

EFL Teachers' Professional Success Across their Age, Gender and Job Seniority

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Abstract: The present study embarks upon probing Iranian EFL teachers' professional success across a number demographic factors. In so doing, three variables, namely age, gender and job seniority, were taken into account as the main factors for the analysis. To undertake the study, the present study was built on characteristics of successful teachers questionnaire (CSTQ) proposed by Moafian and Pishghadam (2009). The CSTQ was administered among 450 Iranian EFL learners to assess their English teachers' (n=40) success. The analysis of their data yielded some factors for teacher success as a construct, such as teaching accountability, interpersonal relationships, attention to all, examination, physical and emotional acceptance, empathy, class attendance, and dynamism to name a few. To run the analysis, they were first classified into 4 groups: group 1 (0-5), group 2 (6-10), group 3 (11-15), and group 4 (16-25) years of teaching experience. Then, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to screen their success as far as their professional seniority are concerned. The results indicates that there is not a statistically significant difference in the continuous variables across the four groups. To probe if teachers' professional success varies across their academic degree and age, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results indicated that that there is a statistically significant difference in the assessment literacy score of the age. More precisely, it confirmed that teachers with the age range of 23-33 reported higher mean rank (22.16) than teachers with the age range of 34-45 (10.86). However, the mean difference between teachers of different degrees is not significant as the p value (.68) is greater than .05. The findings have implications in teacher education, materials development, and teacher training.

Keywords: Teachers' Success, Job Seniority, Age, Gender, teacher education

1. Introduction.

When improving teaching at the classroom level is one objective of the syllabus in the educational system, successful teachers attempt to meet the demands related to finding the appropriate way of teaching and assessment; so improving teacher quality is one of the most necessary strategies for improving public education in Iran because teachers can have large effects on students' achievement. "The investigation of teacher success is important as with better knowledge of the concept, educators can better envisage professional development directions, and enhance the quality of teacher education programs"(Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010, p. 136).

Successful classroom teachers may seem different; they have just struggled for some years to find appropriate and interesting ways of teaching. May be this is an art, but it is clear that without getting the knowledge they couldn't be successful. We know intuitively that these effective teachers can have a strong effect on the daily lives of children and their lifelong educational and career aspirations. We now know empirically that these effective teachers also have a direct influence in enhancing student learning. Years of research on teacher quality support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement.

King (2003) states that teaching is a complex activity that is influenced by the multitudinous facets of teacher quality and teacher quality is a crucial predictor of student performance. A successful classroom teacher is one who provides the discipline and environment necessary for student learning. Establishing and maintaining this discipline and environment require the successful application of the essential skills. Shabani and Khorsandi (2014) stated that pedagogically successful teachers determine the strong and weak points of their teaching by comparing their own approaches and methods of teaching with those of others; successful teachers enthusiastically delve into details about how they are acting in classroom. Brookfield (1995) states that successful teachers have some traits like avoiding the unnecessary parts, using different kinds of instructional approaches, teaching with level adaptation but stopping regularly to have on the spot correction or feedback, dwelling on the content and their instructional aims. Lowman (1996) believes that the teachers who are the creators of successful concepts of learning for students are successful ones.

Since teachers play a key role in pedagogical success, there is an urgent need to know them and the characteristics of successful teachers. Is there one teaching style/method that is more successful than others? Like students, teachers are human beings – with different personalities and backgrounds. Through practice and experience, successful teachers apply their skills to develop a personal teaching style/method that fits their own personality, background, and teaching philosophy. Are successful teachers born or made? Some people are born with a 'talent' for teaching and evaluating, but almost anyone can learn the essential skills of a successful teacher. These teachers are always thinking about ways to improve the educational experience of their students. They critically assess everything they do deciding how to make good student experiences even better and modifying or discarding lessons that produce poor student experiences. Language teachers' perception of classroom management depends on how they see their job as a language teacher (Sarani & Hosseini, 2014). Successful teachers are prepared to give an educational reason for everything that happens in their classroom. They never respond to students in a condescending or confrontational way. Successful teachers know how and when to use assessment in a positive way.

In an EFL classroom, a teacher controls over many factors, such as classroom's physical environment, students mood and behavior, the amount of communication between teacher and students which in turn will affect not only students' motivation for English language learning, but also their environment and behaviour. One of the most important factors for successful teachers related to teachers evaluation in classroom. Moreover, it is necessary for language teachers to investigate how their assessment techniques can affect progress and behavior of different students in their class because teachers' ability in evaluation plays a vital role in the success of any program in education.

The researcher try to demonstrate that is there a significant difference between teacher success with various experience, age and degree. In this regard the present study seeks to answer the following research question:

Does teachers' professional success vary across their age, academic degree and professional seniority?

2. Methodology.

2.1. Participants.

At first some teachers were chosen. They consisted of 40 male and female teachers. They were chosen from EFL teachers in English with different degrees (BA & MA). This study addressed English teachers that worked in different schools, universities and private institutes with the age range of 23 to 50. The selection of teachers was randomly by consent from the respondents. They were informed about the goal of this research and it was carried out with regard to anonymity. In the process of selecting participants, the researcher used a minimum 1-year experience. The questionnaire was given to these teacher's students that consisted of 450 nonnative students age range from 10 to 30, which answered the questionnaire (Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire). They were asked to answer some likert questions based on their opinion according to teachers' performance in the classroom.

2.2. Instrumentation.

2.2.1. Characteristics of successful teachers questionnaire (CSTQ).

To examine teacher's success, researchers employed Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire. The CSTQ was administered to the language learners to assess their English teachers' success. The present study was built on the model for a successful EFL teacher proposed by Moafian and Pishghadam (2009), who designed and validated the CSTQ. The analysis of their data yielded some factors for teacher success as a construct, which are: teaching accountability, interpersonal relationships, attention to all, examination, physical and emotional acceptance, empathy, class attendance, and dynamism. CSTQ includes 47 five-point Likert-type items, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. It takes 15 minutes to answer all items.

2.3. Data collection procedure.

This study is a quantitative methods. To accomplish the purpose of the research, 1 kinds of Likert questionnaires (Characteristics of Successful Teachers Questionnaire) used. The teacher's success was measured by (CSTQ). This study was carried out in several language institutes, schools and universities. Data was collected from stratified sampling teachers from schools, institutes and universities. the learners of the chosen teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire (CSTQ) to evaluate their teachers' professional success. This was done to probe teacher's success based on different variables.

3. Results.

Researcher's investigation showed that teachers' professional success does not vary across their experience and degree, but the age of teachers was the effective factor in teachers' success. According to King (2003) teacher quality is considered as a vital essence of teaching program which in turn affects the students' performance. Different factors influence teachers' success, so for investigating pedagogical success, researchers can evaluate them based on their situation. As indicated in this study degree and experience didn't affect teachers' success but their age does.

3.1. Analysis of Research Question.

In order to probe the second null hypothesis suggesting that teachers' professional success do not vary across their demographic factors, the factors were classified according to teachers age, degree, and teaching experience:

3.1.1. Job Seniority.

In order to probe the second null-hypothesis stating that teachers' professional success do not vary across their professional seniority, they were classified into 4 groups: group 1 (0-5), group 2 (6-10), group 3 (11-15), and group 4 (16-25) years of teaching experience. Then, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to screen their success as far as their professional seniority are concerned. Table 3 depicts the result of Kruskal-Wallis Test.

Table 1. Kruskal-Wallis Test for job Seniority

	Job Seniority Groups	N	Mean Rank
Score	below 5(G1)	7	23.64
	6 to 10(G2)	21	19.83
	11 to 15 (G3)	10	20.95
	16 to 25 (G4)	2	14.25
	Total	40	

As indicated in the table the mean rank of the job seniority for the four groups are 23.64, 19.83, 20.95, 14.25. This indicates that teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience had the higher mean rank and those (group 4) with more than 16 years of teaching experience reported less mean rank. In order to probe if the differences are significant the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Kruskal Wallis Test Statistics ^{a,b}

Chi-Square	1.166
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.761
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: Job Seniority	

As indicated in Table 2 there is not a statistically significant difference in the continuous variables across the four groups because the sig value is greater than the .05. Thus the second null hypothesis stating that teachers' professional success does not vary across their professional seniority were supported. The results indicate that despite the differences in the mean ranks reported in the table 3, the Chi-square value was not significant.

3.1.2. Academic degree.

In order to answer the second null hypothesis stating that teachers' professional success do not vary across their academic degree, Mann-Whitney U test was ran. The results are presented in Table.3.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test for Teachers' degrees.

	Degree		Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Score	BA	13	11.04	143.50
	MA		12.17	109.50
	Total			

As indicated in the table 3, teachers with MA degrees reported higher mean rank than teachers with BA degree. In order to probe if the differences are statistically significant or not, the results are reported in the table 4. As it can be seen in this table, the mean difference between teachers of different degree is not significant as the p value (.68) is greater than .05.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U for Teachers' degrees

	Score
Mann-Whitney U	52.500
Wilcoxon W	143.500
Z	-.402
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.687

Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.695 ^b
a. Grouping Variable: Degree	
b. Not corrected for ties.	

3.1.3. Age.

In order to answer the null hypothesis stating that teachers' professional success does not vary across their age, another Mann-Whitney U test was ran. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U test for Teachers' age

	Age	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
score	23 to 33	16	22.16	354.50
	34 to 45	16	10.84	173.50
	Total	32		

As indicated in the table.5, teachers with the age range of 23-33 reported higher mean rank (22.16) than teachers with the age range of 34-45 (10.86). In order to probe if the differences are statistically significant or not, the results are reported in the table 6.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U test for Teachers' age

	score
Mann-Whitney U	37.500
Wilcoxon W	173.500
Z	-3.416
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000 ^b
a. Grouping Variable: Age	
b. Not corrected for ties.	

As the table 8 depicts, there is a statistically significant differences in the assessment literacy score of the age range 23 to 33 and 34 to 45. This indicate that the null hypothesis was rejected thus age of teachers' can have a significant factor the assessment literacy of teachers.

4. Discussion.

If you ask a student what makes him or her successful in school, you probably won't hear about some fantastic new book or video lecture series. Most of the students believe on their teacher's ability in teaching process. Educational leaders and researchers agree that teachers have an immense impact on student success. Years of research on teacher quality support the fact that successful teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement.

The researcher found that teachers' professional success does not vary across their professional seniority and degree, but the age of teachers' can have a significant effect on teachers' success. Many of the experienced teachers have substantial knowledge of their students' learning. This knowledge and experience make the learning environment more conducive for teaching and learning but, it hasn't direct effect on teacher's success.

Several studies have been conducted to find the relationship between teacher success and different factors. For example, in a study, Pishghadam and Moafian (2008) explored the relationship between multiple intelligences and teacher success, reporting that interpersonal, interpersonal, and kinesthetic intelligences can influence teacher success. Moreover, Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2011) showed that there is a significant association between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their success.

Some studies could be found in which the role of demographic variables on teachers' reflectivity has been examined. For example, in a study conducted by Odeh, Kurt and Atamtürk (2010), it was revealed that teachers' level of education and teaching experience did not make a significant difference in teachers' reflection. In addition, Guvenc and Celik (2012) found no significant difference between reflective teaching skills perception of teachers and their teaching experiences. In a study conducted by Karadag and Sadik (2012) among 277 teachers, it was revealed that there was no significant difference in their reflective thinking levels according to their gender. They also found that teachers with higher length of service had a higher reflective thinking tendency. Keshavarzi and Falahati Qadimi Fumani (2015) examined the effect of teachers' reflectivity and gender on their use of intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport teaching styles among 50 EFL teachers. The results of their study indicated that gender had no effect on teacher's reflectivity. Furthermore, Aghaei and Jadidi (2013) investigated the influence of EFL teachers' language awareness and gender on their reflective behavior. The findings of their study showed that gender had no effect on teachers' reflectivity.

In an EFL classroom, a teacher controls over many factors, such as classroom's physical environment, students mood and behavior, the amount of communication between teacher and students which in turn will affect not only students' motivation for English language learning, but also their environment and behavior. One of the most important factors for successful teachers related to teachers evaluation in classroom. Moreover, it is necessary for language teachers to investigate how their assessment techniques can affect progress and behavior of different students in their class because teachers' ability in evaluation plays a vital role in the success of any program in education.

It is necessary to develop and design programs for EFL teachers the focus of which is improving teacher's ability in teaching and evaluating. The major goal of a successful teacher-training program is to expose prospective teachers to effective teaching strategies and experiences. This will in turn help them to find better method and techniques in assessment that lead to conducting more productive classes and establishing more intimate relationships with students in the class. The finding can also help school authorities in the implementation of professional development programs.

5. Conclusion.

We know intuitively that successful teachers can have an enriching effect on the daily lives of children and their lifelong educational and career aspirations. We now know empirically that these teachers also have direct influence in enhancing student learning. In this study, when we investigated teachers' success based on different variable, it was observed that age can be one of the effective factors in teachers' success. This could be due to increasing teacher's ability based on their age. Teachers are one of the most important attributes that affect each educational system. Teachers' professional success does not vary across their professional seniority and degree, but age of teachers' can have a significant effect on teachers' success. Many of the experienced teachers have substantial knowledge of their students' learning. This knowledge and experience make the learning environment more conducive for teaching and learning but, it hasn't direct effect on teachers' success.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2001), reflective teaching can be considered as the result of post method pedagogy. Reflection has been of great importance and has received noticeable attention in teacher education and it is considered as a key component of teacher development (Griffiths, 2000, Jay and Johnson, 2002). According to Akbari (2007), reflection can increase teachers' job satisfaction, interpersonal relationship of teachers with their colleagues and students, and the teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

This paper investigates efforts to elicit useful information to improve teaching and learning parts. This lead to some suggestion about what is essential in teaching process that can be predicted by expert people in educational system. Teachers attempt to provide suitable environment for students during learning. Teachers need to acquire acceptable knowledge from appropriate source. They need to learn and use this knowledge in developing, using and analyzing variety of teaching and assessment procedures for making ideal method in learning process.

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