacher training centre of CELTA course in Istanbul. The participants were selected through convenient and snowball sampling methods. They consisted of 50 male and female Iranian EFL teachers whose majors were Translation and literature in English as well as Teaching in 30 to 40 age range, with one to more than ten years of experience in teaching. The participants were already teaching at

different private and public high schools, Language schools and universities in the different provinces of Iran. There were 26 Bachelor's degrees and 19 Master's degrees among them, while 5 of them were PhD candidate at the time of data collection. 27 candidates participated in the face-to-face classes while 23 preferred to have the course online. To observe research ethics, the participants' consent to participate in the study was taken. Moreover, they were ensured about anonymity and confidentiality of their personal information. Additionally, they were informed of the objectives of the study.

Instruments

The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

To measure the participants' TSE perceptions, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), an extended model of the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), was utilized (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). This survey contains twenty-four items on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Nothing to 9=A Great Deal. Overall, the reliability of the scale has been reported .94. In addition, the validity of the scale has been confirmed through factor analysis (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Data Collection

Data collection started with sampling, observing ethics of research. Then, the researcher prepared two google forms of TSES for pre-test and post-test, which were distributed among the participants via Email, WhatsApp or Telegram before and after CELTA or TESOL certification course. Moreover, to attain the necessary data to address the second question on the effectiveness of the format of the presentation of contents of CELTA or TESOL course on NNETs' TSE perceptions, a question was placed in the demographic information section of the links of TSES related to CELTA/ TESOL experience format of the participants (i.e., online or face to face). It lasted about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted at descriptive and inferential levels. More particularly, to analyze

the data related to the first research question, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon test were run. To answer the second research question, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, descriptive statistics and one-way ANCOVA were used.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Test of Normality for TSE Scores

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Test of Normality	
						Z	p
TSE Pretest	68.20	50	7.95	1.73	5.04	.87	.00
TSE Posttest	85.46	50	8.76	.21	.82	.97	.42

As depicted in the Table 1, the observed mean scores of TSE after the course were higher after the CELTA/TESOL course than those observed before the course. Moreover, the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicate that the distributions of the scores of TSE after the CELTA/TESOL course was normal, but it was shown that the TSE scores of the

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and descriptive statistics which were run to answer the first research question.

participants collected before the course were not distributed normally. Accordingly, it was concluded that Wilcoxon test- the non-parametric test equivalent to the paired samples t-test-had to be used to compare TSE scores of the participants before and after the CELTA/TESOL course. The results of Wilcoxon test are reported in Table 2.

Table 2
Wilcoxon Test for Comparing Overall TSE before and after the Course

	TSE Posttest - TSE Pretest	Cohen's d
Z	-5.769 ^a	1.48
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

a. Based on negative ranks b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As shown in Table 2, there was a significant difference between the observed mean scores of overall TSE before and after the course ($Z = -5.76$, $p = .00 < .05$). Therefore, it can be argued that the CELTA/TESOL course has been effective in improving the participants' level of TSE perceptions, in general. In addition, according

to the observed Cohen's d, it can be concluded that the course had a rather huge effect on the participants' development of TSE perceptions.

Table 3 shows the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, descriptive statistics which were implemented in an attempt to answer the second research question.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Test of Normality for TSE Scores

Groups		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Test of Normality	
							Z	p
Online	TSE Pretest	69.43	23	8.79	2.32	7.09	.21	.00
	TSE Posttest	83.95	23	8.70	-.70	.44	.11	.20
Face to Face	TSE Pretest	67.14	27	7.16	.78	.69	.13	.20
	TSE Posttest	86.74	27	8.76	.97	.48	.14	.14

As demonstrated in Table 3, both online and face-to-face groups experienced a remarkable improvement in terms of TSE perceptions after the CELTA/TESOL certification course.

Moreover, the results of the normality test showed that the distribution of the observed scores were normal for the posttests and face-to-face group pretest ($p > .05$); however, the

distribution of the observed scores for the online group pretest was not normal ($Z = .21$, $p = .00 < .05$). In order to compare the TSE perceptions of the groups after the course, one-way ANCOVA was used and the pretest

scores were considered as the covariate of the analysis. It has to be noted that the online group pretest scores were normalized before the analysis of covariance. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
One-way ANCOVA for Comparing TSE scores of the Online and Face-to-Face Groups

	F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Square
Online-Face to Face	77.34	1	.02	.23

Based on the results reported in the Table 4, there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their TSE perceptions at the end of the course ($F(47,1) = 77.34$, $p = .02 < .05$, $\eta = .23$). Accordingly, it can be argued that the participants in the face-to-face group had a significantly stronger perceptions of TSE than their counterparts in the online group. However, considering the observed eta squared, it is worth mentioning that the difference was small.

DISCUSSION

This study has tackled the contribution of CELTA/ TESOL course to Iranian NNETs' overall TSE perceptions. Furthermore, this research was an attempt to probe the effect of the format for instructional delivery (online or face to face) on Iranian NNETs' TSE perceptions.

Concerning the first research question, as proved by the results of data analysis, the participants significantly improved in terms of their overall TSE perceptions as a consequence of exposure to the CELTA or TESOL certification course. Consistent with this study, several studies (e.g., Anderson & Hirschhorn, 2012; AYDIN et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Gülcan & Dollar, 2016; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Ingvarson et al., 2005; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Woodcock, 2011; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Wyatt, 2008) have confirmed the effectiveness of a variety of professional development programs on TSE.

To justify this finding, Ingvarson et al. (2005) argued that diverse professional development programs play a significant role in teacher empowerment regarding self-efficacy

by providing them with a strong theoretical and practical knowledge base. Another relevant argument by Wyatt (2008) in this regard emphasizes that level of teaching expertise plays a mediating role in the association between programs such as the TESOL and the improvement of TSE. What is more, as argued by Faez and Valeo (2012), TSE perceptions improve after TESOL course due to increased knowledge of the task and situation among the participants. Another relevant justification in this regard is the one proposed by Aydin et al. (2016) according to which CELTA course is of the potential to upgrade the quality of teaching and consequently develop TSE perceptions. Last but not least, Gülcan and Dollar (2016) suggested that improvements in TSE perceptions after participation in CELTA course are partially rooted in the enhanced self-esteem of teachers.

As far as the second research question is concerned, the findings revealed that although both face to face and online groups showed a remarkable improvement in their TSE perceptions after CELTA/ TESOL certification course, there was a significant difference between the two groups' TSE perceptions after the course in favor of the face to face group. In other words, the participants of the face to face group's perceptions of TSE were significantly higher than those of their counterparts in the online group. However, it should not be missed that the observed difference was small.

In line with this study, Campbell (2020) found that face to face TESOL/ TEFL course was significantly more influential than online one in affecting TSE perceptions. To interpret this finding, it can be argued that since practical

aspects of teaching are usually more emphasized in face to face CELTA/TESOL course, teachers' level of TSE perceptions is more significantly impacted by such courses.

Additionally, the researcher believes that theories become more meaningful when they are turned into practice. In face to face CELTA/TESOL course, like any other teacher professional development programs, demonstrations are used wherein teachers vividly can see how different principles can be implemented in real class situations. This contributes to TSE empowerment and helps them operationalize what they have read in books. In sum, the bottom line is that teachers' perceptions of face to face CELTA/TESOL course are positive; they have positive attitudes towards it; they become motivated by it; and they think that its outcomes are useful (Campbell, 2020). All these may have contributed to higher effectiveness of face to face CELTA/TESOL course in comparison to its online version.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study are enlightening and useful taking this issue into account that recently, CELTA/TESOL certification course has been more emphasized and touched theoretically and practically from different angles with the focus on meaning, real-world language use, and communicative-oriented activities in an attempt to merge different language skills (Firouzi & Khabiri, 2018). Furthermore, with a view to the enhanced dominance of TSE perceptions in teaching quality and effectiveness, the findings are of high utility.

All in all, it can be concluded that CELTA/TESOL certification course has the potential to significantly affect Iranian EFL teachers' TSE perceptions. This shows that internationally-certified Iranian EFL teachers have a higher regard about themselves after being exposed to CELTA/TESOL certification

course. Given that the existing literature supports the effectiveness of TSE on teaching success and effectiveness, it can be concluded that using CELTA/TESOL certification course is associated with many benefits for both EFL teachers and learners in EFL classes. Moreover, it can be concluded based on the results that attempts should be made to benefit more from face to face CELTA/TESOL certification course rather than its online form in a way that teachers' TSE perceptions be more heavily affected in a positive direction.

The results and findings of this study recommend some implications for in-service teacher training programs in that they need to focus more heavily on providing practice and theory to the trainees through CELTA/TESOL certification course. Although it is hard to organize such programs in a constructive and reflective way due to the mismatch between the number of trainers and the teachers, there is a need to take the possible steps to gradually fulfil this goal. The training and the practice for in-service teachers has to be real-life and contextualized, so that they can find it meaningful and to internalize. Both private language institutes and the Ministry of Education are recommended to conduct in-service teacher training programs including CELTA/TESOL course or similar professional development programs for their staff.

In sum, more CELTA/TESOL course programs are needed in which the immediate needs of in-service teachers are met on a collaborative and reflective manner. The CELTA/TESOL course seems to be a good prototype solution in functioning as a bridge between in-service teacher training and the actual context they are working in. Including more context-specific components addressing the specific needs of the in-service teachers can increase the impact of CELTA/TESOL course on teachers' practices.

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