

Are TEFL vs. Non-TEFL Graduates Teachers' Experience, Creativity, Mindfulness, and Instructional Competency Different ?

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Abstract

Recent advancement in educational systems have fostered the significance of language teachers' responsibilities to improve their qualities and competences since students' development is directly related to teachers' qualities and profession. The current study aims at finding the interrelationships between TEFL graduates vs. Non TEFL graduates EFL teachers' Teaching Experience, Sense of Creativity, Sense of Mindfulness, and their Instructional Competency. 318 EFL teachers were selected through convenience sampling from different institutes. Participants filled three questionnaires of Teaching Creativity Quotient, Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, and Instructional Competency Questionnaire by using both paper-based and online methods. To analyze the data, two models for interrelationships among the variables of the study for the two groups of TEFL and Non- TEFL graduates were proposed and tested using path analysis. The findings showed that the proposed model in TEFL group perfectly fit with the data. In non-TEFL group the goodness of fit indices was not within the acceptable range. Moreover, there was a significant difference between the two groups (TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers) regarding instructional competency. This study can be beneficial for teachers, learners, and supervisors.

Keywords: *Creativity, Instructional competency, Mindfulness, Teaching Experience.*

INTRODUCTION

Recent advancements in educational system have fostered the significance of language teachers' responsibilities to improve their qualities and competences since students' development is directly related to teachers' qualities and profession (Katyal & Evers, 2004; Halili, 2019). Accordingly, the importance of teacher education is highlighted. In this condition, teachers' duty is not only to transfer the information and knowledge to students but also to increase their sense of creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and so on (Faravani & Ataei, 2015a). Therefore, to achieve these goals, a teacher needs to have essential teaching competencies and qualities (Nair, 2016; Kansanen, 2004).

Working as a teacher is full of stresses; as teachers said, working in modern teaching environment is very stressful and this can result in teachers who are tired, depressed, worried, cynic and don't consider themselves adequately efficient. In addition, stress and fatigue in teachers and their consequences (including low self-efficacy, lack of enthusiasm, and less

effective teaching style) has negative effects on student engagement and their educational quality (Emerson et al, 2017)

Teacher quality refers to some teacher-related characteristics that produce advantageous educational results which help teachers to have fruitful classes (Coachran-Smith, 2005; Nguyen et al, 2020). Faravani and Ataei (2015b) mentioned some essential qualities for a good teacher. They believed that a teacher should be creative, talented, and skillful in teaching, and provides students with positive feedback, fosters their critical thinking, and builds up a suitable environment for learning. Therefore, it seems that creativity, mindfulness, and teaching experience can be categorized as teacher qualities, since these features can help teachers to provide an appropriate learning environment.

In our complicated world, with no borders remains using modern technologies, a teacher should be aware of different cultures and have a global perspective, he should know modern and relevant teaching styles to go beyond borders. However, it is represented in literature that most teachers and teacher candidates have a racist worldview (Crawford et al, 2002). Teachers as professionals who want to improve their work efficiency by making wise choices in determining educational speed, teaching schedule, students' grades and his reaction to them, decision on placement and tracking, should evaluate and monitor their students' activities.

Schultz Jørgensen (1999) and Pellerone et al, (2020) believe that competence strengthens teachers' quality and professional knowledge as it enables them to use knowledge or skills according to the situation. Among different competencies that a teacher needs to have, instructional competency has a crucial role in the process of teaching. An instructionally competent teacher uses different and proper teaching methods, techniques and strategies to assess students' learning qualities. Moreover, an instructionally competent teacher is aware of students' needs and is active and reflective to assess and develop professional skills of teaching and learning (Glickman, 2002; Macaro & Han, 2020). Barnuevo, Hasegawa, and Hugo (2012.) introduced the components of instructional competency which are consisting of knowledge about subject matter, teaching skill, classroom administration, and assessment skill. So, it can be inferred that instructional competency is multifaceted and can help teachers to face the challenges of teaching.

Different factors can influence teacher instructional competency and may be related to it. One factor can be creativity (; Kettler et al, 2018; Zhang & Watkins, 2007). As it was mentioned before, a successful teacher needs to have some competencies and qualities. On one hand, Park (2011) claimed that creativity is a skill which emerges when somebody faces a challenge and solves problems. On the other hand, one component of instructional competency is classroom management (Barnuevo, Hasegawa, & Hugo, 2012 ; Gözen, 2017) which means that competent teachers use different techniques to find a way to solve the problems when they face difficult situations in class. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teachers who are both creative and competent, are more ready for the challenges of teaching. Accordingly, it can be concluded that creativity and instructional competency are interrelated.

Another factor that can be related to instructional competency is mindfulness. Mindfulness has been defined differently by different scholars. According to Kabat-Zinn (2003) and Tarrasch et al (2020), mindfulness is defined as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention to purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment". Based on Baer, Smith, Hopkins, and Krietemeyer (2006), observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience are the components of mindfulness.

As it was mentioned earlier, mindfulness is a factor that can affect instructional competency. Mindfulness can help people to deal with stressful situations (Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011; Jennings, 2016; Braun et al, 2019). For that reason, being mindful is so crucial for teachers since teaching is regarded as a stressful profession (Garner et al, 2018; Tirri, 2011). Mindfulness is a complex phenomenon which is about present moment awareness, attention and self-control (Bishop et al., 2004; Braun et al, 2019). On one hand, mindfulness can help teachers to deal with stressful classroom environment and students' behavior with more awareness, emotion regulation and acceptance (Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, & Orsillo, 2017). A mindful teacher is able to make decisions at the moment and find out a way to deal with problematic situations. On the other hand, two components of instructional competency are classroom management and teaching skills meaning that competent teachers know how to manage the stressful classroom and how to teach and behave with students with more awareness by using different strategies and techniques (Barnuevo, Hasegawa, & Hugo, 2012; Gage & MacSuga-Gage, 2017). Consequently, it can be inferred that mindfulness and instructional competency are interrelated.

There are some overlaps between qualities of mindfulness and creativity. On one hand, Langer (2014) stated that a mindful person is characterized with the following traits:” (1) ability to create new categories; (2) being open to new information and (3) being aware of more than one perspective”. On the other hand, Shively (2011) stated that creativity is related to fluency (capability of developing a lot of ideas), flexibility (capability of considering different perspectives of the topics), originality (capability of generating unique or unusual ideas) and elaboration (being able to fructify an idea). So, it seems that there is a bidirectional relationship between creativity and mindfulness.

It is worth mentioning that teacher experience is a challenging issue. There are different ideas and controversies over the importance of teaching experience. As suggested in Louws et al (2017), tendency to increase knowledge about the methods of classroom administration in mid-career teachers is higher than early- and late-career teachers.

Rice (2010) believed that experience increases knowledge, skills, and productivity. Moreover, Ladd (2008) claimed that 20 years-experienced teachers are not necessarily more effective than 5 years-experience teachers. Based on this controversy, the researcher finds it necessary to find the role of teaching experience.

As it was discussed earlier, the teacher has a key role in the classroom and can help students to be more successful. But some special criteria are needed for a person to be considered as an instructionally competent teacher. According to the literature, it seems that there is no study which investigated the interrelationships among instructional competency, sense of mindfulness, sense of creativity, and teaching experience between two groups of TEFL and Non-TEFL Iranian EFL teachers. Therefore, the researcher found it essential to fill this gap.

To sum up, this study was conducted to answer the following main questions:

1. Research Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between teaching experience and instructional competency of Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Research Question 2: Is there any significant relationship creativity and instructional competency of Iranian EFL teachers?
3. Research Question 3: Is there any significant relationship between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency Iranian EFL teachers?

4. Research Question 4: Is there any significant relationship between educational background (TEFL vs. non-TEFL) and instructional competency of Iranian EFL teachers?
5. Research Question 5: Is there any significant relationship between sense of mindfulness and creativity of Iranian EFL teachers?
6. Research Question 6: To what extent is the proposed model for the interrelationships of teaching experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency appropriate for the Iranian EFL context?

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Setting

Based on a study conducted by Kline (2015), we need at least 250 persons for conducting SEM. Accordingly, the sample of this study included 318 teachers, 190 of whom were TEFL graduated and 128 were non-TEFL graduated teachers from other fields, including literature, translation and linguistics. 136 of the participants had Bachelor, 139 had Master, and 43 had PhD and all work in language institutes. There were 114 men and 204 women with age range of 20-40. Participants were randomly selected from different cities in Iran, mostly Mashhad and Tehran. The procedure of data selection was done through convenience sampling. The data was collected using both paper-based and online methods.

Instrumentation

We used the following methods and tools for data collection.

Teaching Creativity Quotient (ELTCQ).

Teachers' sense of creativity was assessed using Teaching Creativity Quotient (ELTCQ) (P'Rayan, 2014; Ufrah, 2020). Teachers indicated their level of agreement with these 30 statements using a 3-point scale. In this questionnaire, 5 means strongly agree, 3 means agree but not strongly, 1 means do not agree. It can help teachers go through self-assessed process for measuring their level of creativity. Higher scores on the scale show a high level of creativity. The given time for answering this questionnaire was 20 minutes. The reliability and validity of this questionnaire was .83 which was computed through SEM.

The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire.

Current study, applied The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Baer et al., 2006 ; Carpenter et al., 2019) to examine a teacher's level of Mindfulness. The questionnaire measures a teacher's mindfulness in terms of five facets which are: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience. Besides, it includes 39 items which are rated using a 1 to 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from never or very rarely true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, to very often or always true. The given time for answering this questionnaire was 15 minutes. The reliability and validity of this questionnaire was .89 which was computed through running SEM.

Instructional Competency Questionnaire.

Teacher's instructional competency was assessed through Barnuevo, Hassegawa, and Hugo (2012) and Ismail, Don, , Husin, & Khalid, (2018)'s questionnaire. This questionnaire is divided into four distinct elements which are: Mastery of Subject Matter, Teaching Skill, Classroom Management, and Evaluation Skill. Each factor includes 10 items. Thus, it has 40

items in total. The teachers marked the item on a Likert scale which includes: rarely, sometimes, often, and always. The given time for answering this questionnaire was 15 minutes. The reliability and validity of this questionnaire was .96 which was computed through running SEM.

Study Design and Analysis

This study is a quantitative procedure for investigating the interrelationships among given variables in a correlational design. For assessing the correlation between variables, Pearson correlation was used. Also, in order to show the difference between two groups (TEFL and Non-TEFL) regarding instructional competency, a t-test was conducted. The relationships between all of variables were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The Proposed Model for SEM

The proposed model for SEM is provided in Figure 1.

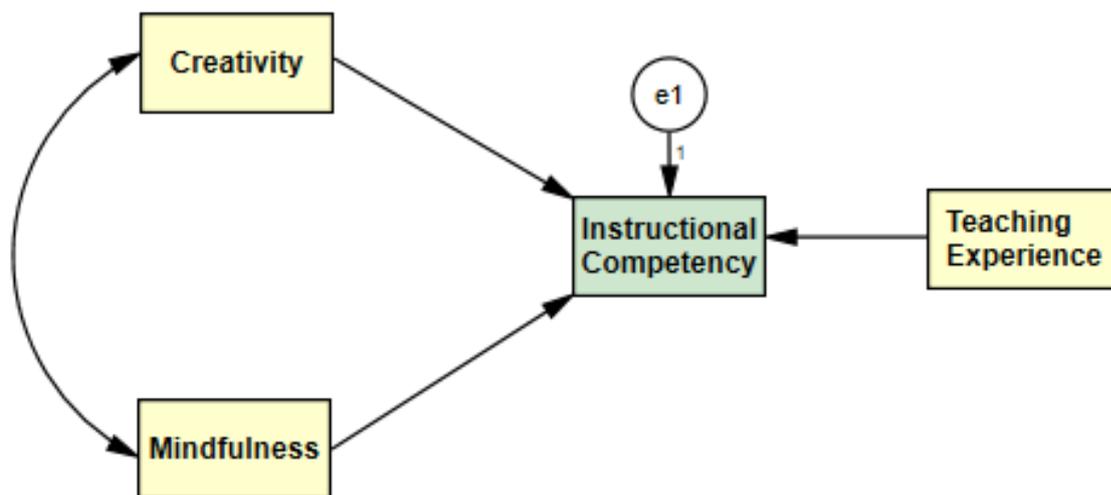


Fig 1. Model proposed for the Interrelationships present between Mindfulness, Creativity, Teaching Experience, and Instructional Competency of TEFL and Non-TEFL Graduates.

Concerning Creativity and Instructional competency, different factors can influence teacher instructional competency. One factor can be creativity (Kettler et al, 2018). As it was mentioned before, a successful teacher needs to have some competencies and qualities. On one hand, Park (2011) claimed that creativity is a skill which emerges when somebody faces a challenge and solves problems. On the other hand, one component of instructional competency is classroom management (Barnuevo, Hasegawa, & Hugo, 2012) which means that competent teachers use different techniques to find a way to solve the problems when they face difficult situations in class. Therefore, it seems that teachers with both creativity and competency characteristics do better in teaching challenges. Accordingly, it can be concluded that creativity and instructional competency are interrelated.

Regarding mindfulness and instructional competency, mindfulness is a factor that can affect instructional competency. Mindfulness can help people to deal with stressful situations. Accordingly, being mindful is so crucial for teachers because some jobs are considered to be stressful and teaching is regarded as such professions (Garner et al, 2018; Tirri, 2011). Mindfulness is a complicated phenomenon that is about awareness and attention to the

present moment and self-control (Bishop et al., 2004; Braun et al, 2019). On one hand, mindfulness can help teachers to deal with stressful classroom environment and students' behavior with more awareness, emotion regulation and acceptance (Block-Lerner et al., 2017). A mindful teacher is able to make decisions at the moment and find out a way to deal with problematic situations. On the other hand, two components of instructional competency are classroom management and teaching skills (Barnuevo, Hassegawa, & Hugo, 2012) meaning that competent teachers know how to manage the stressful classroom and how to teach and behave with students with more awareness by using different strategies and techniques. Consequently, it can be inferred that mindfulness and instructional competency are interrelated.

Pertaining to creativity and mindfulness, there are some overlaps between qualities of mindfulness and creativity. On one hand, Langer (2014) stated that a mindful person can be characterized by the following characteristics: "(1) creation of new categories; (2) openness to new information; and (3) awareness of more than one perspective". On the other hand Shively (2011) stated that "creativity deals with fluency (the ability to generate lots of ideas), flexibility (the ability to look at topics from different angles), originality (the ability to generate unique or unusual ideas) and elaboration (the ability to carry an idea to fruition)". So, it seems that bidirectional creativity and mindfulness have a bidirectional relationship.

It is worth mentioning that teacher experience is a challenging issue. There are different ideas and controversies over the importance of teaching experience. Rice (2010) believed that experience increases knowledge, skills, and productivity. On the other hand, Ladd (2008) claimed that 20 years-experienced teachers are not necessarily more effective than 5 years-experienced ones. Therefore, it seems necessary to investigate how teaching experience affects other variables.

RESULTS

According to the research questions and hypotheses of this study, following analyses were conducted:

Test of Normality

In order to investigate if the data are distributed normally, we used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in terms of creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency are indicated in the following table.

Table 1 Results of K-S Test

	Df	Sig.
Creativity	318	0.13
Mindfulness	318	0.12
Instructional Competency	318	0.09

According to table 1, sig value obtained for all of the variables is higher than .05. So, normal distribution of data among variables is confirmed.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics (including mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum scores) of the variables of current study i.e. experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency are indicated in table 2.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Creativity, Mindfulness, and Instructional Competency

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Creativity	318	75.00	150.00	116.37	12.94
Mindfulness	318	69.00	179.00	131.29	15.85
Instructional Competency	318	40.00	160.00	128.20	21.25
Experience	318	1.00	22.00	15.26	4.78

The possible range of scores for the creativity scale with 30 items is between 30 and 150, for the mindfulness scale with 39 items is between 39 and 195 and for the Instructional Competency scale with 40 items is from 40 to 160. It is indicated in above table that the mean score of teachers' creativity is 116.37 and its standard deviation is 12.94. Additionally, the mean score of teachers' Mindfulness is 131.29 with standard deviation of 15.85. Besides, the mean score of teachers' Instructional Competency is 128.48 with standard deviation of 21.25. Finally, the mean score of teachers' experience is 15.26 with standard deviation of 4.78. The first column also shows that the number of teacher participants was 318.

Reliability of the Questionnaires.

Output data of Cronbach alpha analyses are presented in table 3. We can see that the applied questionnaires had acceptable indices of Cronbach alpha as a whole and also in their subscales.

Table 3 Indices of Cronbach Alpha obtained from analysis of reliability

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach alpha
Creativity	30	0.83
Mindfulness	39	0.89
Instructional Competency	40	0.96

It can be observed that Cronbach Alpha indices of our questionnaires were acceptable: Creativity (.83), Mindfulness (.89), and Instructional Competency (.96).

ANALYZING THE MODEL FITNESS

The results of research hypotheses are discussed in this part.

Result of Research Hypothesis One

H1: Any significant relationships cannot be seen between the experience of a teacher and his instructional competency.

To assess research hypothesis 1, Pearson Correlation was conducted. Tables 4 and 5 show the results of Pearson correlation between teaching experience and instructional competency in TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, respectively.

Table 4. Correlation of Teaching Experience and Instructional Competency in TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Teaching Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	190

Based on the contents of above table, the relationship recognized between teaching experience and instructional competency in TEFL group ($r=.32$, $p<.05$) with 190 participants was moderately positive and significant.

Table 5 Results of Correlation between Teaching Experience and Instructional Competency in Non-TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Teaching Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.30**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	128

In Non-TEFL group ($r=.30$, $p<.05$) with 128 participants, a positive and significant relationship was recognized between instructional competency and work experience of a teacher. Therefore, again the null hypothesis is rejected for TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

Result of Research Hypothesis Two

H2: creativity and instructional competency of a teacher are not significantly related.

To assess research hypothesis 2, Pearson Correlation was conducted. Tables 6 and 7 show the results of Pearson correlation between creativity and instructional competency in both TEFL and Non-TEFL groups separately.

Table 6 Results of Correlation between creativity and instructional competency in TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	0.45**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	190

Table 6 shows that a moderately positive and significant relationship was found between creativity and instructional competency in TEFL Group ($r=.45, p<.05$) with 190 participants.

Table 7 Results of Correlation between Creativity and Instructional Competency in Non-TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	0.33**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	128

From table 7, it can be recognized the relationship found between creativity and instructional competency in non-TEFL Group ($r=.33, p<.05$) with 128 participants was moderately positive and significant. Hence, the second null hypothesis is rejected for both TEFL and Non-TEFL group.

Result of Research Hypothesis Three

H3: There isn't any significant dependency between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency of a teacher.

To assess research hypothesis 3, again Pearson Correlation was used. Tables 8 and 9 show the Pearson correlations obtained between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency in both TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, respectively.

Table 8 Results of Correlation between Sense of Mindfulness and Instructional Competency in TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Sense of Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	0.48**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	190

According to the above table, it can be seen a moderately positive and significant relationship between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency in TEFL Group

($r=.48, p<.05$) with 190 participants. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is rejected in TEFL group.

Table 9 Results of Correlation between Sense of Mindfulness and Instructional Competency in Non-TEFL Group

		Instructional Competency
Sense of Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	0.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.12
	N	128

Table 9 exhibits that the relationship between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency in Non-TEFL Group ($r=.11, p>.05$) with 128 participants was not significant. Hence, the third hypothesis is confirmed for Non-TEFL group.

Result of Research Hypothesis Four

H4: The difference of instructional competency between two groups (TEFL- and Non-TEFL teachers) was not significant.

To assess the fourth research hypothesis, we used an independent sample t-test. Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics of instructional competency in TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers. Results of this t-test are indicated in the following table.

Table 10 The Descriptive Statistics of TEFL and Non-TEFL Teachers in Instructional Competency

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instructional Competency	TEFL	190	137.56	14.53
	Non-TEFL	128	118.85	12.75

As Table 10 shows, the mean score of TEFL group in instructional competency (137.56), is higher than non-TEFL group (118.85). in order to recognize the significance of difference, a t-test was applied.

Table 11 Results of the Independent-Samples T-test

<i>t-test</i> for Equality of Means					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Instructional Competency	4.351	316	0.00	17.83	3.56

Levene's test is used to show variance homogeneity on the instructional competency. According to table 11, a significant difference can be seen between the two groups of teachers (TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers) regarding instructional competency.

Result of Research Hypothesis Five

H5: Sense of mindfulness and creativity of a teacher are not significantly related together.

To assess research hypothesis 5, Pearson Correlation was used. Tables 12 and 13 are dedicated to Pearson correlation obtained for the relationship of sense of mindfulness and creativity in TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, respectively.

Table 12 Results of Correlation between Sense of Mindfulness and Creativity in TEFL Group

		Creativity
Sense of Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	0.39**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
	N	190

According to table 12, a moderately positive and significant dependency can be seen between sense of mindfulness and creativity in TEFL Group ($r=.39, p<.05$) with 190 participants.

Table 13 Results of Correlation between Sense of Mindfulness and Creativity in Non-TEFL Group

		creativity
Sense of Mindfulness	Pearson Correlation	0.19*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033
	N	128

Table 13 indicates that, the relationship between sense of mindfulness and creativity in non-TEFL Group ($r=.19, p>.05$) with 128 participants was positive but weak. Hence, the fifth null hypothesis is rejected both for TEFL and Non-TEFL groups.

Result of Research Hypothesis Six

H6: The proposed models of association among variables does not show enough adequacy for TEFL and non-TEFL Groups.

Statistically, path analysis is a way to identify the relationships and dependencies between given variables. This method is considered as a special kind of structural equation modeling (SEM) and for each variable present in casual model, individual indices are adopted. It means that path analysis is considered as a structural model and cannot be used for measuring purposes. Path analysis model hypothesized in our study is presented in fig 2.

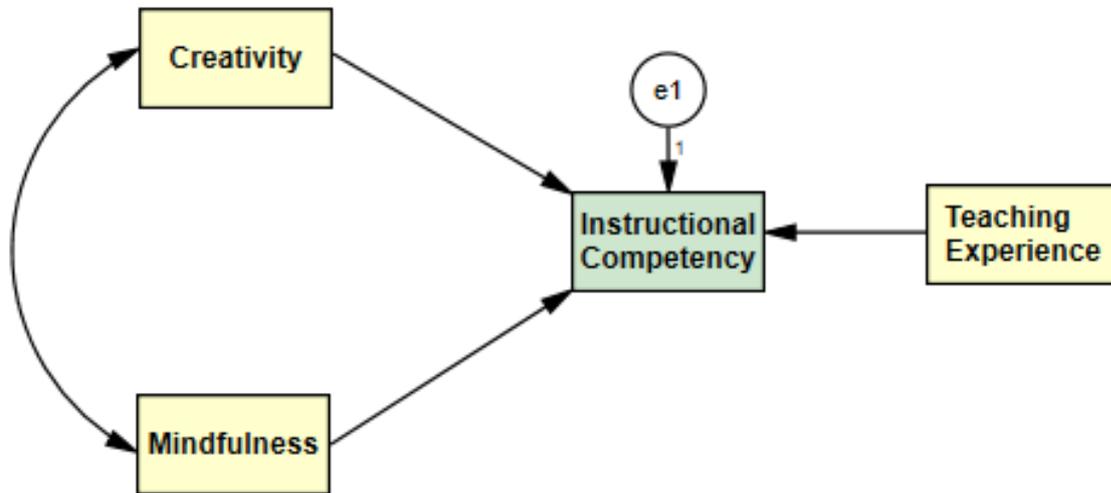


Figure 2. Proposed model of the Path Analysis

In order to test the structural relations, model of path (Figure 2) was examined using Amos 24 statistical package. Figure 3 shows the Path Analysis of the interrelationships between experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in the TEFL group.

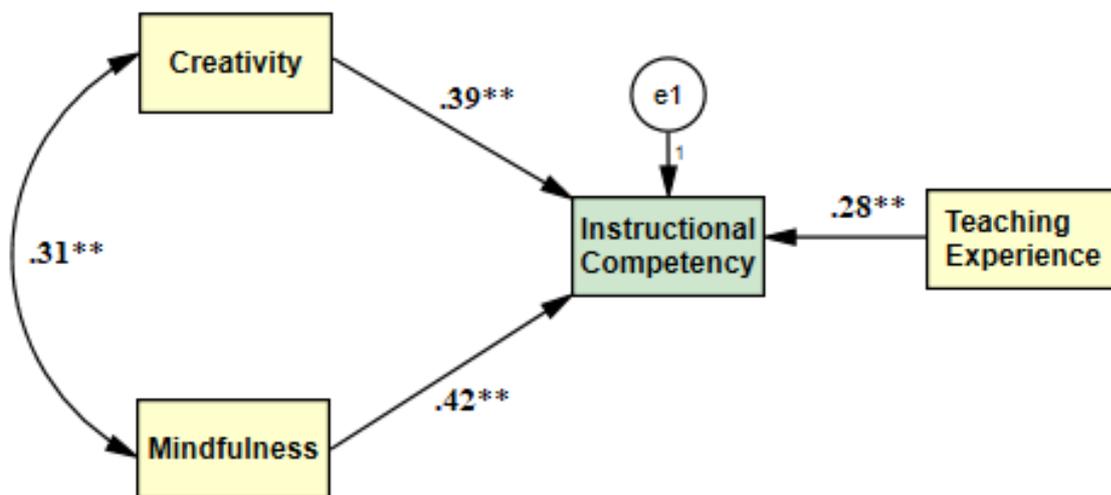


Figure 3. The Path Analysis of the interrelationships of Creativity, Mindfulness, and Instructional Competency in TEFL group.

As the model displays, creativity is positively and significantly correlated with mindfulness ($B=.31, p<.05$). In addition, it shows that in the TEFL group, all the three independent variables predict instructional competency positively and significantly: creativity ($B=.39, p<.05$); mindfulness ($B=.42, p<.05$); and teaching experience ($B=.28, p<.05$).

Several indices of goodness of fit were evaluated in terms of the fitness of model. The indices obtained from the analysis of model of path in TEFL group can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14 Goodness of Fit Indices for Model of Path Analysis in TEFL Group

	X2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Acceptable fit	<3	>.90	>.90	<.08
Model	2.12	0.92	0.91	0.075

It can be seen from the table 14 that all of the indices of goodness of fit are statistically acceptable. Therefore, the model of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in TEFL group enjoyed perfect fit with data. So, it is clarified that the suggested Path model is appropriate for the Iranian context for TEFL group. Therefore, the sixth null hypothesis is rejected for TEFL group.

Figure 4 shows the Path Analysis of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in non-TEFL group.

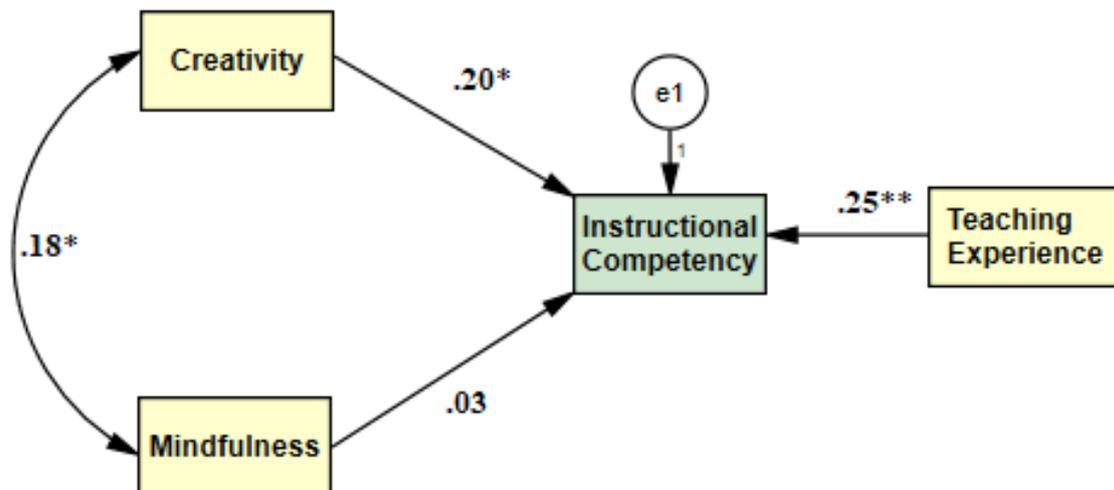


Figure 4. the Path Analysis of the interrelationships in non-TEFL group.

As the model displays, creativity is positively and significantly correlated with mindfulness ($B=.18, p<.05$). In addition, it showed that in non TEFL group among three independent variables only two variables predict instructional competency positively and weakly: creativity ($B=.20, p<.05$), and teaching experience ($B=.25, p<.05$). However, it was found that among non-TEFL group, mindfulness cannot predict instructional competency with positive significance ($B=.03, p>.05$).

In order to evaluate the fitness of proposed model, some indices of fit were examined. Indices of goodness of fit obtained for path model in non-TEFL group are presented in the following table.

Table 15 Goodness of Fit Indices for Model of Path Analysis in Non-TEFL Group

	X ² /df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Acceptable fit	<3	>0.90	>0.90	<0.08
Model	3.22	0.85	0.82	0.082

As indicated in table 15, none of the indices of goodness of fit lie in acceptable range. Therefore, the model of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in non-TEFL group does not fit with data. So, we can come to conclusion that that the proposed Path model is not appropriate for non-TEFL group in Iranian context. Hence, the sixth null hypothesis is confirmed for non- TEFL group.

DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This study aimed to find the possible interrelationships between variables, namely instructional competency, sense of mindfulness, creativity, and teaching experience between TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers. The basic purpose of the current research is to investigate whether the proposed model for these variables are suitable or not. According to findings, just in TEFL group, all of the variables were significantly related together. Also, the proposed model perfectly fitted with the data only in TEFL group. In this part, the logical reasons for such interrelationships are mentioned.

Discussion for first Question of the research

As the first question, we tried to find any significant relationship between teaching experience and instructional competency in both TEFL and Non-TEFL groups. According to SEM which was run in this study, in both groups, a positive significant relationship was observed between teaching experience and instructional competency. So, the first hypothesis was rejected. It can be inferred that the teachers who are more experienced are more instructionally competent in comparison with novice teachers.

According to Zand- Moghadam and Meihami (2016), the knowledge obtained from researches is used in classrooms managed by TEFL teachers and they consider it as a helpful source; on the other hand, non-TEFL teachers believe that their own experience in class management is more reliable.

On one hand, the result of this research question is in line with Rice's (2010) claim, since he believed that teaching experience increases knowledge, skills, and productivity. On the other hand, the results are in contrast with Ladd's (2008) idea. They stated that teachers with 20 years of experience vs. teachers with 5 years of experience don't necessarily show more efficiency and competency. Based on researchers' idea, this contrast might be due to the different participants and settings.

Discussion for Research Question Two

Second question of this research was designed to find possible significant relationships between teacher's creativity and instructional competency. Findings indicated that in both TEFL and Non-TEFL groups, a positive significant relationship was observed between creativity and instructional competency. The null hypothesis was rejected in both groups.

Teaching procedure, creativity and exhaustion was investigated in a study conducted by Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2016). It was found that creativity is important in choosing teaching style by teachers. In addition, creativity can predict positively facilitator and delegator styles, but its prediction trend for Authority and Expert is negative.

Some studies have shown that the underlying components of creativity and instructional competency are related (Barnuevo, et al. 2012; Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2016; Park, 2011). The results of the present study are in line with the mentioned studies. Therefore, it seems that the level of teacher creativity can increase teacher's instructional competency.

Discussion for Research Question Three

The purpose of third question was to find any relationship between teachers 'sense of mindfulness and instructional competency in both groups of teachers. According to the obtained findings sense of mindfulness and instructional competency of TEFL Group are positively and significantly related ($r=.48, p<.05$). In contrast, the relationship between sense of mindfulness and instructional competency of non-TEFL Group was insignificant ($r=.11, p>.05$). Null hypothesis was approved for the Non TEFL group and rejected for TEFEL group.

As indicated by Simsir (2019), taking mindfulness in online courses by EFL teachers increases their tendency to increase their teaching enthusiasm, awareness, happiness and health level.

Based on some studies it seems that the underlying components of mindfulness and instructional competency are related (Barnuevo, et al., 2012; Braun et al, 2019;). So, it seems that the results of this research question are consistent with abovementioned studies. It is worth to mention that the reported results in Non-TEFL group is due to educational background of teachers. It can be concluded that TEFL teachers with high level of mindfulness are more instructionally competent.

Discussion for Research Question Four

The fourth research question tried to investigate any relationship between teacher's educational background (TEFL vs. Non TEFL) and instructional competency. A significant difference can be observed between the two groups (TEFL- and Non-TEFL groups) regarding instructional competency. Findings showed that the mean score of TEFL group in instructional competency (137.56), is higher than non-TEFL group (118.85).

In a study by Hamidi and Khatib (2016), Iranian EFL teachers and their capabilities such as emotional awareness, language skills and classroom management and also the interaction between these factors were investigated. Using statistical analyses, they concluded that: 1) the interaction between emotional awareness and classroom management was positive, 2)emotional awareness and language skills were significantly related, and 3) language skills was significantly related to classroom management.

Different studies highlighted the importance of teacher education which current study is in the same line with (Jacobs & Farrell; 2001; Tercanlioglu, 2008). According to the results, current study proved that related education can make a big difference between ELT teachers. It can be concluded that teachers who have related education and background are more instructionally competent which makes them more prepare for the process of teaching.

Discussion about fifth Research Question

The fifth question of the research is about the interactions between teachers' sense of mindfulness and creativity. As observed in results section, teachers' sense of mindfulness and creativity in TEFL Group are positively and significantly related together, but in non-TEFL group, there is a positive but weak relationship between them.

Obtained findings for this research question was in line with what Leavitt (2016) found in his study. He claimed that according to Langer (2014) and Shively (2011) there are some overlaps between qualities of mindfulness and creativity. Therefore, it can be concluded that development in sense of mindfulness can help teachers to be more creative.

Discussion for Research Question Six

The last research question aimed to investigate whether the proposed model of association among these variables shows enough adequacy for context of Iran. As seen in literature (Barnuevo, et al., 2012.; Bishop et al., 2004; Jacobs & Farrell, 2001; Langer, 2014; Park, 2011; Rice, 2010; Shively, 2011; Tercanlioglu, 2008), four variables of creativity, teaching experience, mindfulness, and instructional competency are associated with each other. Hence the last null hypothesis was rejected only for TEFL group, because in TEFL group, predictability of all three independent variables for instructional competency was positive and significant. Moreover, all of the indices of goodness of fit lie within the acceptable range. Accordingly; therefore, the model of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in TEFL group enjoyed perfect fit with data. We can come to deduction that the proposed Path model is appropriate for TEFL group in Iranian context.

For Non TEFL group the hypothesis was confirmed. Since, in Non TEFL group among three independent variables, only two variables predict instructional competency positively and weakly. However, it was found that among non-TEFL group, mindfulness is not a positive significant predictor of instructional competency. Not all of the indices used for goodness of fit lie in acceptable range. Therefore, the model of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in non-TEFL group does not fit with data. In conclusion, the model proposed as Path model, is not appropriate for the Iranian context for non-TEFL group.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The aim of present study was to clarify the interaction between two groups of TEFL- and Non-TEFL teachers by considering their teaching experience, mindfulness, creativity, and their instructional competency. A teacher needs to have different qualities and competences among which mindfulness, creativity, teaching experience and instructional competency can be mentioned.

In this study two models were proposed for TEFL and Non-TEFL groups. The mean score of TEFL group in instructional competency (137.56) was higher than Non-TEFL group (118.85), which means that no significant difference is seen between TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers regarding instructional competency. Based on the conducted results, TEFL teachers are more instructionally competent. In researcher's point of view, it can be due to the fact that TEFL teachers passed different practical teaching courses and had trained in university for

several years which helped them to be more prepared for the process of teaching. But in contrast, Non-TEFL teachers may don't have a rich educational background in teaching.

In the TEFL group, all three variables were proven to be positive significant predictors of teacher's instructional competency. Creativity ($B=.39, p<.05$), mindfulness ($B=.42, p<.05$), and teaching experience ($B=.28, p<.05$). These results show that creativity, mindfulness, and teaching experience add some knowledge to the concept of instructional competency. It implies that teachers who have related education and are creative, mindful, and experienced can teach and manage the classroom better.

In contrast, in Non-TEFL group among three independent variables only two variables predicted instructional competency positively but weakly: creativity ($B=.20, p<.05$), and teaching experience ($B=.25, p<.05$). However, it was found that in non-TEFL group, mindfulness cannot predict instructional competency in a positively significant way ($B=.03, p>.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that educational background effects mindfulness directly. Teachers who are not TEFL graduates are not mindful and as a result they are less instructionally competent.

In TEFL group, creativity was positively and significantly correlated with mindfulness ($B=.31, p<.05$). In contrast, in Non-TEFL group the interrelationship between these two variables was weakly and positively significant ($B=.18, p<.05$). It can be inferred that teachers who are creative are mindful as well. As it was mentioned earlier according to Langer (2014) and Shively (2011) the underlying components of mindfulness and creativity have some overlaps. So, it can be concluded that in TEFL group teachers are more mindful and as a result they are more creative. It's due to the fact that they were trained for several years and they learned how to face problems in an appropriate way. In contrast, Non-TEFL teachers don't have related back ground which makes them to be less mindful and creative.

According to the obtained results, the proposed model perfectly fitted the data only in TEFL group. Therefore, the model of the interrelationships among experience, creativity, mindfulness, and instructional competency in TEFL group enjoyed perfect fit with data. As a conclusion, it can be stated that in TEFL group, instructional competency of tutors is enhanced by increasing in level of their creativity, mindfulness and teaching experience.

This research can help TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers in different ways. It can motivate teachers to advance their knowledge regarding their education among which instructional competency, creativity, mindfulness can be mentioned. Therefore, this study might make the teachers more up dated and open to new knowledge and information. Teachers might consider that being creative, mindful, and instructionally competent can help the betterment of the classroom. Firstly, the current study helps teachers to highlight the importance of creativity which helps them not to have boring classes by providing new challenges and opportunities for students. Secondly, this study might motivate teachers to read about mindfulness and find some ways to practice it which helps them to overcome their stress in the classroom and try not to convey this stress to students. Thirdly, this study shed lights on the importance of instructional competency as it paves the way for teachers to learn and use different strategies and techniques which make materials more comprehensible for students and help teachers themselves to manage the class easily.

Beside all factors above, the result of this study can be beneficial for Non-TEFL teachers since the importance of education was discussed in it. The current study can motivate Non-TEFL teachers to attend more TTC courses and be trained for the classroom.

The results and findings of this research provide some implications for language students. It is believed that teacher development can enhance students' improvement (Johnson &

Golombek, 2011). Therefore, if teachers are educated the class might be more fruitful and rich for the students. Moreover, creative teachers might provide students with varieties of challenges and opportunities. If teachers are instructionally competent the process of language learning might be easier for the students since competent teachers apply different techniques to transfer their information to students. Also, a mindful teacher behaves students with more emotion regulation and manages the classroom atmosphere more properly.

The current study has practical implications for managers and supervisors in institutes. Since in this study, the difference between TEFL and Non-TEFL teachers was clearly discussed. It was proven that TEFL teachers can perform better in classroom by using creativity, mindfulness and instructional competency. So, the educational back ground of teachers should be considered as an essential criterion for choosing and hiring EFL teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we investigated Iranian EFL teachers in terms of teaching creativity, experience, instructional competency and mindfulness and our purpose was to explore and compare the relationship between these factors and TEFL and non-TEFL graduates. It was found that the purposed model in TEFL graduates was consistent with data. Fitness of the model with non-TEFL graduates was unacceptable. Additionally, when TEFL and non-TEFL teachers were compared in terms of instructional competency, they were significantly different. The present study suggests the importance of teacher creativity and its effects on class activities. So, it can persuade educational designers to design books and syllabus in order to improve teacher creativity and be challenging for students. Furthermore, this research would be useful for teachers, learners and supervisors.

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