



## The Relationship between Trust and Empowerment: The Mediating Role of Efficacy

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### ABSTRACT

*Schools are among the most important organizations of any society. Lack of trust in colleagues, students and parents damages the relations between teachers and prevents cooperation at schools. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between trust and empowerment considering the mediating role of efficacy among EFL high school teachers. The participants were 155 EFL teachers in Iranian high schools in Golestan province, Iran. These participants were at the range age of 23 – 58 (male = 62, female = 93). The teacher empowerment scale used in the present study is adapted from Short and Rinehart' (1992) "School participant empowerment scale". The teachers' trust scale is derived from the scale of Faculty Trust in Schools developed by Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006). Also, teacher efficacy scale developed by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998). The result showed there is significant relationship between trust and empowerment, empowerment and efficacy, and trust and efficacy. Also, it was concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between trust and empowerment and efficacy among EFL high school teachers in Golestan province, Iran. The results of this study have practical implications for school principals and teachers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Trust; Empowerment; Efficacy; EFL High School Teachers

### INTRODUCTION

A growing body of research into teacher empowerment in educational settings suggests that teachers' sense of empowerment has a significant effect on student achievement and their other self-perceptions, such as job satisfaction, professional commitment and perceived reform outcomes (e.g. Bogler & Somech 2004; Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011). Teacher must be able to give an example of how to be a creative person, also have a scientific attitude, eager to find out new things, consistently uses a variety of learning resources, and especially teachers need to set an example as a lifelong learner (Schwarzer, 1992).

Within the past two decades, the term "teacher empowerment" has become firmly set up within the instructive writing with the call for decentralization or school-based administration. Teacher empowerment can be defined as "a process whereby school members create the competence to require charge of their claim development and resolve their claim problems" (Bogler & Somech 2004, p. 278).

Watts (2009) also noted that, empowering teachers leads to better instruction and management of operations, but it necessitates the inclusion of both personal and organizational issues. Watts emphasized that "the empowerment process can be seen as a development of personal competence and an opportunity to display that competence in an organizational setting" (p. 40). As evidence recommends, teachers' sense of empowerment is profoundly related to organizational settings such as positive school climate and successful instruction (Moore & Esselman, 1992).

Bandura represents one core aspect of social-cognitive theory which is Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Teacher efficacy has positive effect on the academic climate in schools (Chong, Klassen, Huan, Wong & Kates, 2010). Even when controlling for students' previous levels of achievement, teachers' personal efficacy still significantly affects students' academic achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli., Steca, & Malone, 2006). Moreover, teacher efficacy has been consistently correlated with teachers' attributes and performance. Teachers' perceived self-efficacy has



significant impact on teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), professional commitment (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011), and job satisfaction (Caprara et al., 2006).

As evidence recommends, teachers' sense of empowerment is profoundly related to organizational settings such as a positive school climate and successful instruction (Moore & Esselman, 1992). A focus on trust is therefore important because trust is a relational characteristic that can be developed in schools (Cosner, 2009). Educational research increasingly acknowledges that teacher trust affects schools' effectiveness and improvement.

Empowerment is a significant predictor of interpersonal-level trust, therefore, another way to empower teachers is to create an atmosphere consisting of social attractiveness, trustworthiness and communication at school. According to Moye, Henkin and Egley (2005), because effective communication skills are crucial in a school setting, administrators must focus on establishing trusting relationships and improving meaningful communication in order to empower teachers and develop an environment of collaborative leadership.

Trust in schools should be viewed in association with different referent groups such as teachers, students, administrators, and organization. However, two particular aspects of trust are trust in the principal and trust in colleagues (Wan, 2005). Trust in principal can be defined as the principal's propensity for keeping his or her word and act in the best interest of the teachers, and trust in colleagues is seen as teachers' reliance on each other (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Measurement of teacher self-efficacy, trust, and empowerment is essential in arrange for administrators to recognize and measure job satisfaction and teachers' acknowledgments of their capacity to reach and teach learners and increment their academic achievement (Forsyth & Adams, 2008).

According to Moy, Henkin, and Egley's (2005) study, the theoretical significance of trust for teacher empowerment has been argued by a few researchers. For example, Newcombe and McCormick (2001) found that teachers are likely to become highly involved in school-based financial decision-making, only if the level of trust in the decision makers and decision-making processes is high and the actual involvement in decision making is positively associated with trust.

Although there are some researches about teacher empowerment and teacher trust but the empirical study of the association between empowerment and teacher efficacy and trust is limited and the findings of these studies are not consistent. To fill the gap, the current study aimed to explore the relationship between trust and empowerment considering the mediating role of efficacy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW EMPOWERMENT**

Lightfoot (1986) defined teacher empowerment as a person's opportunities for autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority. Maeroff (1988) explained that teacher empowerment requires autonomy, acknowledgment, opportunities for expanding knowledge, and access to decision making. Vroom (1964) concluded that teachers who being more fulfilled with their occupations have more critical opportunities to affect choices which influenced their work environment. Empowerment of teachers serves as a significant factor within the victory of the schools; Teacher empowerment has been seen as advancing collegiality, and recognizing the affect that teachers have on student accomplishment (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005).

According to Bogler and Somech (2004), there is a correlation between teacher empowerment and student success. Additionally, Hatcher (2005) proposed that teacher empowerment is the opportunity to exercise teacher leadership by creating a non-hierarchical network of collaborative learning. There is need to consider the background and concerns of individual teachers where negotiation and compromise is necessary recipe for the realization of teacher empowerment (Rosen, 1993). Schools need to be prepared for the possible delays or lack of efficiency due to teacher participation in school management (Mentell, 1993).

Bandura (1997) proposed that since self-efficacy beliefs were clearly guided by a teacher's own inner nature and coordinated toward perceived abilities given particular tasks, they were powerful predictors of behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs influence thought patterns and emotions that enable actions in which people expend substantial effort in pursuit of goals, persist in the face of adversity, rebound from temporary setbacks, and exercise some control over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1986).



Jerald (2007) highlights some teachers' behaviors found to be related to a teacher's sense of efficacy. Teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy:

“Teach to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization; are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the need of their students; are more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly; are less critical of students when they make errors and are less inclined to refer a difficult student to special education.” (p. 33).

A teacher who exhibits these behaviors according to Jerald (2007), is going to positively impact student learning. Herreros (2012) in a study of the ‘State efficacy and the development of trust’, analyzed the relationship between state efficacy and interpersonal trust. That article presented a theoretical model that predicted how trust would represent in high-effect and low-effect states. The model claimed that in low-effect states, state efficacy will not have an effect on trust levels also the theoretical results confirmed by a multilevel analysis of 47 countries.

### **TRUST**

Trust in principal can be defined as the principal's propensity for keeping his or her word and act in the best interest of the teachers, and trust in colleagues is seen as teachers' reliance on each other (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

After a decade of research on trust in schools, (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, as cited in Geist & Hoy, 2004) found that teachers' trust in colleagues and principals are two outstanding elements of trust in a school setting also found that teacher trust is a school-wide commitment to a shared vision, an effective process for making collaborative decisions and solving problems and school leadership that consistently supports teachers.

When there is teacher trust, there is a confidence and willingness toward the organization and a belief in the organization that “the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open” (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). According to Noonan, Walker, and Kutsyuruba (2008) trust is a complex, dynamic, and multidimensional phenomenon that is related to a number of crucial variables concerning effectiveness of school organizations, human relationships, and behavior. Trust may be defined by its function to facilitate actions among individuals within the social system. By trusting others, one expands one's capacity for action and ability to achieve one's goals (Coleman, 1990). At the school level, trust is less of an individual discernment and more of a collective orientation shared by role group members, and this collective orientation guides or constrains interactions among agents (Adams & Forsyth, 2009).

### **EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Khany and Tazik (2016) examined the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' trust, empowerment, and job satisfaction. Participants were 217 (117 females and 100 males) Iranian EFL teachers teaching in secondary school. Four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact), three faculty trust (trust in principal, trust in colleague, and trust in students and parents), and two aspects of job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic) were measured. The collected data were analyzed by means of structural equation modeling (SEM) using the AMOS 20 program. Results indicated that psychological empowerment was directly related to job satisfaction; however, trust was indirectly related to job satisfaction through psychological empowerment. Assuming job satisfaction as the causing factor, results indicated that job satisfaction could be directly related to other two variables. Findings have valuable implications for secondary school principals and authorities of Ministry of Education in higher levels.

In Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) study of the structure of trust and self-efficacy, they found that all three aspects of faculty trust, i.e., trust in principal, trust in colleagues and trust in students and parents, significantly correlate with teachers' self-efficacy. Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2000) in an article of the theoretical and empirical analysis of the construct of collective teacher efficacy, found a significant correlation between teacher efficacy and trust in colleagues, and both of them are significantly correlated with teachers' sense of collective efficacy. Based on a qualitative inquiry, on teaching learning in a school–university partnership a model of collective efficacy was elaborated for use in schools. Then, an operational measure of collective teacher efficacy was developed, tested, and found to have strong reliability and reasonable validity. In addition, collective teacher efficacy was positively associated with differences between schools in student-level achievement in both reading and mathematics.



In a study by (Veisi, Azizifara, Gowharya, & Jamalinesari, 2014), they investigated the relationship between teacher empowerment and teacher self-efficacy. The sample consisted of 60 teachers in Ilam and Eyvan high schools. Participants in this study answered the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) questionnaire (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The findings indicated significant positive correlation between teacher empowerment and teacher self-efficacy. Independent sample t-test revealed no statistically significant differences on empowerment or self-efficacy based on age and empowerment based on years of teaching experience or gender. In addition, a statistically significant difference was found between teachers' self-efficacy and gender.

Asghari, Khodapanahi, and Sedghpour (2008) investigated the relationship between empowerment and self-efficacy with job satisfaction. Three hundred and ninety high school teachers were selected via multi-stage cluster sampling method from four regions (3, 6, 11 & 18) of Tehran. Participants responded to a Demographic Questionnaire, The School Participant Empowerment, The Sherer's General Self-Efficacy Scale, and The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. Data were analyzed with Pearson Correlation Coefficient, Multiple Regression analysis. Results indicate significant relationships between empowerment and job satisfaction, empowerment and self-efficacy. As a conclusion, empowerment and self-efficacy have interaction relationships; i.e., self-efficacy in teachers leads to empowerment and empowerment in teachers leads to self-efficacy and both of them, have effects on job satisfaction.

As it has already been mentioned, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between trust and empowerment considering the mediating role of efficacy among EFL high school teachers. So far to the best knowledge of the researcher no Iranian study has dealt with the relationship between trust and empowerment considering the mediating role of efficacy among EFL high school teachers. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge the existing gaps found in the previous studies through the following questions:

Q1: Is there any statistically significant relationship between trust and empowerment among Iranian EFL high school teachers?

Q2: Is there any statistically significant relationship between trust and efficacy among Iranian EFL high school teachers?

Q3: Is there any statistically significant relationship between efficacy and empowerment among Iranian EFL high school teachers?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study were 155 EFL teachers in high schools in Golestan province, Iran. These participants were at the range age of 23 – 58 (male = 62, female = 93), and they had different years of experience teaching at different public and private schools in Golestan Province, Iran. These teachers had B.A or M.A degree of teaching English as a foreign language, English language literature, and English language translation and the sampling strategy was informed by convenience sampling.

### **INSTRUMENTS**

#### **TEACHER EMPOWERMENT SCALE**

The teacher empowerment scale used in the present study contains 11 items and three factors, i.e., professional growth (3 Items), participation in decision-making (4 Items) and perceived impact on colleagues (4 Items). This scale is adapted from Short and Rinehart' (1992) "School participant empowerment scale", and has been used in Lee and others' (2011) study on teacher empowerment and receptivity in curriculum reform in Mainland China, also .896 were reported for the result of the reliability test of Cronbach's alpha. The scale used to measure teacher empowerment ranged from 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'Slightly disagree', 'Slightly agree', 'agree', 'Strongly agree'.

#### **TEACHER TRUST SCALE**

The instrument to assess teachers' perception of trust in colleagues contains five items derived from the scale of Faculty Trust in Schools developed by Hoy, Gage, and Tarter (2006), measuring five facets of trust between teachers and their colleagues: benevolence, reliability, honest, competence and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 1999).



This instrument has also been used in studies in Mainland China (Lee, Zhang, & Yin 2011; Yin, Lee, & Jin 2011). Also .926 were reported for the result of the reliability test of Cronbach's alpha. The scale used to measure teacher trust ranged from 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'Slightly disagree', 'Slightly agree', 'agree', 'Strongly agree'.

### **TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE**

The 8-item teacher efficacy scale developed by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) was used to assess participants' sense of individual teacher efficacy in this study. The scale measures teachers' GTE (four items) and PTE (four items). Additionally, the reliability of teacher efficacy scale in the current study was .86, which indicates the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The scale used to measure teacher efficacy ranged from 'Strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'Slightly disagree', 'Slightly agree', 'agree', 'Strongly agree'.

### **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The paper and online version of the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, who were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaires at a convenient time and place. The sample consisted of 155 participants (93 females & 62 males) with the age range of 23-58 years old, teaching at different public and private schools in Golestan Province, Iran. The criterion of participants' selection was their availability and their willingness to enroll in the research. Therefore, the sampling strategy was informed by convenience sampling. In addition, the purpose of completing the questionnaires was explained to the participants and it was guaranteed that their data would be confidential. The questionnaires were coded numerically and the confidentiality and anonymity considerations were observed. After about two weeks, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher and entered into PLS software for further analysis.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The design of this study is based on quantitative correlational design applied in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This study is used as a quantitative method of research in which three quantitative variables were examined, and it determines if there is any relationship among them.

### **RESULTS**

To test the validity of the theoretical model and to calculate the coefficients of influence, Structural Equation Modeling Method was used by PLS software. Structural Equation Modeling is a very general and powerful multivariate analysis of the multivariate regression family and, more precisely, the extension of the "general linear model", which allows the researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously. What makes the method of structural equations a powerful method used by researchers is that in addition to its graphical appearance that makes the interpretation easy, this method can calculate the set of relationships between variables simultaneously. In general, the method of structural equations reveals the structure of the internal relations of variables through a set of equations similar to multiple regressions. Therefore, to answer the main question of this research, structural equation method has been used using PLS software.

### **FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Application of factor analysis is one of the first priority which ensures the possibility to use gathered information for data analysis. So, at first, the researcher examined the suitability of the data for factor analysis. There are several ways to do the factor analysis, including calculating the KMO value, which varies between 0 and 1. If the KMO value is less than .5, then the data is not suitable for factor analysis, and if the value is between .5 and .69, then the possibility of the factor analysis increases more cautiously, but if its value is greater than .7, correlations between the data will be appropriate for factor analysis. On the other hand, Bartlett's test is used to ensure the data is correct and the matrix of correlations is on the basis of the analysis which is not zero in the participants. In other words, using the Bartlett test, the researcher can ensure that the sampling is sufficient enough to apply the correlations. The results presented in Table 1 showed that the correlations between data are suitable for factor analysis and sampling adequacy, so the factor analysis can be done in this study.



**Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.838
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3887.263
	df	.276
	Sig.	.000

Given the KMO number (greater than 0.7) and the significant number of Bartlett's test (.05 < sig), it can be stated that the data is suitable for performing factor analysis and has the required conditions.

**Table 2. Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.833	36.806	36.806	8.833	36.806	36.806	3.922	16.341	16.341
2	3.164	13.184	49.990	3.164	13.184	49.990	3.744	15.601	31.942
3	2.562	10.674	60.664	2.562	10.674	60.664	3.355	13.978	45.920
4	2.098	8.740	69.403	2.098	8.740	69.403	3.254	13.557	59.477
5	1.792	7.469	76.872	1.792	7.469	76.872	3.079	12.830	72.308
6	1.581	6.588	83.460	1.581	6.588	83.460	2.676	11.152	83.460
7	.602	2.507	85.966						
8	.466	1.941	87.907						
9	.399	1.663	89.570						
10	.356	1.484	91.054						
11	.291	1.214	92.268						
12	.281	1.171	93.439						
13	.248	1.032	94.471						
14	.232	.966	95.437						
15	.213	.889	96.326						
16	.177	.739	97.065						
17	.164	.682	97.747						
18	.139	.579	98.326						
19	.116	.484	98.810						
20	.093	.387	99.196						
21	.072	.300	99.496						
22	.061	.254	99.750						
23	.043	.180	99.930						
24	.017	.070	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



The total table of variance explained that these questions from the 6 factors and these factors explain and cover about 8.460 percent of the variance, which in fact indicates the proper validity of the questions. This correlation matrix determines the terms (questions or variables) and the factor that will be cleared based on the correlation of this relationship. In this matrix, the factor loads (factor scores) of each of the variables are greater than 0.5 and are considered under the operator umbrella. The higher the coefficient, the factor plays a greater role in the total variation (variance) of the variable in question. The following table shows what questions and factors related to these factors are related.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Name	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Trust	155	1.00	5.00	2.9161	.07912	.98505
Efficacy	155	1.00	4.25	2.6097	.06238	.77663
Empowerment	155	1.00	4.45	2.8106	.05954	.74123
Valid N (listwise)	155					

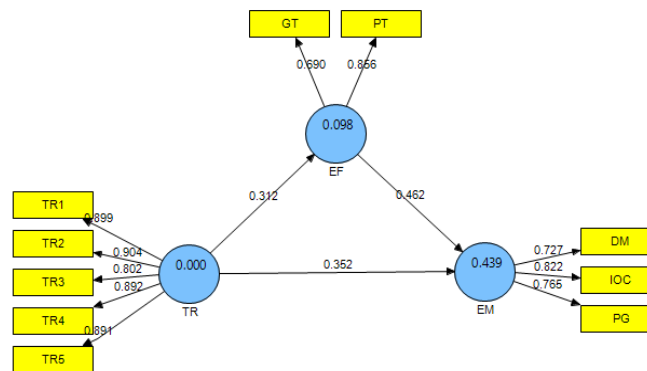
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE RESEARCH VARIABLES**

According to Table 3, the descriptive statistics of all the research variables are as follows:

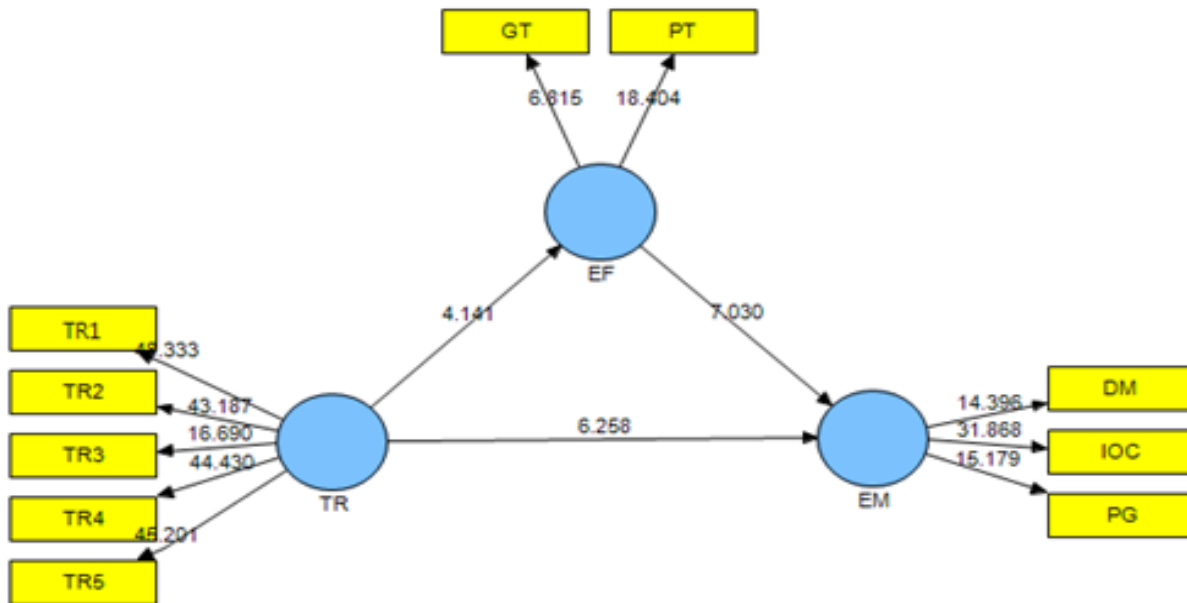
For example, for the Trust variable (TR), the minimum values are 1.00 and the maximum comments are 5.00, and the average and standard deviation of the comments are 2.9161 and 0.98505 respectively. For the Efficacy variable (EF), the minimum values are 1.00 and the maximum comments are 4.25, and the average and standard deviation of comments are respectively 2.6097 and 0.77663 respectively. For the Empowerment variable (EM), the minimum values are 1.00 and the maximum comments are 4.45, and the average and standard deviation of the comments are respectively 2.8106 and 0.74123 respectively.

**TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

In this section, research hypotheses were examined using PLS software.



**Figure 1.** Structural Research Model with Factor Loading Coefficients



**Figure2.** Structural Research Model with Significant Coefficients

Fig. 1, shows standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between two variables which indicates that it is significant. According to Fig. 1, since t-coefficients are greater than 1.96, the significance of the research hypotheses is confirmed at 95% confidence level.

In order to examine the model of goodness of fit, the researcher used the structural model of goodness of fit and the general model of goodness of fit to investigate the model's goodness of fit. In order to investigate the reliability of the research measurement model, the researcher examined factor loading of coefficients, Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability.

**Table 4.** Factor Loadings Coefficients

Factors	Factor loading	Indicators
Trust	0.899	TR1
	0.904	TR2
	0.802	TR3
	0.892	TR4
	0.891	TR5
Efficacy	0.856	PT
	0.690	GT
Empowerment	0.765	PG
	0.822	IOC
	0.727	DM

The value of the criterion for the factor loadings coefficient is 0.4 In the table above, all the factor loading coefficients of the questions are greater than 0.4, which indicates that this criterion is suitable.

According to the data analysis algorithm in PLS, after calculating the factor loadings coefficients of the questions, it is time to calculate and report the Cronbach's alpha coefficients and the composite reliability, the results are given in the following table (Table 4).





**Table 5.** *Latent Variables Coefficients*

Latent variable	Symbols	Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Alpha> 0.7)	Composite reliability coefficient (CR> 0.7)
Trust	TR	0.926	0.944
Efficacy	EF	0.869	0.891
Empowerment	EM	0.896	0.915

Considering that the suitable value for Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability is .7, and according to the results of the table above, these criteria have adopted a suitable amount for the variables, the suitability of the research reliability can be confirmed.

The second criterion to examine the measurement model's goodness of fit is convergent validity, which examines the correlation of each structure with its own questions (indexes).

**Table 6.** *Convergent Validity Results of the research latent Variables*

Latent variable	Symbols	Average Variance Extracted (AVE> 0.5)
Trust	TR	0.772
Efficacy	EF	0.604
Empowerment	EM	0.596

Considering that the suitable value for AVE is .5 and according to the results of the table above, this criterion has adopted an appropriate value for the variables, thus the suitability of the convergent validity of the research is confirmed. According to Fig. 1, since t-coefficients are greater than 1.96, the significance of the research hypotheses is confirmed at 95% confidence level.

The second criterion for examining the structural models of goodness of fit in research is the R2 coefficients associated with the endogenous (dependent) latent variables of the model. R2 is a criterion that indicates the effect of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable, and three values of .19, .33 and .67 are considered as the criterion value for weak, moderate and strong R2 values. According to the three values of the criterion, the suitability of structural model of goodness of fit can be approved.

**Table 7.** *R2 Criterion Results for the Endogenous Structure*

Latent variables	symbols	R2
Efficacy	EF	0.098
Empowerment	EM	0.439

To evaluate the general model's goodness of fit, the GOF criterion is used, with three values of .01, .25 and .36 as weak, moderate and strong values for GOF.

Communalities is obtained from the average of the shared values of the research latent variables.



**Table 8.** *Communality and R2 Variables of Research*

Latent variables	Symbols	Communality	R <sup>2</sup>
Trust	TR	0.772	0.000
Efficacy	EF	0.604	0.098
Empowerment	EM	0.596	0.439

**Table 9.** *The Results of the General Model's Goodness of Fit*

GOF	R <sup>2</sup>	Communality
0.420	0.269	0.657

**Table 10.** *The Results of Direct Relationship and Significance Coefficients of Research Hypotheses*

Hypothesis	The causal relationships between research variables	Symbols	Path Coefficients (β)	Meaningfulness (T-Value)	Test Results
First	Trust□Empowerment	TR---EM	0.352	6.258	Confirm the First Hypothesis
second	Trust□Efficacy	TR---EF	0.312	4.141	Confirm the Second Hypothesis
Third	Efficacy□Empowerment	EF---EM	0.462	7.030	Confirm the Third Hypothesis

Also, the direct and indirect relationship between research variables is measured in the final model of research, which indicates the direct and indirect relationship of variables, is presented in Table 10.

**Table 11.** *The Relationship between Total Variables in the Main Model of the Research*

Type of Relationship	Direct Relationship	Indirect Relationship	Total Relationship
TR on EF	0.786	.....	0.786
TR on EM	0.452	0.786×0.374=0.293	0.745
EF on EM	0.374	.....	0.374

To determine the effect of the teacher's efficacy as the mediating variable, the researcher used the VIF criterion which reveals the relationship of variables as follows:



$$VAF_1 = \frac{0.786 \times 0.374}{(0.786 \times 0.374) + 0.452} = \frac{0.293}{0.745} = 0.39$$

- a: path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) between independent variable and mediator
- b: path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) between the mediator and dependent variables
- c: path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) between independent and dependent variables

This means that approximately 39% of the total effect of trust and empowerment is indirectly explained by the mediating role of efficacy.

The model's goodness of fit shows that the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between two variables (trust and efficacy) is  $\beta = .312$  and the significance of coefficient (t statistic) between these two variables is also t (4.141) (more than 1.96) which indicates that this relationship is significant. On the other hand, the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between two variables (efficacy and empowerment) was  $\beta = .462$ , and the significance of coefficient (t statistic) between these two variables was also t = 7.30 (more than 1.96), indicating that this relationship is significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between trust and empowerment through efficacy.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to investigate the relationships between trust and empowerment considering the role of efficacy among Iranian EFL high school's teachers in Golestan province, Iran. Data were obtained from 155 EFL high school teachers in Golestan province, Iran. The data were collected through three questionnaires that measured trust, efficacy and empowerment. After gathering the data, it was analyzed based on Structural Equation Modeling by Partial Least Square (PLS) software.

The SEM results extend our understanding about the relationships among trust, teacher efficacy and teacher empowerment by leading to the following three claims:

- (1) Teachers' perception of trust in colleagues significantly and positively effects their sense of empowerment in school. the results of the present study highlight the positive role of teachers' trust in colleagues for their participation in decision-making as well as their perceptions of professional growth and impact on colleagues, which provides empirical evidence supporting Wan's (2005) suggestion that trust relationship among teachers facilitates teacher empowerment. Goddard (2002
- (2) ) in an article of the theoretical and empirical analysis of the construct of collective teacher efficacy, Based on a qualitative inquiry, on teaching learning in a school–university partnership. Found a significant correlation between teacher efficacy and trust in colleagues, and both of them are significantly correlated with teachers' sense of collective efficacy. Also, the result of this study is in line with the current study.
- (3) Concerning the relationship between teacher trust and teacher efficacy, according to table 10, it can be stated that the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between two variables (Trust and Empowerment) is  $\beta = 0.312$  and the significant coefficient (t statistic) between these two variables is t = 4.141 (more than 1.96), which indicates that it is significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between trust and efficacy among Iranian EFL high school teachers. Unlike the previous studies that examined the relationship between trust and teacher efficacy, only using correlation or qualitative methods (e.g. Fisler and Firestone 2006; Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy 2000; Hoy and Tschannen-Moran 1999), the SEM results of the present study provide more information about the causal relation between trust and teacher efficacy. In contrast with Edwards, Green, and Lyons' (2002) finding that a low to moderate relationship exists between teachers' personal efficacy and their sense of empowerment, the present study shows that teachers' trust has strong predicting ability for the three teacher empowerment factors.
- (4) According to table 10, the standardized coefficient (path coefficient) between two variables (efficacy and empowerment) is  $\beta = 0.462$  and the significant coefficient (t statistic) between these two variables is t=7.030 (more than 1.96), which indicates that it is significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between efficacy and empowerment among Iranian EFL high school teachers. In contrast with



Edwards, Green, and Lyons' (2002) finding that a low to moderate relationship exists between teachers' personal efficacy and their sense of empowerment, the present study shows that teachers' PTE has strong predicting ability for the three teacher empowerment factors.

Examining the mediating role of efficacy beliefs on the relationship between trust and teacher empowerment is one of the focuses of the current study. The results of the mediation effect test show that there is a complete mediation effect of teacher efficacy on the relationship between trust in colleagues and the three teacher empowerment factors; i.e., professional growth, participation in decision-making, and impact on colleagues.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study has used SEM (structural equation modeling) to explore the relationship of trust with two other variables namely empowerment and efficacy. The data were collected through three questionnaires. These three questionnaires were teacher efficacy scale developed by (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998) was used to assess participants' sense of individual teacher efficacy in this study. The scale measures teachers' GTE and PTE, the instrument to assess teachers' perception of trust in colleagues contains five items derived from the scale of Faculty Trust in Schools developed by (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006), measuring five facets of trust between teachers and their colleagues: benevolence, reliability, honest, competence and openness, The teacher empowerment scale used in the present study contains 11 items and three factors, i.e. professional growth (four items), participation in decision-making (five items) and perceived impact on colleagues (five items). This scale is adapted from Short and Rinehart' (1992) "School participant empowerment scale".

This study has contributed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the trust and its subscales and showed how they are related to efficacy and empowerment among Iranian high school teachers. That is to say, the study has proved that there is a statistically significant relationship between trust, empowerment and efficacy among Iranian high school teachers. The research suggests that trust is a lifeline between students, teachers, principals, and successful outcomes in school settings. Friedman (2006) stated that complex problems are solved by people who find horizontal connections in a high-trust society and are used as an advantage that leads ultimately to success. This can have a profound effect on not only teacher morale, but also on student achievement. Seidman (as cited in Friedman, 2006) writes, "The more people trust each other or their leaders, the more likely they are going to work well together" (p. 320). This study has addressed this gap and contributed to our understanding of the impact towards trust.

### **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study provides some important contributions and implications for ministry of education and the teachers. When there is teacher trust, there is a confidence and willingness toward the organization and a belief in the organization that "the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open" (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 18).

Administrators must adhere to fostering trust by having open lines of communication, being visible and encouraging teachers to play active roles in the decision-making process. The members of a school in essence should be the members of a team who are working toward implementing activities to foster their communicated vision. It must go beyond words and into action.

Also, ministry of education needs to use a wider range of strategies to address factors that encourage their teachers to trust in colleagues, rather than putting an emphasis on a single motivator. There is need to specify the domains for teacher participation in school decision-making. There is need to work on traditional legacies that may not be of benefit in today's society.

Because of the time and geographical limitation, participants were only high school male and female English teachers in Golestan province, Iran so the current study could not provide generalizable suggestions for Iran. Future research could extend this model to include other dimension of trust. Future research can also test the model in different geographic area to examine the model in different contexts. Furthermore, cultural differences could also influence how teachers perceive trust and other studies can take this into consideration. Future studies could also investigate to what extent efficacy in one context or subject area can relate to teacher trust.



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