EFL Teacher's Affective Constructs and Their Sense of Responsibility

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Abstract

This study, in the first place, attempted to examine the relationship between English as foreign language (EFL) teachers' affective constructs and their sense of responsibility. In the second place, the roles of teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, school setting, and the number of students in the classroom on teachers' affective constructs and sense of responsibility were investigated. For this purpose, 110 EFL teachers were selected throughavailability sampling from different high schools in Neyshabur, Iran. The teachers were asked to fill out a multi-dimensional questionnaire including different affective constructs and responsibility subscales. The subsequent data analysis via correlation and multi analysis of variances revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' affective constructs and their sense of responsibility. Furthermore, significant correlations were found between teachers' experience and school setting with teachers' affective constructs and their sense of responsibility. But the effects of teachers' gender and the number of students in their classrooms on teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility were not significant. The conclusions and implications of the research are further discussed with reference to earlier findings.
Keywords: **EFL teachers' sense of responsibility, Affective constructs, EFL teachers, Multidimensional questionnaire**

1. Background to the Study

Education plays a very important role in human improvement. Teachers, by preparing effective learning and teaching environments influence learners' educational improvement. Thus, qualified and well-trained teachers are necessary to improve the quality of citizens in a nation and also civilization.

There are different factors effecting educational system in a country. One of the most important elements influencing students' achievements in an educational system is the teacher. Especially for younger learners the ideal hero of life is the teacher. As mentioned by Aliakbari and Kafshgar (2013), attempts to improve performance in schools will never succeed unless teachers, as one of the most important elements of educational system, are taken into account in all of their

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physical, psychological and physiological dimensions. To improve teachers' performance an educational system ought to put teachers' affective constructs and sense of responsibility under investigation.

The dependent variable under investigation in this study is EFL teachers' sense of responsibility (TSR). Responsibility feeling differs from job to job. In the case of teaching, sense of responsibility differs according to different social contexts, student composition, and school autonomy (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Figel, 2008; Kant, 2011). Sense of responsibility refers to how teachers themselves view their responsibilities and condition under which they are willing to accept personal responsibility for such outcomes (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). Diamond et., al. (2004) also argued that features of micro-political context, teachers' expectations of students and their individual and collective sense of responsibility for student performance-are under the influence of racial and social class composition of schools (school settings).

In Iran English teachers are expected to do some special responsibilities. English teachers are to teach the recommended textbook by ministry of education. Their language classes should integrate all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Recently the main focus has been on listening and speaking. Teachers must cover the textbook in the assigned number of hours during a year. They are expected motivate the students by frequent oral and written evaluation. Teachers are encouraged to dress formally and polite classroom behavior is important.

In the following sections, first this study briefly touches on different perspectives toward affect and then it poses the gap which inclined the researcher to conduct such a study.

The most important concept relating to teachers' affective construct (TAC) is motivation. Although teachers' motivation is of great importance in education, a large number of the studies in this field refer to students' motivation. In theories of motivation there is a distinction between two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsically motivated people tend to do things to receive external rewards and benefits (e.g. good salary), while intrinsically motivated ones are those who enjoy receiving internal rewards (Alavi & Mehmandoust, 2011).

In Iran, there are some significant factors that affect teachers' motivation especially language teachers' motivation. As an English teacher with more than 20 years of experience, I think teachers donot have much motivating professional situation. They have little influence in educational policy and decision making. Headmasters of schools are not educated in the field of educational management and most of them are not trained to manage an educational center. Political groups have a large influence on selection of educational managers. Teacher's job promotion is based on the years of teaching experience not teaching performance so it is not much motivating as all the teachers promote equally. Salary and income up to some level can affect teachers' motivation and also teachers' respect in the eyes of students, parents, and society. In the case of language teaching, in particular, the increasing number of students in classrooms is a factor of demotivation for EFL teachers, as there isnotany chance to involve all students in the classroom activity. The time devoted to language teaching among other school subjects is not enough to cover the whole textbook determined by ministry of education. The textbook also can affect students' language perception and as a result teachers' motivation.

Another factor in teachers' affective construct is emotion. There are some studies on the relation between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their teaching performance (Alavinia, Bonyadi, & Razavi, 2012; Brown, 2011; Mashhadi, 2013). In a study on Iranian EFL learners

and teachers, Alavinia, Bonyadi and Razavi showed that the teachers' emotional intelligence was found to significantly correlate with EFL learners' motivation in their study sample. "The significant role that teacher social emotional competence may play in the classroom environment through classroom management, forming positive teacher- student relationships, and implementation of social-emotional learning curricula, as well as the influence social emotional competence may have on teachers' overall well-being, requires an assessment that is able to reliably measure this construct in a manner that is valid for research and applied purposes" (Karalyn, 2012, p.76).

Most major topics in psychology and every major problem faced by humanity involve emotion (Russel, 2003). A teacher may choose a different approach for teaching according to the emotion he/she is experiencing. In a rather recent study on 175 Australian higher education teachers, Triwell (2011) approved that there are significant relations between the ways teachers emotionally experience the context of teaching and the ways they approach their teaching. Positive emotions are considered to be associated with student- focused teaching approaches and negative emotions associated with transmission approaches.

Another element of EFL teachers' affective construct which is under investigation in this research is teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards learners, teaching, and learning. There is growing evidence to indicate that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs are closely linked to their values, to their views of the world, and to their understanding of their place within it (Li, 2012). Teachers' beliefs on learning and teaching make them decide what approaches and methods are suitable for teaching language and their belief about learners determines the teacher-learner emotional relationship. Borg and Al-Bosaidi (2012) indicate that teachers' beliefs can

powerfully shape both what teachers do and, consequently, the learning opportunities learners receive.

Job satisfaction is another aspect of teachers' affective construct. Aliakbari and Kafshgar (2013) stated that there is not a conventional definition about job satisfaction. In their study, factors influencing job satisfaction are consisted as (a) job environment factors such as the way people are treated, the nature of job tasks, relations with other people in the work place, and rewards and accordingly, meaningfulness of the job, supportive administration, job characteristics, social benefits, and intention to remain in the job as the job environment factors., and (b) individual factors as an individual's gender, age, educational background, teaching subjects and job experience.

The last factor influencing teachers' affective construct is teachers' self- efficacy. "Efficacy is essentially individuals' future-oriented judgment about their competence rather than their actual level of competence" (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2012). Ghanizaheh and Moafian state, teachers' beliefs about themselves and their capabilities can be influential in the quality of their performance.

In this study all dimension of affective construct of teachers are under consideration to see if the affective constructs has any impact on teachers' sense of responsibility.

Thus, this study was led by the following research questions:
1. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' affective constructs and their sense of responsibility?
2. Do the teachers differ in their affective construct and their sense of responsibility in relation to gender, teaching experience, number of students, and school location?

2. Method
2.1 Participants
The sample encompassed 110 full-time EFL teachers drawn from several high schools of

Neyshabur and four surrounding educational areas (Zabarkhan, Tahat-e-jolgeh, Sarvelayat, and Mianjolgeh) in Southeast of Iran; 60(54.5%) of the teachers were females and 50(45.5%) were males. In this sample, 44(40%) of the participants worked at urban areas, while 32(29.1%) at suburban areas, and 34(30.9%) at rural areas.

To more fully understand the population of interest, the researchers obtained a variety of basic demographic information. Most (49.1%) of the participants had between 21-30 years of experience, 34(30.9%) between 11-20, and 22(20%) between 1-10. The highest level of formal education that the participants had completed was B.A.

2.2 Instruments

The data collection tool was a questionnaire. To construct this questionnaire, six different self-report questionnaires were utilized. In order to make the total questionnaire of the research shorter, the researcher deleted the similar and overlapping items. The questionnaires used were as follow:

1. *Motivation Scale.* The teachers' motivation scale developed by Bernaus, Wilson, and Gardner (2008) was used for motivation subscale in the study. It consisted of 10 items which participants were to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement in each item.

2. *Beliefs and Attitudes Questionnaire.* The questionnaire developed by Mahat (2008) was used to measure teachers' beliefs and attitudes. It also consisted of 10 Likert-scale items.

3. *Emotion.* Hafman and Kashdan (2009) designed a question on emotion. This questionnaire was used to measure teachers' emotions.

4. *Efficacy.* The researcher utilized the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* designed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Because in other questionnaires used in this research the items were in an affirmative form, the researcher changed the items which were in questionnaire form in the main questionnaire into statement. As an example; the item "How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?" was changed to "I can do a lot to control disruptive behavior in the classroom."

5. *Job Satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was chosen from an article by Karabenick and Lauermann (2013). The satisfaction questionnaire contained 15 items.

6. *Sense of responsibility.* The *Teachers' Responsibility Scale* (TRS) developed by Lauermann and Karabenick (2013) was used in this study. Items of the scale were designed to represent four areas of responsibility: responsibility for student motivation, student achievement, relationships with students, and teaching.

The participants were asked to indicate their gender, years of teaching experience, location of the school they teach, and the average number of students per class.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The process of data collection started in May (2015) and continued until October (2015). The population of this study comprised EFL teachers from 70 high schools in various districts of Neyshabur city in Iran. All of the participants were full-time high school teachers and were contacted personally by the researcher in their respective high schools or in professional development classes engaged in an urban school and were invited to participate in the study. They were informed about the study and ensured about the privacy concerns of the research. The researcher explained the details of each part of the questionnaire to the participants and asked them to cooperate honestly in the study. From among 125 EFL teachers who received the questionnaire, only 110 gave the questionnaire back.

3.Results of Data Analysis

In order to investigate the aim of study with regard to the relationships between teachers'

affective constructs and sense of responsibility sub-scales, bivariate spearman correlations of all variables were calculated.

To detect differences in teachers' affective construct and sense of responsibility in relation to other demographic factors such as gender, age, years of experience, and average student number, five multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVA) were used.

The first research question was "Is there a significant relationship between teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility?" To determine the relationship between these two variables, first the relationship between subscales of the two variables was under investigation.

It is determined that one way MANOVA is statistically significant. A *sig* value of $p<.05$ indicates that the group means are different. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers' sense of responsibility is significantly correlated with teachers' affective construct.

It was found that different EFL teachers' affective construct subscales had a statistically significant effect on motivation as a responsibility subscale except for motivation as an affective construct subscale (The p values are $p = 0$, $p= 001$, $p = 0$, $p = 0$, and $p=.06$ respectively). It couldbe figured out that all these affective construct sub scales had a statistically significant effect on the responsibility of the teachers about students' achievement except for motivation affective construct subscale (The p values are $p = 0$, $p= 0$, $p = 0$, $p = 0$, and $p= .07$ respectively). The third row also indicated that all aspects of teachers' affective constructs had a statistically significant effect on the responsibility of the teachers about their relation with the students except for motivation affective construct subscale (The p values are $p = 0$, $p = 0$, $p = 0$, $p = 0$, and $p=.07$ respectively). The significant effect of beliefs and efficacy on teaching responsibility of the teachers were obvious but the effect of emotion, job satisfaction and motivation of teachers on their teaching responsibility were not significant (The *p*values are $p = 0$, $p = .09$, $p = 0$, $p = 39$, and $p = .09$ respectively).

In order to investigate the first aim of study with regard to the overall relationships between EFL teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility, bivariate spearman correlations of variables were calculated.

According to the correlation matrix, EFL teachers' affective construct was significantly related to teachers' sense of responsibility ($p=.001$). So the first null hypothesis was rejected and it could be inferred that there was a positive relation between these two variables.

The second research question was "Do the teachers differ in their affective construct and their sense of responsibility in relation to gender, teaching experience, number of students, and school location"? To find an answer to this question, descriptive statistics (Mean) of sense of responsibility and affective construct subscales with reference to different demographic variables was needed. The SPSS version 19 was used in order to detect the multi analysis of variances (MANOVA) of affective construct sub scales, sense of responsibility subscales, and demographic variables mentioned in the second research question.

The mean and standard deviation of each of TAC subscales and TSR sub scales were compared according to male and female teachers.

The multivariate test of significance showed the result of one way MANOVA. By looking at the second row named gender and the Wilks' lambda part, it could be determined that one way MANOVA was not statistically significant. A*sig* value of .19 which means $p> .05$ indicated that the group means were not different. Therefore, it couldbe concluded that teachers' affective construct and teachers' sense of responsibility were not significantly dependent on gender of the teachers.

The sense of responsibility and affective constructs subscales differences were not significant considering teachers' gender.

The multivariate test of significance showed the result of one way MANOVA. Lambda ranges between 0-1, with values close to 0 indicating the group means were different and values close to 1 indicating the group means were not different.

By looking at the second effect, labeled expe (experience) in the Wilk's lambda row, a *sig* value of .000 which means $p < .05$ indicated that the group means were different. Therefore, it could be inferred that teachers' affective construct and teachers' sense of responsibility were significantly dependent on teachers' experience. So, the null hypothesis in this case was rejected.

It was found that the EFL teachers' affective constructs were statistically significantly different between 1-10 years of experience teachers and 11-20 years of experience school teachers ($p < .05$) and also between 11-20 years of experience teachers and 21-30 years of experience teachers ($p < 05$) but it was not significantly different between 1-10 years of experience teachers and 21-30 years of experience teachers ($p = .95$).

It also shows that EFL teachers' sense of responsibility was statistically significantly different between 11-20 years of experience school teachers and 21-30 years of experience teachers, ($p < o5$), but not between 1-10 years of experience teachers and 11-20 years of experience ones ($p = .57$) and also between 1-10 years of experience teachers and 21-30 years of experience ($p = .07$).

The affective construct and sense of responsibility of teachers with 10-20 years of experience was lower than the other two groups.

The multivariate test of significance showed the result of one way MANOVA. By looking at the second effect, labeled "setting", and the Wilk's lambda row, a *sig* value of .015 which means $p < .05$ indicated that the group means were different. Therefore, it could be concluded that teachers' affective construct and teachers' sense of responsibility are significantly dependent on school setting.

It could be seen that school setting had a statistically significant effect on EFL teachers' affective construct $F(2,10) = 18/11$; partial $\eta 2 = .52$; $p = .05$ and also it had a statistically significant effect on teachers' sense of responsibility $F(2,7) = 3.72$; partial $\eta 2 = .65$; $p < 05$.

The EFL teachers' affective constructs were statistically significantly different between urban and suburban school teachers ($p < .05$) but not between urban and rural teachers ($p = .35$) and also between suburban and rural teachers ($p = .57$).

This also had shown that EFL teachers' sense of responsibility was statistically significantly different between urban and rural teachers, ($p < .05$), but not between urban and suburban ($p = .85$) and also rural and suburban teachers ($p = .16$).

The mean and standard deviation of each of TAC subscales and TSR sub scales were compared considering the school setting.

The EFL teachers' affective constructs were not statistically significantly different regarding the number of students in the classroom ($p = .96$, $p = .47$, and $p = .57$). The EFL teachers' sense of responsibility was not also different considering the number of the students in their classroom ($p = .14$ and $p = .59$) except for the number of more than 30 and less than 20 students in the classroom ($p < 05$).

The level of affective construct and sense of responsibility of teachers with more than 30 students in the classroom was more than the other two groups.

4.Discussion and Conclusion

Generally the relationship between the dependent variable (teachers' sense of responsibility) and independent variable (EFL teachers' affective construct) in this study was positively significant. The first

research question focused on the relationship between EFL teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility. As it was inferred, *p*values between different EFL teachers' affective construct subscale and each of teachers' sense of responsibility subscales were less than 0.05. It was identified that among 20 alpha levels only six of them were above 0.05 ($p>.05$). Motivation as an affective construct subscale was not significantly related to different sense of responsibility subscales. Moreover, the relation between job satisfaction and emotion was not significantly related to responsibility for teaching.

In fact affective construct has a strong impact on the first three dimensions of sense of responsibility: responsibility for motivation (to make students more interested in the subject matter that the instructor is teaching), responsibility for students' achievement (students' learning and academic progress), and responsibility for relationship (make the students trust the teacher and feel that they can account on the teacher to solve their problems inside and out of school). But affective construct has less impact on responsibility for teaching (making the instruction as affective as the teacher can), and it can be due to the fact that the first three responsibility subscales have more straight and pure relation to affect, but some other factors as the high educational level impact responsibility for instruction.

Spearman's measures of association identified that overall relationship between the mean of EFL teachers' affective construct and their mean of sense of responsibility was significant. It indicates that teachers with high affective construct are more responsible for the subject they teach, their students' achievement, their relationship with their students, and their teaching.

The first null hypothesis is rejected because the *p* value ($p= 001$).

The second research question referred to EFL teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility in relation to some demographic factors as gender, teaching experience, school location, and number of the students in class. To find out the relationship between TAC and TSR with each of these factors first by comparing means of every TAC subscales and TSR subscales in relation to different subgroups of these factors was under investigation.

TAC and TSR didn't have a relation to gender.A *sig* value of .19 which means $p>.05$ indicates that the group means are not different. Therefore, it could be concluded that teachers' affective construct and teachers' sense of responsibility are not significantly dependent on gender of the teachers. Female participants have higher level of affective construct and sense of responsibility comparing to male participants.

Teachers' experience has a significant effect on both EFL teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility. Tteachers with 10-20 years of experience have the least and teachers with more than 20 years of experience have the most level of affective construct and sense of responsibility between the three groups of experience in this research.

The null hypothesis about the relationship between school setting and TAC and TSR is also rejected. So school setting also, as independent variable, affects the level of affective construct and sense of responsibility of Iranian EFL teachers. It is inferred that urban teachers have the highest affective construct and sense of responsibility between the three groups. That may be because of the sensitivity of students' parents in urban areas about their children's education. Parents in urban areas are eager to improve the educational level of their children. They more often go to the school where their children study and meet the teachers. They talk about the educational problems of their children to the headmaster or the teachers. Moreover, educational systems in a city may have more control over the schools in urban areas than rural areas. These factors affect the motivation and sense of responsibility of the teachers.

The effect of number of students in class on teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility are not much significant. Teachers with more than 30 students in class have a higher level of affective construct and sense of responsibility, owing to the fact that, the number of students in the district of this research differs according to the school setting. Schools in rural areas have less than 20 students in each class. In urban areas because of the population and insisting on educating up to higher levels, the number of students in a class is normally more than 30. Factors improving the level of teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility in urban areas were mentioned before.

Generally, the results of this research revealed that there is a strong relationship between EFL teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility. This study evaluated teachers' affective construct and sense of responsibility as distinctive concepts via their respective sub-scales. Most sub-scales of sense of responsibility were associated with subscales of affective constructs. These findings were new in the area of relationship between these very important variables in Iran. Although some of the former research demonstrated relations between sense of responsibility and some aspects of affect, these studies didnot investigate the effect of all affective construct sub scales on sense of responsibility.

There were also some counter-evidence claims which could not find any relationships between teachers' sense of responsibility subscales and a subscale of teachers' affective construct (Aliakbari & Kafshgar, 2013). These inconsistencies point to the fact that there may be other factors which mediate the relationships between teachers' sense of responsibility and their affective construct that vary from one context to another. Furthermore the findings were inconsistent with previous studies of Ravi Kant (2011). Also, the findings were not inconsistent with some previous studies as Kant (2011),

in the sense that urban teachers have a high level of affective construct and are more responsible, comparing to suburban and rural groups.

Further studies may approach the issue by considering a vast variety of participants from all over a country because local cultural and local social differences may impact the obtained results. Also some inner moral criteria may influence the participants feeling while filling out the questionnaire. In this study, teachers' affective construct and sense of responsibility was assessed only through questionnaire. In a similar study, researchers can make use of other kinds of evaluative tools such as interviewing teachers, or a combination of different assessment devices to assess teachers' affective construct and their sense of responsibility.

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