

Teacher Efficacy and Trait Emotional Intelligence in EFL: a case study

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Abstract

This study focused on Teacher Efficacy (TE) and the way it is influenced by trait Emotional Intelligence (trait EI) in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL). Teacher Efficacy pertains to self-referent beliefs of teachers' competence to decide upon, design and implement classroom strategies while trait Emotional Intelligence refers to emotion-related self-perceptions reflected in distinctive ways of thinking, recognizing, managing and expressing emotions. 27 in-service secondary education EFL teachers from the prefecture of Trikala participated in this research, which revealed they felt highly self-efficacious. The length of time a teacher instructed a specific group of students was the most significant predictor of Teacher Efficacy. Also, all four Teacher Efficacy scales positively correlated with global trait Emotional Intelligence and all trait Emotional Intelligence facets, and had a statistical significance with most of them thus proving that the two constructs share common characteristics.

Key words: Teacher Efficacy, trait Emotional Intelligence, English as a Foreign Language

Introduction

Teacher Efficacy (TE) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) have emerged as two important variables in scientific studies on education. Teaching is definitely an emotional practice (Perry & Ball, 2008) and, as Sutton and Wheatley (2003, p.339) claim, "*the substantial variation in teacher efficacy may result in part from variance in teachers' emotions*". Feelings can impact self-efficacy cognitive processes, for uncontrolled emotions may obstruct information analysis related to task implementation (Gundlach et al., 2003); therefore, the relation between TE and EI deserves the researchers' attention given the fact that teachers play a crucial role in the classroom environment.

Teacher efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's beliefs that they can generate particular outcomes by performing specific behaviors (Bandura, 1997). It is neither a measure nor a skill but one's perceptions about what they can achieve under certain circumstances using any talent they possess. That is why equally skilled individuals or the same person might perform differently in a variety of contexts depending on their efficacy beliefs (Dellinger et al., 2008).

Based on self-efficacy theory, TE is a teacher's perception of the course of action they can take so as to accomplish a particular teaching task in a specific educational context (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). It constitutes a substantial factor affecting the instructional strategies and procedures adopted by educators ensuring their professional success and enhancing their learners' academic performance (Wolters & Daugherty, 2007) and engagement even if these learners face difficulties or lack motivation (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Such beliefs, though, do not reflect the real level of people's abilities as individuals usually have an inaccurate image of their capabilities either overvaluing or undervaluing them and self-knowledge is rather restricted (Vazire & Mehl, 2008). Emerging from the conviction that one has the power to exercise thought control while acting, TE is deemed as highly influential on teachers' thoughts, feelings (Gibbs, 2003) and orientation towards the educational process as a whole (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Some researchers regard TE as a relatively firm trait once it is formed (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011) whereas

others claim it is developmental in nature since it is subject-, context- and task-specific encompassing the idea of modification over time through reflection, self-doubt and learning (Wyatt, 2015).

TE beliefs stem from performance accomplishments (hands-on experiences of doing things), vicarious experiences (observing, hearing or reading about colleagues doing specific things), social/verbal persuasion (being informed by others about how one performed or will perform a task) and affective state/physiological responses (being informed by one's senses) (Bandura, 1986). For teachers to become more efficacious, it is recommended that performance accomplishments be encouraged through micro-teaching, vicarious experiences be supported by collaborative learning and reading (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007) and social/verbal persuasion be promoted by mentoring and mentor feedback (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Teacher efficacy in EFL

A number of studies examining the importance of TE in EFL pinpoint that TE positively correlates with family support (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012), reflective practices (Moradkhani et al., 2017), language learning strategies (Wong 2005), proficiency in English (Yilmaz, 2011), attendance of professional development programmes (Zonoubi et al., 2017), self-regulation, goal setting, mastery-goal orientation (Ghonsooly & Ghanizadeh, 2013), teacher empowerment (Veisi et al., 2015) and eagerness to use communicative tasks when teaching speaking (Demir et al., 2015). TE has an impact on communicative language teaching (Nishino, 2012), organizing group work (Wyatt, 2010) and student learning outcomes (Wossenie, 2014). High TE teachers were assessed positively by their students compared to those with low TE and experienced teachers enjoyed much higher TE than novice ones (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2011). Novice teachers' TE is task specific (Faez & Valeo, 2012), not influenced by their academic education (Akbari & Moradkhani, 2010) though certain components of their TE are positively affected by their practicum (Atay, 2007). Private school teachers are more efficacious than those working in the public sector with verbal persuasion being the most important source of TE (Phan & Locke, 2015) not to mention that peer observation enhances the observer's TE (Mousavi, 2014). Yet, it negatively correlates with job burnout (Yazdi et al., 2013) and poor educational contexts (Moradkhani & Haghi, 2017).

Trait emotional intelligence

Trait EI, or trait Emotional Self-Efficacy, is defined as "*a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies*" (Cooper & Petrides, 2010:449). Being the latest EI model, it belongs to the domain of personality encompassing one's perceptions of their emotional capabilities and behavioral patterns. Resulting from systematic content analyses of other EI models as well as similar personality constructs, its constituent elements are all the personality attributes that are linked to affect and can be found in more than one EI models (Petrides et al., 2007). Its sampling domain also contains components of Social Intelligence (Thorndike, 1920) and Personal Intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

The trait EI model is a distinct one and cannot be grouped with the rest since it includes neither mental abilities nor competencies (Petrides, 2010). It does not correlate with IQ tests either (Petrides et al., 2004). In fact, it constitutes a framework within which data from any self-report EI questionnaire can be correctly interpreted provided that the findings are analysed by means of trait EI. It proves how differing meaningful EI models are linked to conventional personality characteristics to say nothing of the fact that its strength is not its predictive and incremental validity (Petrides, 2009) but its content and explanatory supremacy because dividing personality variables into personality affective features helps with the construct contextualization: concentrating on personality emotion-pertinent traits generates emotional intelligence (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). It includes 15 hierarchically

structured personality traits called facets which are unrelated to cognition and should be accounted for when designing any comprehensive trait EI measure. The facets are grouped in four factors: well-being consists of self-esteem, trait happiness and trait optimism; sociability contains social awareness, assertiveness and emotion management (of others); self-control is composed of stress management, emotion regulation and (low) impulsiveness; emotionality comprises emotional perception (of self and others), emotion expression, relationships and trait empathy. The facets adaptability and self-motivation belong to no factor but contribute to global TEI (Petrides et al., 2007).

Emotional intelligence in EFL

The impact of EI on education is examined by several empirical studies a few of which attempt to unveil its influence on EFL teachers and their work. Research based on various EI models reveals that teachers' EI is a significant variable in EFL teaching (Mahmoodi et al., 2019) positively correlating with job satisfaction (Khoshnoodfar & Pahlavani, 2018), classroom leadership behavior, emotional support (Khany, 2019), efficaciousness in managing young learners (Marashi & Zaferanchi, 2010), adoption of more supportive and less punitive attitudes (Metaxas, 2018), age and success since the higher an EFL teacher's EI is, the more successful they are (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010). High EI teachers are evaluated more positively by learners (Barlozek, 2014) and influence their students' motivation to learn a foreign language (Roohani, & Mohammadi, 2015), their language achievements and positive attitudes towards the learning process (Saeidi & Nikou, 2012) whereas low EI is a predictor of teacher burnout (Alavinia & Ahmadzadeh, 2012). The length of teaching experience is significantly correlated to EI in a way that the more experienced teachers use their emotional experiences to help the less inexperienced ones (Amirian & Behshad, 2016). Teachers' EI is strongly related to the use of reflective practices (Seydi Shahivand, & Moradkhani, 2020), their sense of plausibility (Saeedi & Pahlavani, 2018), the implementation of task-oriented coping strategies (Ferdowsi & Ghanizadeh, 2017) and particular speaking strategies: those with high EI focus on fluency and accuracy while conducting story-telling activities to boost interaction whereas the ones with low EI concentrate on accuracy and design information-gap activities (Shabani, 2018). However, the level of EI is not predicted by the university degree (Bachelor or Master) one holds (Amirian & Behshad, 2016), does not correlate with their critical thinking skills or their students' task engagement (Alvandi, et al., 2015) and fails to predict the kind of achievement goals learners pursue (Kourakou, 2018).

As for trait EI, it correlates with the teaching strategies EFL teachers implement so as to promote students' emotional literacy and establish a positive learning environment: high trait EI entails the integration of certain strategies nourishing students' positive thinking, personal responsibility and coping skills to handle negative experiences (Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018). High trait EI is also associated with better emotion-regulation skills while teaching (Gregersen et al., 2014), more positive attitudes towards students, higher enjoyment of lively students (Dewaele & Mercer, 2018) and high levels of motivation with intrinsic motivation being most strongly correlated with well-being (Dewaele, 2020).

Teacher efficacy and emotional intelligence

Literature reports that teachers' EI predicts their TE (Penrose et al., 2007; Sarkhos & Rezaee, 2014). For Fabio and Palazzeschi (2008), the intrapersonal dimension of EI predicts teachers' TE adding that high TE correlates with high EI in all three TE dimensions. Barari and Barari (2015) claim that emotional evaluation, emotional regulation and emotional utilisation were positive predictors of TE. Chesnut and Cullen (2014) examined the effects of EI, TE and the expectations of future work environment on pre-service teachers' commitment to the teaching profession in order to promote a new approach to teacher education. EI was the strongest predictor of commitment to the profession. Chan (2008) emphasises the strong

correlation among prospective and in-service teachers' EI, TE and their coping strategies. EI can also affect an individual's power over their self-efficacy beliefs (Gundlach et al., 2003).

Sadly, there is a dearth of research examining the relation of EI, let alone trait EI, and TE among English teachers. Rastegar and Memarpour (2009) studied EFL teachers' EI and TE in relation to their age, gender and teaching experience and revealed a significant positive correlation between the constructs. Alavinia and Kurosh (2012) found the same correlation with age and years of teaching experience not affecting the correlation, though. Karakaş (2016) indicated teaching experience influences TE, EI and teacher knowledge and that the constructs grow higher with time. Few other studies concerning EFL teachers also point out the positive correlation of various EI dimensions and/or overall EI with TE and its subscales (Amirian & Behshad, 2016; Koçoğlu, 2011; Nejad, 2015).

Methodology

Significance of the study and research questions

Despite the acknowledged importance of EI in education (Petrides et al., 2004), few studies have been conducted in EFL. In all probability and to the extent of this researcher's knowledge, no survey to date has examined the influence of trait EI on EFL teachers' TE using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) (Petrides, 2009) to measure EFL teachers' trait EI levels. Similarly, EFL teachers' TE perceptions have not been thoroughly explored. In order to delve into the assumed link of the constructs and the extent to which trait EI influences EFL teachers' TE perceptions, the participants' trait EI levels and TE beliefs were measured so that the following questions could be answered:

1. What are EFL teachers' TE beliefs?
2. Do age, academic education, teaching experience, working position, time instructing a particular group of students and attendance of seminars influence the formation of TE beliefs?
3. Is there a link between EFL teachers' trait EI levels and their TE beliefs?

Participants and procedure

The sample comprised 27 in-service EFL teachers (26 females-1 male) working in secondary education in the prefecture of Trikala, Thessaly. 14.8% were in the 36-40 age group, 29.6% belonged to the 41-45 age group, 25.9% were aged 46-50, 14.8% were between 51-55 years of age and 14.8% were 55+. 77.8% were university graduates and 22.2% were Master's degree holders. Two had a teaching experience of 11-15 years, 7 had been teaching for 16-20 years, another 7 for 20-25 years and 11 for 25+ years. The majority (66.7%) worked in a High School, below one quarter of them (22.2%) worked in a General Lyceum and the rest (11.1%) were Vocational School teachers. 11 participants had been instructing a particular group of students for less than a year, 8 for 2 years and the remaining 8 teachers for three years. Only 1 attended seminars once a year, 8 attended seminars twice a year, 9 participated in seminars three times a year and the remaining one third (9) had seminar experiences more than three times a year.

The participants were recruited during a seminar for secondary education EFL teachers held in the prefecture of Trikala. The majority of those present agreed to be involved in the study after being assured of the anonymity of their contribution and the confidentiality of their responses which would be used for research purposes only. Numerically coded questionnaires were distributed and detailed information about the purpose of the study, the procedure and the instruments was given. The questionnaires included items pertaining to demographic data. Being fluent users of English, they filled in the English version of the questionnaires. Data were collected within 15 days and entered into an SPSS data file for analysis.

Measures

The participants filled in the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tchannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and the TEIQue (Petrides, 2009) to measure EFL teachers' TE beliefs and trait EI respectively.

The TSES long form includes 24 items giving scores on self-efficacy teachers (TE) and 3 subscales: self-efficacy student engagement, self-efficacy instructional strategies and self-efficacy classroom management. All subscales load equally on eight items each of which is measured on a 9-point Likert scale from "nothing" (1) to "a great deal" (9) (Tchannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The TEIQue, version 1.50 is directly related to trait EI theory, covers the whole trait EI domain and comprises 153 items yielding scores on 15 facets, four factors and global trait EI. 13 facets load on 4 factors: wellbeing, self-control, emotionality and sociability, whereas adaptability and self-motivation are not included in any factor and directly contribute to global trait EI score (Petrides, 2009). Since it is factor-analysed at the facet level, problems related to item factor analysis are prevented (Bernstein & Teng, 1989). Answers are given on a 7-point Likert-scale, ranging from 1 to 7 (strongly disagree-strongly agree).

Results

Data analysis

Concerning EFL teachers' TE beliefs, means and standard deviations for the TE scale and its subscales were computed. Teachers achieved above midpoint in all four scales with self-efficacy classroom management yielding the highest mean score of 7.13 (SD=1.14) ($r=4.63-8.88$) and self-efficacy student engagement the lowest mean score of 6.17 (SD=1.08) ($r=4.38-8.75$). The mean score for self-efficacy instructional strategies was 7.07 (SD=1.11) ($r=4.25-8.75$) and, for TE, it was 6.79 (SD=1.03) ($r=4.75-8.58$).

Linear regression analyses were performed using one dependent variable (i.e. self-efficacy Teachers, self-efficacy student engagement, self-efficacy instructional strategies and self-efficacy classroom management) and age, academic education (Bachelor's or Master's degree), teaching experience, working position, time instructing a particular group of students and attending seminars as the independent variables in each analysis. It was revealed that, concerning overall TE, although the independent variables as a whole did not predict whether an EFL teacher felt self-efficacious ($R^2=0.332$, $p=0.28$), how long one taught a group of students did ($p=0.04$). For self-efficacy student engagement, the combination of the independent variables yielded a very weak statistical significance ($R^2=0.475$, $p=0.056$), while a teacher's education ($p=0.024$) and how long they taught a group were strong predictors of their self-perceptions of successful student engagement with the latter being extremely strong ($p=0.003$). Academic education was the only predictor for self-efficacy instructional strategies ($p=0.047$) whereas the variables as a whole did not affect it ($R^2=0.287$, $p=0.41$). Independent variables treated holistically ($R^2=0.278$, $p=0.43$) and individually were not significant predictors for self-efficacy classroom management.

Pearson correlations were performed so that the relation between EFL teachers' trait EI and their TE could be examined (Table 1). In particular, the TE scale and each of its subscales were correlated with global trait EI and each and every one of its factors and facets. The results showed there is a positive correlation and strong statistical significance between global trait EI and TE ($r=0.657$; $p=0.000$). Self-esteem, emotion expression, empathy, social awareness, emotion perception index, emotion management, relationships, assertiveness, well-being, emotionality and sociability strongly correlated with TE and the 3 subscales, and their relation was statistically significant. Adaptability and happiness were found to be positively and significantly correlated with TE, self-efficacy student engagement and self-efficacy instructional strategies. Also, they positively correlated with self-efficacy classroom management but not significantly. As for motivation, emotion regulation, impulse control,

stress management, optimism and self-control, they positively correlated with all TE scales but no statistical significance was identified.

Table 1. Correlations between EFL teachers' TE and EI

		SE Teachers	SE Student Engagement	SE Instructional Strategies	SE Classroom Management
Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	,735**	,761**	,567**	,715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,002	,000
Emotion Expression	Pearson Correlation	,620**	,592**	,571**	,561**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,001	,002	,002
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	,312	,269	,360	,238
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,113	,174	,065	,233
Emotion Regulation	Pearson Correlation	,219	,166	,155	,283
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,273	,407	,440	,152
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	,440*	,548**	,427*	,255
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,021	,003	,026	,199
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	,613**	,633**	,572**	,500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000	,002	,008
Social Awareness	Pearson Correlation	,725**	,762**	,648**	,607**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,001
Impulse Control	Pearson Correlation	,087	,046	,093	,101
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,666	,818	,645	,617
Emotion Perception Index	Pearson Correlation	,614**	,637**	,603**	,469*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,000	,001	,014
Stress Management	Pearson Correlation	,283	,283	,347	,160
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,152	,153	,076	,424
Emotion Management	Pearson Correlation	,652**	,572**	,536**	,701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,002	,004	,000
Optimism	Pearson Correlation	,291	,345	,322	,145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,141	,078	,101	,471
Relationships	Pearson Correlation	,553**	,555**	,481*	,501**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003	,003	,011	,008
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation	,522**	,541**	,548**	,367
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005	,004	,003	,060
Assertiveness	Pearson Correlation	,641**	,641**	,643**	,502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,008
Well-being	Pearson Correlation	,538**	,614**	,497**	,389*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	,001	,008	,045
Self-control	Pearson Correlation	,230	,193	,231	,213
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,249	,334	,245	,286
Emotionality	Pearson Correlation	,676**	,677**	,628**	,576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,002
Sociability	Pearson Correlation	,789**	,773**	,718**	,703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000
Global trait EI	Pearson Correlation	,697**	,702**	,659**	,580**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,002

Discussion

Interestingly, the results of the present research showed that EFL teachers felt highly self-efficacious. Having scored above average in the TSES, they are likely to exhibit the characteristics indicated by Bandura (1997) believing they possess the qualities guaranteeing their success. This is of particular significance given the fact that, as non-native speakers of

English, they would be expected to feel less confident, (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999), which, in turn, would undermine their TE (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008) that is partly formed by the assessment of their abilities (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). It is also noteworthy that despite their high TE, teachers did not feel equally capable when performing different tasks proving that TE levels are not uniform but domain, task and skill specific (Bong, 2006). Unlike what was shown by Eslami and Fatahi (2008), they considered themselves more capable of managing the class than implementing proper strategies or engaging students. A possible explanation for the low mean score in student engagement is that only recently has the importance of student engagement been highlighted so they have not developed appropriate engagement skills yet.

Apart from time spent with students, a teacher's education positively influences TE for student engagement. Academic qualifications also predict TE for instructional strategies thus demonstrating the value of higher academic education and lifelong learning (Schütze & Slowey, 2000). In contrast to previous studies (Chacón, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011), their in-service professional development was rather insignificant in the formation of their TE. In Greece, in-service professional development for EFL teachers is limited to very few two- or three-hour seminars (Dendrinis et al., 2013) and, as a result, their impact may be restricted. In line with Chacón (2005), their teaching experience was not a significant influence on their high overall TE since they were not novice probably experiencing low TE (de la Torre Cruz & Arias, 2007) not to mention that TE beliefs tend to be stable (Pajares, 1992). Their age, working position and education did not influence their professional self-perceptions, either. Concerning age, the findings are consistent with Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2002) but not with Campbell's (1996) or Ghanizadeh and Moafian's (2011). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2002) also observed that teaching younger students is related to high TE; therefore, the results regarding their working position were somehow anticipated considering they all were secondary education teachers and there were no significant differences in their students' ages. Academic education was not influential probably due to the emphasis placed on theory rather than practice in academic contexts. These findings support a study by Akbari and Moradkhani (2010), yet, they do not match earlier studies revealing academic degrees enhance TE (Campbell, 1996; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Remarkably, the time they taught a particular group of students appeared important; consequently, the more they got to know their students' needs, strengths and weaknesses, the better they could organise their instruction, which resulted in higher TE. Unfortunately, no previous studies confirming such a conclusion came to the researcher's attention. Yet, such an assumption was made since TE is strongly related to student achievement (Allinder, 1995) and, according to a study by Midgley et al., (1989), it correlated with student achievement in spring but not in autumn, which means it has a delayed influence.

As anticipated, EFL teachers' EI and TE were positively linked. The findings are in perfect agreement with earlier studies in the EFL sector, detailed reference of which is made in another section of this article, and other subject domains (Chan, 2004). As a result, highly emotionally intelligent teachers are highly efficacious because emotions control self-efficacy perceptions (Gibbs, 2003). Teaching is directly associated with emotions (Hargreaves, 1998) so EI is vital in TE, for affective experiences convey information arousing efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). It is no wonder that all four TE scales positively correlated with all EI facets, most of which had a statistical significance with TE, proving that the two constructs share common characteristics. Extensive review of the literature shows that TE and EI are positively linked to professional success and performance (Low & Nelson, 2006; Bandura, 1997), student engagement, effective classroom management (Brackett et al, 2010; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), handling negative emotions, active coping and persistence (Anari, 2012). They negatively correlate with anxiety and stress (Chan, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) leading Perry and Ball (2005, p. 11) to the conclusion that "*good teaching does reflect the exercise of emotional*

intelligence". Besides, they both examine self-perceptions, the first one in a broader sense whereas the latter in the teaching context.

Unsurprisingly, of all facets, sociability was the one most significantly correlated to TE, which is self-evident as teaching takes place in a social context. The findings support Dewaele's research (2018) claiming that classroom management and pedagogical skills were significantly linked with sociability, well-being and self-control. Indeed, high TE teachers are competent in creating friendly relationships among learners, enhance group solidarity, evoke positive feelings (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017) and show their students more warmth (Ashton & Webb, 1986): an affective relationship between teachers and learners is crucial when creating an effective classroom atmosphere (Wubbels et al., 1991). In EFL, such a relation is imperative as teaching and learning are mostly based on interaction rendering empathy, emotion perception, emotion regulation and assertiveness indispensable constituents of the instruction. Obviously, with their empathic skills, they take their learners' perspective and understand their feelings (Mercer, 2016). Also, when a teacher understands and regulates their emotions, they can control the negative ones creating a positive classroom environment and establishing a good rapport with learners. The harder a teacher tries to create a supportive environment, the more efficacious they feel in designing successful lessons since the ability to motivate students entails the ability to recognise and manage students' emotions. Self-esteem, which is the feeling of confidence and self-worth, is important as it combines positive self-worth with adequacy in performing specific tasks (Lawrence, 2006). Impulse control, stress management, optimism and self-control are positively though not significantly correlated probably because the TSES does not examine the identification, exhibition and sharing of teachers' emotions.

Limitations, recommendations and implications

Unfortunately, the present research involved only secondary education EFL teachers from the prefecture of Trikala, which means it is a case study; therefore, it is subject to specific limitations. Indeed, the teacher sample was really small and consisted of females mainly working in High Schools. So future research should use larger and more proportionate convenience samples working in Primary, Secondary and, even, Vocational Education in order to examine the constructs and generalize the findings for all school levels. Additionally, qualitative tools should be implemented in future studies since this one was based on self-report data which are, undoubtedly, subjective.

It is suggested that teachers take the results into consideration, for an awareness of their TE beliefs may help them improve their teaching strategies. As TE and EI are associated, teacher trainers ought to design seminars to improve teachers' EI, which, in turn, will enhance TE: increasing TE within the context of EI can yield long-term results and motivate teachers to conduct high quality instruction (Assanova & McGuire, 2009).

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