

## **A Look into the Association between Life-Wise Syllabus and Teacher Success: A Quantitative Study in an EFL Context**

**Hamid Khosravany Fard <sup>\*1</sup>, Reza Pishghadam<sup>2</sup>, Azar Hosseini Fatemi<sup>3</sup>**

*1, 2, 3. English Department of the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad*

\*Corresponding author: [hamidkhosravani8@gmail.com](mailto:hamidkhosravani8@gmail.com)

---

Received: 2016.4.16

Revisions received: 2016.6.12

Accepted: 2016.7.11

---

### **Abstract**

The current study aimed at investigating the relationship between life-wise syllabus- as a new type of syllabus which emerged as the result of recent developments in applied ELT and corresponding to the "education for life"- and teacher success in an EFL context. Life-wise syllabus introduced by Pishghadam in 2011 directed English teachers' attention to give priority to life issues rather than language in class. These new concepts encourage curriculum development based on life and all of its manifestations which is the core principle of humanistic education. Then teaching should not only comprise mathematics, chemistry, or literature, but also emotions, relationships, attitudes, thinking styles, feelings, and states of mind. Due to the recent emergence of this syllabus and the dearth of research over its effectiveness, this research study was carried out to shed more light on the issue. To this end, 200 teachers- 100 from private sector and 100 from public sector- and their 1771 students were chosen as the participants of the research study from Mashhad and Ghaen cities. In this study, the teachers were given "Life-Responsive Language Teaching beliefs Questionnaire" (hereafter LRLTB), and their students were given the "Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire" (hereafter CSET). The results of the correlational study indicated that the main variables and also their subscales were highly correlated. The comparison between male and female teachers regarding correlation between variables did not show any significant difference. But the comparison between private and public school teachers in terms of the relationship between the variables displayed that they were more strongly correlated for the latter.

**Keywords:** Life-responsive language teaching belief, Life syllabus, Teacher success

### Introduction

In recent years an expanding interest in defining the process of English language teaching has emerged. This tendency to understand and define the process has led to the emergence of many concepts one of which is syllabus. The simplest explanation of this concept is a statement of what is to be learnt. A syllabus is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translate the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level (Dubin & Olsthain, 1997).

In a later extension of the theory of Applied ELT, Pishghadam and Zabihi (2013) have introduced English for Life Purposes (ELP) as a new concept in English language teaching. They argue that the focus of teaching English as a second/foreign language should be shifted toward enhancing the learners' life qualities by offering a diversity of subjects for discussion which can enable the learners to compare their home culture with other cultures and project their unique identities rather than considering learners' specific needs in study or work situations, as was seen in ESP classes (Mahmoodzadeh, 2013).

As a matter of fact, a variety of syllabi are proposed in the course of time since the emergence of second and foreign language teaching and learning to be applied in the ELT environment. The most recent one which was proposed by Pishghadam (2011) is the "*life syllabus*". This implies that the language syllabus must be planned according to the principles of the syllabus of life. This is not to suggest that language learning should be ignored, but it should not be considered the end product of a language class. Rather, primacy ought to be given to the improvement of learners' life qualities through the development and application of life syllabus in ELT classes. Due to the recent emergence of life syllabus, the dearth of research with the aim of finding out the relationship between the teachers' success and the extent to which they believe in life syllabus in ELT classes could be felt. So to fill this gap this study is an attempt to explore the relationship between the newly proposed concept of life syllabus and the teachers' success to see how the teachers' tendency to give priority to life issues

rather than language in class affects their effectiveness in the case that any relationship exists between the two.

English Language Teaching (ELT) is most commonly seen as an educational practice, with internal debates focusing, for example on the method, content, syllabus, and materials of teaching. Among these concepts, clarifying the concept of syllabus is seriously problematic. There seem to be as many definitions as definers. While each of these definers is to cover a similar ground, various nuances and differences in emphasis are totally clear. To make the point comprehensible, two definitions of this concept are given and explanations that illuminate the divergence of these two definitions are set forth. Pienemann (1985, p.23) defines syllabus as "the selection and grading of linguistic teaching objectives", while Breen (1984, p.47) defines it "as a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students' learning". As can be examined, the former definition by Pienemann only concerns the linguistic teaching objectives without looking upon the non-linguistic functions of a syllabus and the latter definition by Breen (1984) concerns the end result of teaching which is teaching and learning achievement but overlooks the vague relationship between what is taught and what is learnt.

This search for the best syllabus and reaching no climax over the issue put a heavy burden on the ELT teachers to put their best foot forward to choose one that suits best to the students' needs and desires. But what is common between all the scholars and researches of this fundamental field is that they're all trying to track down the one that brings about the highest achievement on the part of both the teacher and the students which means both teaching and learning processes are expected to be worthwhile. But what challenge ELT teachers and learners, syllabus designers, policy-makers, textbook designers, and testers and all those that are responsible for the improvement and upgrading of the ELT is the fact that whether there exists any bridge between these two concepts which are "teacher success" and "syllabus", the latter of which is really comprehensive due to the existence of large majority of different types of syllabi.

As a matter of fact teachers' perceptions as hidden agents of change in any educational system, are of primary importance in ELT in an EFL context which is bound up with cultural issues and national/home and

cultural identities (e.g. Pishghadam & Saboori, 2011). Life syllabus as a recently proposed syllabus by Pishghadam (2011) which is subsumed in Applied ELT paradigm is one of the important notions of this domain based on which for a language course to be as efficient as possible, it should "incorporate the issues of concern in learners" life into the ELT curriculum, highlighting the aspects as wells as the enhancement of learners" language proficiency" (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Norouz Kermanshahi, 2012, p.895). Undoubtedly the extent to which the teachers believe in life syllabus which circles around life-and-language classes rather than language syllabus focusing on language-and-life classes, their success will be affected. In this respect, Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) call attention to the new and expanding functions and also the added role with which ELT practitioners should come to term. Top priority to learners" life issues and then teaching the desired language is the suggestion they offer ELT teachers. What they mean by this is that language learning is not peripheral in English language teaching but "language learning should not be considered the end product of ELT classes" (p.23).

The present study addressed the following questions:

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between LRLTB and teacher success in ELT classes?
- 2) Is there any significant relationship between the components of LRLTB and their success in ELT classes?
- 3) Is there any significant relationship between the components of teacher success and their LRLTB in ELT classes?
- 4) Is there any significant difference between the relationship of LRLTB and teacher success regarding teachers" gender?
- 5) Is there any significant difference between the relationship of LRLTB and teacher success regarding the teachers" setting of teaching (public and private sector)?

### **Method**

This study was an attempt to figure out whether any relationship exists between the ELT teacher"s success and LRLTB and also to compare the

strengths of relationships between the variables and their subscales regarding teachers' genders and settings of teaching.

In this section, some variables such as participants and setting, instrumentation, procedure, and statistical analysis of the data collected in this study are explained.

### **Participants**

This study was carried out in public high schools for the third grade and also pre-university level students and also private language institutes for upper-intermediate and advanced level students in the context of EFL in Iran.

The two groups of participants involved in this study were Iranian public and private language school teachers and students. The participants of the study were 1771 students and 200 teachers- 100 working in institutes and 100 working in state-funded schools- which were part of the convenience sample, from both public and private sectors. The students were intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced level students from various schools of Mashhad and Ghaen cities. The students' age ranged from 12 to 35, and had a mean of 18.58, and SD of 2.9, and the teachers' age ranged from 19 to 48, and had a mean of 27.96, and SD of 5.34. Out of these 1771 students who participated in this study, 916 were male students and 855 were female students. 959 were private language students and 812 were studying English as an obligatory course in the public schools.

### **Instrumentation**

To obtain the relevant data, two sets of instruments were used in this study. Features of each of these instruments are mentioned below.

#### ***Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire (CSET)***

In 2009, Moafian and Pishghadam designed and standardized a questionnaire measure language teachers' success which is called "Characteristics of successful EFL teachers questionnaire".

The total reliability of the questionnaire is very high. For example, Birjandi and Bagherkazemi (2010) reported cronbach's alpha coefficient about .90 for it. It consisted of 47 Likert type items followed by five alternatives ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree which

measures twelve constructs as teaching accountability, interpersonal relationship, attention to all, examination, commitment, learning boosters, creating a sense of competence, teaching boosters, physical and emotional acceptance, empathy, class attendance, dynamism.

***Life-Responsive Language Teaching Beliefs Questionnaire (LRLTB)***

To evaluate the teachers' life-responsive language teaching belief, the questionnaire, which was designed and standardized by Pishghadam, Zabihi and Ghadiri in 2012, was used. This questionnaire consisted of 45 items makes use of pivotal life skills emphasized by World Health Organization, which included ten psychosocial and interpersonal competencies. Having analyzed the items of the questionnaire, Pishghadam et al. named each factor as follow: life-wise empowerment, adaptability enhancement, pro-social development, and life-over-language preference. The reasons for the selection of such terms are explained below.

Life-wise empowerment is the label for the first factor which consists of 15 items. It refers to the language teacher's ability to support mental well-being and behavioral preparedness of learners including creative and critical thinking (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Ghadiri, 2012). The second factor is called adaptability enhancement which refers to the language teacher's ability to foster adaptive and positive behaviors that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life including problem-solving and decision-making (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Ghadiri, 2012). This factor consists of 14 items. Factor 3 which is known as pro-social development relates to the language teacher's ability to promote personal and social development including interpersonal bonds and effective communication (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Ghadiri, 2012). This factor comprises 10 items. Life-over-language Preference is the label selected for the fourth factor of the questionnaire which includes 6 items characterizing the language teacher's ability to center attention on learners' qualities of life including their feelings and emotions in comparison with linguistic points (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Ghadiri, 2012).

The questionnaire comprises 45 items that are scored according to Likert-type scale of seven points ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree". The internal consistency of the whole questionnaire was

examined with the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. The Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of the whole test as 0.94. Also all the factors yielded good reliability estimates ranging from 0.57 to 0.90. Moreover the factorability of the intercorrelation matrix was assessed by two tests: Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO statistics obtained for the questionnaire was .88.

### **Data Collection**

The participants took part in this study were 200 teachers from both private language schools and public schools. In the first phase of the study, the quantitative part, the participants were given the two mentioned questionnaires. The 200 English language teachers were given the Life-Responsive Language Teaching Beliefs Questionnaire and the second participants which were the students were supposed to answer the Characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers Questionnaire. Then their answers to the questionnaires were analyzed by applying the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 18) software.

To find out whether there's any relationship between the Iranian English teachers life-responsive language teaching belief and their success, quantitative data collection and analysis were utilized. In this way, SPSS software was applied to carry out various data analyses of this study such as reliability, correlation.

To check the reliability of all the data collected via completion of the two questionnaires of LRLTB and teacher success by the teachers and the students of them respectively, Cronbach's Alpha was checked.

To answer the research questions of the study related to the relationship between them, correlation was investigated. To analyze the data more meticulously, the correlation between teacher success and its subscales and LRLTB and its subscales regarding teachers' gender and setting of teaching (public and private sectors), i.e. gender and setting as the grouping variables, were compared to see the correlation between the variables for which groups are stronger.

The results gained from the tests taken by the participants fell within the interval data so the Pearson Product moment formula was used to calculate the correlation between each pair of variables. The comparisons of the

relationships between the relationships of teacher success and LRLTB were assessed by applying fisher-r-to-z statistics.

## Results

### *Reliability of the Teacher Success Scores*

Table 1.

#### *Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.970	.970	47

The reliability table, Table 1, displays a reliability of .970 for CSET which is a highly acceptable reliability and so it displays a very good internal reliability.

### *Reliability of the LRLTB Scores*

Table 2.

#### *Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.962	.951	45

The reliability table, Table 2, displays a reliability of .962 for LRLTB questionnaire which is highly acceptable reliability so it shows a very good internal consistency.

## Correlation

This study tried to investigate the relationship between teacher success with its subscales and life syllabus belief with its subscales. As the scores obtained from these tests are interval data, the Pearson product moment formula was used. The relationship between dependent variable, teacher success and its subscales which are rapport, fairness, qualification, facilitation, and examination and independent variable LRLTB and its subscales are presented and then after that the results are discussed.



### ***Correlation between Total Teacher Success, LRLTB, and Their Subscales***

The first two questions of this study were whether there was a relationship between teacher success and life-responsive language teaching belief as variables of this study and also the components of these two variables.

The SPSS output for correlations between teacher success and LRLTB and their subscales is presented in Table 3.

*Table 3*  
*The Correlation between Teacher Success and LRLTB and their Subscales*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Rapport	1									
2. Fairness	.930	1								
3. Qualification	.977	.954	1							
4. Facilitation	.962	.938	.981	1						
5. Examination	.945	.908	.957	.957	1					
6. Life-wise empowerment	.801	.822	.812	.791	.769	1				
7. Adaptability enhancement	.812	.841	.826	.809	.784	.936	1			
8. Pro-social development	.792	.817	.800	.785	.767	.887	.899	1		
9. Life-over-language preference	.659	.648	.664	.661	.627	.762	.757	.723	1	
10. Total Success	.979	.975	.994	.985	.959	.821	.837	.813	.668	1
11. Total LRLTB	.828	.852	.839	.821	.797	.977	.977	.947	.801	.850

From the output provided in Table 3, there's a high correlation between total success and total LRLTB is ( $r = .85$ ,  $p. \leq .05$ ). Moreover the correlation between total success and the subscales of LRLTB variable are above .8 ( $p. \leq .05$ ) except for the life-over-language preference ( $r = .668$ ,  $p. \leq .05$ ). For

instance the correlations between total success and adaptability enhancement, total success and pro-social development are .837 and .813, respectively. The most striking result to emerge from the correlation statistics of the data in this study is that all correlations are of high value. Most of the correlations between all sets of variables are above .7.

And regarding the relationship between the subscales of teacher success and LRLTB scores, similar results can be concluded. The correlation values for most of them are above .6 ( $p \leq .05$ ). For example, correlations between each of the components of teacher success- rapport, fairness, qualification, facilitation, examination- and LRLTB are .828, .852, .839, .821, and .797, respectively. As shown, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between teacher success components and LRLTB.

#### ***Correlation between Teacher Success, Life-Responsive Belief and their Subscales regarding Teacher' Gender***

The third question of this study was whether there was a difference between the correlations of teacher success and LRLTB as the independent and dependent variables of this study and also the components of these two variables regarding teachers' gender.

Table 4.  
The Correlation between teacher success and LRLTB regarding male teachers

Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Rapport										
2.Fairness	.931									
3.Qualification	.979	.953								
4.Facilitation	.962	.936	.979							
5.Examination	.945	.914	.958	.951						
6.Life-wise empowerment	.769	.811	.787	.772	.757					
7.Adaptability enhancement	.782	.829	.805	.790	.781	.935				
8.Pro-social development	.786	.825	.806	.788	.784	.881	.904			
9.Life-over-language preference	.636	.618	.650	.654	.627	.746	.711	.684		
10.Total Success	.980	.975	.994	.984	.960	.801	.818	.818	.649	
11.Total LRLTB	.804	.845	.825	.810	.798	.976	.977	.946	.771	.838

Table 5.  
The Correlation between teacher success and LRLTB regarding female teachers

Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Rapport										
2.Fairness	.928									
3.Qualification	.974	.956								
4.Facilitation	.963	.940	.985							
5.Examination	.946	.899	.955	.964						
6.Life-wise empowerment	.848	.842	.847	.820	.789					
7.Adaptability enhancement	.782	.829	.805	.790	.781	.935				
8.Pro-social development	.801	.810	.792	.782	.747	.895	.891			
9.Life-over-language preference	.690	.692	.682	.9	.625	.785	.819	.776		
10.Total success	.978	.974	.995	.987	.958	.852	.864	.808	.692	
Female 11.Total LRLTB	.861	.864	.858	.838	.798	.977	.977	.948	.841	.868
										1

The correlations between total teacher success and LRLTB for males (N=115) and female (N=85) teachers are very close together which equal .838 ( $p \leq .05$ ) for males and for female equal .868 ( $p \leq .05$ ) as shown in Tables 4 and 5. It can be concluded from these tables that there is a high correlation between the life-over-language preference as one of the scales of

life syllabus and the total success but among the other correlations it enjoys the lowest correlation for both males and female teachers.

To examine the significance of the difference between the correlations between dependent and independent variables Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation is used. Z-score was calculated by Fisher's formula to assess the significance of difference between two correlation coefficients in the two independent samples of male and female teachers. Simply put, Fisher's Z-transformation allows using the normal distribution tables to assess the significance of the Z-statistic. To perform the calculation, the correlation coefficients with their respective sample sizes were entered into the online computer software laid in <http://quantpsy.org>. By convention, values greater than |1.96| are considered significant if a two-tailed test is performed. So If the Z-statistic is 1.96 or more, then we can reject the null hypothesis.

The comparison of the correlations between the variables, LRTL and its subscales, and total success, regarding the participant teachers' gender showed that there is no significant difference between the correlations between the variables of these two independent groups, male and female teachers.

The correlations between life-wise empowerment and teacher success are 0.801 and 0.852 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -1.13 and the P-Value is 0.2585. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between adaptability enhancement and teacher success are 0.818 and 0.818 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals 0 and the P-Value is 1. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between pro-social development and teacher success are 0.818 and 0.808 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals 0.21 and the P-Value is 0.8337. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between life-over-language preference and teacher success are 0.649 and 0.692 for males and females, respectively. The Z-

score for the difference between the correlations equals -0.54 and the P-Value is 0.5892. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between LRLTB and teacher success are 0.838 and 0.868 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -0.77 and the P-Value is 0.4413. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between LRLTB and teacher success subscales are 0.838 and 0.868 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -0.77 and the P-Value is 0.4413. So the result is *not* significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is not rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

And regarding the relationship between LRLTB and each of the components of teacher success, the correlations between them are of higher values (above .9,  $p \leq .05$ ) for male participants compared to those of females. The correlations between LRLTB and each of the teacher success components- rapport, fairness, qualification, facilitation, examination- for male participants are .980, .975, .994, .984, and .960, respectively. And for the female participants the correlations are .861, .864, .858, .838, and .798, respectively.

According to the comparison of the correlations, no significant difference exists between male and female teachers regarding the relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables in this research study.

#### ***Correlation between Teacher Success, Life-Responsive Belief and Their Subscales regarding Teachers' Setting of Teaching (Public and Private sectors)***

The fourth question of this study was whether there is a difference between the relationship of teacher success and LRLTB and also the components of these two variables regarding the sector in which they're teaching (private and public sectors).

Table 6.  
The Correlation between teacher success and LRLTB regarding private school teachers

Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Private</b>										
1.Rapport										
Language										
Schools										
2.Fairness	.896									
3.Qualification	.964	.942								
4.Facilitation	.943	.914	.976							
5.Examination	.920	.864	.938	.947						
6.Life-wise empowerment	.725	.774	.738	.703	.675					
7.Adaptability enhancement	.747	.803	.776	.746	.714	.936				
8.Pro-social development	.688	.750	.707	.681	.665	.889	.898			
9.Life-over-language preference	.514	.521	.533	.516	.483	.741	.719	.666		
10.Total success	.967	.966	.993	.980	.940	.755	.789	.727	.534	
11.Total LRLTB	.742	.797	.763	.732	.704	.978	.977	.946	.766	.780
										1

Table 7.  
The Correlation between teacher success and LRLTB regarding public school teachers

Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Rapport										
2.Fairness	.967									
3.Qualification	.989	.972								
4.Facilitation	.980	.969	.986							
5.Examination	.970	.960	.974	.965						
6.Life-wise empowerment	.891	.878	.904	.900	.885					
7.Adaptability enhancement	.903	.893	.907	.907	.888	.938				
8.Pro-social development	.906	.892	.907	.905	.887	.885	.901			
9.Life-over-language preference	.796	.775	.792	.801	.768	.785	.802	.778		
10.Total success	.991	.987	.995	.991	.978	.901	.910	.910	.796	
11.Total LRLTB	.929	.916	.935	.934	.914	.975	.978	.949	.837	.936

Tables 6 and 7 compare the correlations that exist between all the variables involved in this study for the private and public language school teachers. As can be seen in these two tables, the correlations between rapport, life-wise enhancement, adaptability enhancement, pro-social development, and life-over-language preference for public school teachers equal .891, .903, .906, and .790, respectively which are higher than their values for the private language teachers which are .725, .747, .688, and .514, respectively.

Correlations between qualification as one of the subscales of teacher success variable and life-wise enhancement, adaptability enhancement, pro-



social development, and life-over language preference are .738, .776, .707, and .533, for private language school teachers and the values for public language teachers are .904, .907, .907, and .792 respectively.

The same case is also true for other scales of teacher success i.e., the correlation between teacher success sub-scales are higher for public school teachers than those of the private school teachers.

The correlations between life-over-language preference and success subscales are much higher for public school teachers than the values for private language school teacher's success scores.

Interestingly, the correlation between total success and total LRLTB for the public school teachers is greater than that of private language institutes. The correlation for the former is .936 and for the latter is .780, according to the two tables which compare the correlation between different variables involved in this study, mainly teacher success and LRLTB subscales. As shown in the table, the lowest correlation exists between the Total success and the life-over-language preference for private language school teachers which equals .534 while the same correlation between the these two variables for public language teachers equals .796. Taking a look at Tables 6 and 7 reveals the fact that though the correlations between the life-over-language preference and the rest of variables are significantly high they are lower than the correlations that exist between the other variables for both private and public English language teachers.

The comparison of the correlation between the independent variables, LRTL B and its subscales, and dependent variable, total success, regarding the participant teachers' setting of teaching showed that there is significant difference between the correlations that exist between the variables of these two independent groups, those teachers teaching in public schools and those teaching in private language schools.

The correlations between life-wise empowerment and teacher success are 0.755 and 0.901 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -3.43 and the P-Value is 0.0006. So the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is rejected and significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between adaptability enhancement and teacher success are 0.789 and 0.910 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the

difference between the correlations equals -3.19 and the P-Value is 0.0014. So the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is rejected and significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between pro-social development and teacher success are 0.727 and 0.910 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -4.21 and the P-Value is 0. So the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is rejected and no significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between life-over-language-preference and teacher success are 0.534 and 0.796 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -3.43 and the P-Value is 0.0003. So the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is rejected and significant difference exists between them.

The correlations between LRLTB and teacher success are 0.780 and 0.936 for males and females, respectively. The Z-score for the difference between the correlations equals -4.59 and the P-Value is 0. So the result is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , and consequently the null-hypothesis is rejected and significant difference exists between them.

And regarding the relationship between LRLTB and each of the components of teacher success, the correlations between them are of higher values (above .9,  $p \leq .05$ ) for the participants of public schools compared to those of private language schools. The correlations between LRLTB and each of the teacher success components- rapport, fairness, qualification, facilitation, examination- for the participants of private language schools are .742, .797, .763, .732, and .704, respectively. And for the participants of public schools the correlations are .929, .916, .935, .934, and .914, respectively.

According to the comparison of the correlations, significant difference exists between those teachers teaching in public schools and those teaching in private language schools regarding the relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables in this research study.

### **Discussion**

In the previous section, it was shown that performance on total teacher success is significantly related to LRLTB scores. It was observed that LRLTB subscales were highly correlated with teacher success. A similar conclusion was made based on the SPSS output about the relationship between the subcategories of teacher success and LRLTB. Those subscales positively correlated with total LRLTB.

Comparison of the results of correlation statistics for male and female teachers does not reveal a significant difference between these two groups regarding the relationship between LRLTB and teacher success. In addition the results of the correlations between the subcategories of these two main variables and each pair of each of the subscales and LRLTB and total success do not display a significant difference for each of these groups.

Comparing the results of correlation statistics for private and public language teachers revealed a significant difference between these two groups regarding the relationship between LRLTB and teacher success total scores. Also the correlations between each pair of the subscales of LRLTB and teacher success and their total scores did not exhibit a significant difference for each of these groups.

The findings of the present study indicate that there is a high correlation between LRLTB and teacher success as the main variables of the study. The relationship between each pair of LRLTB subscales and teacher success, each pair of teacher success subscales and LRLTB, and even the subscales of the two main variables seem to be highly correlated with each other. It might be somehow reasonable to conclude that the students are highly in favor of those teachers that give high degree of prominence to life skills training in the context of English language teaching. They might expect their English teachers to be armed with abilities to promote different aspects of their emotions, behaviors and life-related issues. They assess their teachers success during a course in an institute or a year in school not solely based on their linguistic knowledge or development of language skills they've achieved at the end of the course but they also would like their teachers to respect their emotional and intellectual development and promoting their life skills which might of great use outside the classroom context. Learning life skills is thus a fruitful practice (Murthy & Wig, 2003 )

that helps individuals to deal effectively with everyday challenges of life (Orley, 1997); accordingly, life skills training can enable students to act in pro-social ways (Weisen Birell & Orley, 1996) and help them take more responsibility for their behaviors and actions (Orley, 1997). Given the general consensus as to the importance of including life skills training in the context of education (Francis, 2007; Goody, 2001) and by virtue of their high credibility with parents and community members (WHO, 1997), schools can be regarded as indispensable places where several life skills can be worked on alongside other academic subjects (Behura, 2012).

The comparison of the relationship between the total LRLTB and teacher success revealed no significant difference between male and female ELT teachers. It might be due to the fact that the extent the teacher consciously or subconsciously believe in the life-wise syllabus is not gender bound.

The same comparison was also made but this time the sector the teachers were teaching was the grouping variable of the study. The results showed that the correlations between almost all the variables are higher for the public school teachers in compare to the private language school teachers. For instance, the relationship between total LRLTB and total teacher success was higher than that of private language school teachers. The reason behind this result might be traced to the feature that dominates public schools more than the private language institutes. Actually public school teachers are more autonomous in choosing the type of syllabus that they like to obey and they are not supervised as frequently as those teachers teaching in the private language institutes. So public school teachers can share the time they have between promoting different aspects of the language learner's expectations and needs. They have the time to pay heed to the educational needs of both the system and also the language learners which are mainly linguistic-based for the former, and also the non-linguistic expectations of the latter. There could be a contrast in the expectations of the educational systems responsible for teaching languages to the learners. On the one hand they expect the teachers that they have employed to give the highest priority to the application of the syllabus they provide the teachers with and on the other hand they might assess the teachers success not only based on the students' scores and achievement of different

language skills but also the informal way of asking the students- orally or in written forms- about the teachers' quality of teaching. According to this study the students' expectations are also focused life-and-language classes rather than language-and-life ones. This is in line with Pishghadam and Zabihi's (2012) introduction of *'Life Syllabus'* in order to encourage the ELT community to consider the enhancement of several life skills prior to language learning. ELT classes can be places for a life skill intervention. In this manner, a variety of life skills can be taught in these classes.

Considering the findings of this study, it can be concluded that those with higher LRLTB seem to outperform those with a lower LRLTB according to the students' perceptions and expectations of a successful teacher. As the results of the study indicate the students are much more in favor of those teachers that look upon them as whole persons and they expect them not only satisfy their educational needs but also their spiritual needs. They assess their teachers' success in performing his duty in the light of the teachers' ability to support their mental well-being and behavioral preparedness including creative and critical thinking, their ability to foster adaptive and positive behaviors that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life including problem-solving and decision making, their ability to promote personal and social development including interpersonal bonds and effective communication, and also their ability to center attention on learners' qualities of life including their feelings and emotions in comparison with linguistic points. These four features extracted as the underlying structure of life-responsive language teaching belief are called life-wise empowerment, adaptability enhancement, pro-social development, and life-over-language preference by Pishghadam, Zabihi, and Ghadiri in 2013. These are in line with the efforts made by Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) whose aim was to introduce life-syllabus in order to encourage the ELT community to consider the enhancement of several life skills prior to language learning. There are other studies performed which confirms the fact that ELT classes are not to be centralized on linguistic issues and the only knowledge and skills that are to improved in such classes are language related skills and the traditional view that only those teachers that focus on language skills are the most successful ones is somehow put aside. This view comes to the fore front since the

emergence of applied ELT. Pishghadam (2011) believes that ELT formed its theoretical foundation, ready to be applied to other fields of study and ELT theorizers and practitioners have moved their orientation from consumer to autonomous. In a study in 2008, Pishghadam has shown that literary discussion in a foreign language learning class can enhance the critical thinking abilities of the language learners. In his view critical thinking is a concept which is discussed generally in psychology; however this issue can be noted in a language learning class. In another study, Hosseini, Pishghadam, and Navari (2010) have also revealed how a language learning class can increase emotional intelligence competencies. They have shown that language learning classes have the ability to help individuals overcome their anxiety, manage their stress, and foster interpersonal competencies.

Some studies are performed to examine how teacher effectiveness is measured. There are different instruments used to measure teacher effectiveness and also there are various measures suggested to evaluate the suitability of each instrument in a particular educational system. Mandating that teachers meet the minimum requirements to be considered highly qualified is a first step toward ensuring teacher effectiveness, but just meeting those requirements is no guarantee that teachers will be effective (Gordon, Kane, & Staiger, 2006). In the context of Iran, English language teachers are not set free to employ their own backgrounds, beliefs, expectations, experiences, pedagogical and content knowledge, certification and licensures, and educational attainments to satisfy the educational needs of educational policy-makers and those top bananas supervising their performance especially in the qualified private language schools. They are being evaluated and measured regarding their skills, knowledge, license, belief, and also their physical appearance and a host of other features and after taking part in the preparation programs and become fully prepared and given different tests they are accepted as English teachers and even at that point they are not the sole decision-makers. They are given textbooks and syllabi according to which they should take steps and be watchful not to deviate the pointed paths. But the intervention and influence of teachers' beliefs, perceptions, expectations, and experiences as the teachers' inputs on the classroom processes, impact on student achievement, graduation rates,

student behavior, engagement, attitudes, and social-emotional well-being are inevitable. Particularly those teachers with high levels of life-responsive language teaching beliefs are to obey the rules assigned by the language program and simultaneously respecting their own beliefs to increase and develop the social, emotional, well-being, cultural identity, critical thinking and other English language learners' dimensions in the ELT classes consciously or unconsciously. And the attention to these aspects is influential and the core of learners' belief about their teachers' success in the ELT classes.

### References

- Behura, S. (2012). A review of life skills education in schools. *Elixir Psychology*, 43, 6790-6794.
- Birjandi, P. & Bagherkazemi, M. (2010). The relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and their professional success. *English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 135-145.
- Breen, M. P. (1984). *Process syllabuses for the language classroom*. In Brumfit, C.J. (Ed): *General English syllabus design, ELT documents* 118. (pp.47-60). London, Pergamon Press/British Council.
- Dubin, F., & Olstahin, E. (1997). *Course design: Developing programs and materials for language learning*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Hosseini, A., Pishghadam, R., & Navari, S. (2010). Tasire classhaye zaban dar afzayesh hooshe hayajani. *Language and Literature Studies*, 42, 1-11.
- Gordon, R., Kane, T.J., & Staiger, D.O., (2006). *Identifying effective teachers using performance on the job: The Hamilton project* (Discussion Paper 2006-1). Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Mahmoodzadeh, M. (2013). Applied ELT: A paradigm justifying complex adaptive system of language teaching?. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies* Vol-1, Issue-3, 58-74. Retrieved from <http://www.eltjournal.org>
- Moafian, F. & Pishghadam, R. (2009). Construct validation of a questionnaire on characteristics of Successful EFL Teachers. *Pazhuhesh-e Zabaha-ye Khareji Journal*, 54, 127-142.
- Murty, S. & Wig, W. (2003). Who bother about mental health care? The tribune (24.12.2003).



- Orley, J. (1997). Promoting mental health and teaching skills for life: The WHO approach. Retrieved January 15, 2014, from [www.healthchildrenwork.lu/pdf/conference/1997/orleyenpdf.2003](http://www.healthchildrenwork.lu/pdf/conference/1997/orleyenpdf.2003).
- Pienemann, M. (1985). Learnability and syllabus construction. In Hyltenstam and Pienemann (eds): *Modeling and assessing second language acquisition* (pp 23-75). Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.
- Pishghadam, R. (2008). Afzayeshe tafakore enteghedehi az tarighe mobahesye adabi. *Journal of Literature*, 48,153-167.
- Pishghadam, R. (2011). Introducing applied ELT as a new approach in second/foreign language studies. *Iranian EFL Journal*, 7(2), 9-20.
- Pishghadam, R. Saboori, F. (2011). A qualitative analysis of ELT in the language institutes of Iran in the light of the theory of 'World Englishes'. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2, 569-579.
- Pishghadam, R., Zabihi, R. (2012). Life syllabus: A new research agenda in English language teaching. *TESOL Arabia perspectives*, 19(1), 23-27.
- Pishghadam, R. Zabihi, R., Ghadiri, M. (2012). [Opening up a new pathway to the future of ELT: Construction and validation of a scale for the measurement of L2 teachers' Life-Responsive Language Teaching Perceptions of L2 teachers](#), *The First Conference on Language Learning and Teaching: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 2012-10-30.
- Pishghadam, R., Zabihi, R., & Norouz Kermanshahi, P. (2012). Educational language teaching: A new movement beyond reflective/critical teacher. *Life Science Journal*, 9(1), 892-899.
- Weisen Birell, R. & Orley, J. (1996). Life skills education: Planning for research as an integral part of life skills education development, implementation and maintenance. Geneva: WHO, Programme on Mental Health.



**Biodata**

**Reza Pishghadam** is associate professor in TEFL at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. His research interests are: psychology of language education and sociology of language.

**Hamid Khosravany Fard** has received M.A. in TEFL from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. His research interests are: psychology of language education and neurolinguistics.

**Azar Hosseini Fatemi** is associate professor in TEFL is the head of Department of English, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. Her areas of interest include issues in second language teaching and learning.