

## Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy: Perspectives of Iranian Female EFL Teachers in Building their Teacher Immunity

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### Abstract

Teacher Immunity is one of the essential factors for successful language teaching in educational contexts. This study aimed to explore the factors which positively contributed to female EFL teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy as predictors of their Teacher Immunity in Iranian EFL contexts. A qualitative interview design was adopted to address the research questions. Furthermore, a convenience sampling technique was employed to select 15 female EFL instructors from various foreign language institutes in Urmia city. A semi-structural interview questionnaire was used to collect data for the current study. Additionally, Thematic Data Analysis was employed to extract major themes from the comments and expressions of the participants. Based on themes emerged from female EFL teachers' comments, self-awareness, effective communication, building a good rapport and conflict management factors could positively predict EFL instructors' teacher immunity. In addition, confidence in teaching, availability of resources and materials, teaching experience and persuasion of instructors were the factors of female EFL teachers' self-efficacy which could positively predict their teacher immunity in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Immunity, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, Female EFL Teachers*

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher Immunity is vital for female EFL teachers in that female teachers face with many problems that make them anxious in their educational contexts. Teacher Immunity is a recently approved factor in EFL context (Rezapoor, & Mohammadzadeh, 2024). Globally, female teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) have significant impact on how students develop their English language ability. But because their line of work is so demanding, they are frequently subjected to variety of stressors (Songhori, Ghonsooly, & Afraz, 2020) that may negatively affect their general wellbeing and their levels of their job satisfaction. Moreover, teacher immunity also extends to protect teachers from frivolous or malicious lawsuits (Koko, & Nkemjika, 2021) that may arise from disgruntled students or parents. Especially in English educational contexts, most of the EFL learners and their parents have high expectations and

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when these EFL learners fail in their English courses, they blame their teacher (Gooran, et al., 2023).

However, it is important to note that teacher immunity does not shield teachers from liability in cases of gross negligence, intentional misconduct, or violations of students' constitutional rights (Kergides, & Sachs, 2021). Overall, teacher immunity serves as a vital framework for prompting (Sarıçoban, & Kirmizi, 2021) effective teaching practices, safeguarding the educational process and motivating EFL teachers. As the result of significant changes in the field of foreign language teaching, teacher immunity has got revitalized importance during the recent decades (Derakhshan, et al., 2023).

Many factors can affect teacher immunity (e.g., low income, employers' greed and personal issues) and numerous research have been conducted to investigate factors that may affect teacher immunity (e.g., Namaziandost, & Heydarnejad, 2023; Sariçoban, & Kirmizi, 2021; Tonguç, 2024). Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence are pivotal for EFL teachers and these factors can affect their performance in the classroom contexts. Many experts and research scholars consider Self-efficacy, Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Immunity as fundamental factors (e.g., Darmawati, 2024; Saad, et al., 2024; Abiodullah, & Aslam, 2020; Wray, Sharma, & Subban, 2022; Fackler, et al., 2021; Burić, & Kim, 2020) in educational contexts.

Self-Efficacy, especially pertinent for female EFL teachers, refers to an individual's beliefs (Nousheen, Zia, & Waseem, 2024) in their abilities to accomplish tasks, teach comprehensively and achieve goals in specific domains. For female EFL teachers, self-efficacy plays a critical role in shaping their teaching practices and overall professional development. Culturally, female teachers in many societies face with unique challenges and expectations (Li, Xue, & Li, 2023), which can influence their confidence levels and also perceptions of their abilities in various fields including teaching English as a foreign language. EFL teachers with higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of difficulties (Woodcock, Hitches, & Jones, 2019). Ultimately, fostering self-efficacy among female EFL teachers is essential for empowering them to navigate the challenges of their profession.

It should be noted that Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in the professional success and personal wellbeing of EFL female teachers. Firstly, emotional intelligence enables teachers to effectively manage their own emotional feelings, particularly (Valente, et al., 2020) in challenging EFL classroom situations. Female teachers often encounter EFL student populations with different proficiency level in English language, varying teaching environments and unexpected obstacles, requiring them to remain focused and composed. High emotional intelligence allows them to regulate their emotions, stay calm under pressure, and make rational decisions (Olaleye, & Lekunze, 2024) and ultimately fostering a positive learning atmosphere for EFL learners. Secondly, Emotional Intelligence aids female EFL teachers to build strong relationships with their students (Yang, 2022). Teaching English as a foreign language involves more than just teaching English syntactic structures and vocabulary. It requires creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where EFL students feel valued and motivated to learn English language.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the relationship between Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence of female teachers and their Teacher Immunity. Understanding how these factors (i.e. Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence) predict and interact with teacher immunity can provide valuable insights into the resilience, well-being and motivation of teachers. This study holds significant implications for the field of teaching

English as a foreign language (TEFL) as it aims to investigate the possible predictive relationship between Self-efficacy, Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Immunity. Furthermore, at qualitative stage of the study, the researchers attempted to elicit positive factors which contribute to female EFL teachers' Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence as predictors of their teacher immunity and it can be crucial for the educational system as whole.

In Iranian EFL contexts, female teachers face various challenges that impact their professional well-being. One significant problem is the lack of attention given to the emotional intelligence and teacher immunity of these instructors (Aminoleslami, 2021). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in teachers' ability to understand and manage their own emotions, as well as to empathize with and effectively respond to the emotions of their students (Wang, 2022). Without adequate emotional intelligence, female EFL teachers may struggle to create a positive and supportive learning environment, leading to decreased student engagement and academic achievement. Thus, there is a need to investigate the emotional intelligence levels of female EFL teachers in Iranian EFL contexts and explore its impact on their teaching practices and students' learning outcomes.

Another pressing problem faced by female EFL teachers in Iranian EFL contexts is the lack of self-efficacy in their teaching abilities (Fathi, & Derakhshan, 2019). Self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to successfully execute teaching tasks and positively influence student learning (Perera, & John, 2020). Low levels of self-efficacy among female EFL teachers can hinder their motivation, confidence, and overall job satisfaction. It can also lead to reduced instructional effectiveness and a negative impact on students' academic performance (Lasha, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the self-efficacy and emotional intelligence levels of female EFL teachers in Iranian EFL contexts and determine how these variables relate to their teacher immunity, which refers to their ability to cope with the challenges and stressors associated with the teaching profession. By addressing these problems, it may be possible to develop interventions and support mechanisms that enhance the professional well-being and overall effectiveness of female EFL teachers in Iranian EFL contexts.

In recent years, the importance of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence have gained significant attention. Many researchers investigated teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy in second/foreign language contexts (e.g., Amiri, 2020; García-Álvarez, Hernández-Lalinde, & Cobo-Rendón, 2021; Wen, et al., 2020). As female EFL teachers face myriad demands, expectations and stressors, investigating the predictive role of Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy in determining teacher immunity can be crucial for educational policy. While the literature has extensively examined individual components of teacher well-being, a comprehensive investigation of Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy as predictors of teacher immunity remains a scholarly gap. This study aimed to bridge this gap by investigating the potential predictive power of EFL female teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy on their teacher immunity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the growing body of research on teachers' emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and teacher immunity, no research, up to date, investigated factors positively contributed to female EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of their Teacher Immunity. The preceding studies and researches give a starting point for looking at teachers' emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and teacher immunity.

A theory known as "teacher immunity" explains how educators, particularly language teachers, build defense mechanisms to lessen the effects of disturbances that can endanger their motivation and sense of self as professionals (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Teacher immunity theory, also known as Educator Immunity, is a legal notion that protects teachers and educators from personal liability for activities taken in the course of their professional obligations. This philosophy is based on the belief that educators should be free to carry out their duties without fear of frequent litigation, allowing them to focus on providing quality education to their students (Hiver, 2017). Teacher immunity protects educators from being held personally liable for claimed negligence if they were working within the scope of their professional duties and using reasonable care.

Hardiness is another concept related to immunity. It is possible to think of the phenomenon that Cole (2004) first reported as a means of preventing and managing the negative effects of high stress levels. Cole (2004) asserts that resilient individuals can manage challenging situations and see them as chances for personal development. Thus, hardiness acts as a source of resistance, limiting the adverse impacts of high-level stress.

Hölscher, Gharaei, Schachner and Umlauf (2024) investigated possible effects on teacher self-efficacy, stress, job satisfaction and supporting students in culturally diverse classroom contexts. This study aimed to enhance studies on intergroup anxiety by examining teachers' concerns about seeming racist as a potential risk factor for their well-being and ability to operate in culturally diverse classrooms, using survey data from German school teachers. According to the research, educators who worry more about coming across as racist also seem to be under greater stress and have worse levels of self-efficacy when working with students from varied cultural backgrounds. This may lower their level of job satisfaction and have an impact on their capacity to meet the requirements of their kids in the classroom.

In 2023 Jalili, Sepehri, and Shafiee conducted research on teacher immunity in English Language Institutes and Public Schools. The purpose of the current study was to ascertain how Iranian EFL teachers perceived immunity in the context of their profession—that is, in public schools and English language institutes. In order to accomplish this goal, convenience sampling was used to pick 100 EFL teachers in Isfahan who were employed as teachers in public schools (N = 50) and language institutions (N = 50) to take part in this study. They were then given the Teachers' Immunity Level questionnaire and subjected to an interview. Regarding immunity in their own work environment, the teachers were questioned. Every teacher employed by language institutes felt that there was little job immunity for educators at these institutions. The causes for the high and low degrees of work immunity in these two educational environments were also questioned from the teachers. The teachers in language institutes felt that the main causes of this disaster in language institutions were the lack of government oversight, the high number of educated but unemployed individuals, employers' avarice in choosing instructors, and the declining value of education in society.

Another study was designed by Rezapoor and Mohammadzadeh (2024) to investigate potential relationships or correlations between emotional intelligence, teacher immunity, and resilience among Iranian EFL teachers. In this way, 90 EFL teachers from various language institutes of Gorgan city, Iran were selected through using a convenience selection technique. The findings showed a strong correlation between teacher immunity and the emotional intelligence of Iranian EFL instructors. The results also showed a strong and positive correlation between teacher immunity and resilience, as well as a good association between emotional intelligence and teacher resilience. Regarding educational consequences, educators

with lower immunity and resilience levels ought to be advised about ways to strengthen these traits, such as exercising to improve their emotional intelligence.

Understanding how self-efficacy and emotional intelligence predict and interact with teacher immunity can provide valuable insights into the resilience, well-being and motivation of teachers. To the researchers' knowledge, few up to date studies, investigated factors positively contributed to female EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of their Teacher Immunity. Therefore, this study aimed to address the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What factors positively contribute to female EFL teachers' Emotional Intelligence as a predictor of their teacher immunity?

**RQ2:** What factors positively contribute to female EFL teachers' Self-efficacy as a predictor of their Teacher Immunity?

## **METHODS**

The present study concentrated on the factors that contribute to the development of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of female EFL instructors' teacher immunity in educational settings.

### **Research design**

This qualitative study had interview design (Mackey & Gass, 2015), and semi-structural interview with an identical set of questions for each of the participants (Ary et al., 2018; Dörnyei, & Griffee, 2010) was used to investigate the participants perspectives.

### **Research participants and Sampling Procedures**

Through Convenience Sampling Technique, 15 female EFL teachers were chosen from the foreign language institutes of Urmia city, Iran. Furthermore, the participants were all female EFL teachers from different foreign language institutes and the EFL teachers were native speakers of Azeri language. These female EFL teachers had at least two years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language in different institutes. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 28. They held English classes for students with different proficiency levels (e.g., basic classes, elementary classes, intermediate and advanced level classes). The participants had B.A or M.A in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

### **Instrument**

In the current study 15 female EFL teachers were interviewed and after gathering the raw data, the qualitative data were transcribed for initial data coding and Thematic Data Analysis.

### **Semi-Structural Interview**

A teacher immunity questionnaire designed and validated by Jalili, Sepehri, and Shafiee (2023) was adopted to collect the data required for the qualitative portion of the current investigation. The semi-structural interview questions were employed to ascertain responses to the study's qualitative inquiries. Furthermore, in order to improve reliability, the semi-structured questions were subjected to pilot testing prior to the execution of the research.

### Procedure and Data Analysis

In this research through convenience sampling 15 female EFL teachers were chosen for the interview. As the female EFL teachers answered the semi-structured interview questions, their answers were recorded and transcribed for initial coding and Thematic Data Analysis. Through Thematic Data Analysis, the researchers attempted to elicit positive factors contributed to female EFL teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy as predictors of their teacher immunity.

## RESULTS

Qualitative research question 1 aimed to explore and investigate the factors related to Emotional Intelligence (EI) of female EFL teachers, with a particular focus on their roles as predictors of teacher immunity in EFL contexts. To achieve this objective, the participants, who were female EFL teachers, were interviewed and requested to provide their insights in the forms of comments. Through the thematic analysis of their responses, four significant themes emerged, shedding light on the factors contributing to emotional intelligence among female EFL teachers as predictor of their teacher immunity. In Table 1 a list of major themes emerged from the teachers' responses is provided:

**Table 1:** List of Themes Related to Emotional Intelligence Factors as Predictors of Teacher Immunity

Number	Themes
1	Self-awareness
2	Effective communication
3	Building a good rapport
4	Conflict management

### Self-awareness

One of the novice teachers with BA degree in TEFL believed that Self-awareness is a key factor of Emotional Intelligence (EI) that can positively affect teacher immunity. In her comments, this EFL teacher mentioned that Self-awareness is very helpful in that it can help teachers to control their classes.

*Extract 1:* As a teacher, I believe that there are several key aspects of emotional feelings and emotional intelligence that contribute to strengthening my immunity in my English language classes. I think one of the factors is self-awareness that plays an important role. Being aware of my own emotions and how it can impact teaching English to the students can help me to manage any challenge that may rise in the classroom with my students.

This themed extracted from the words of several teachers. As another teacher in this line mentioned:

*Extract 2:* I believe that students can learn English in a friendly environment. That is why I think that effective communication ability can help any teacher to have a friendly relationship with her students. This ability can help teachers to enhance their immunity in educational contexts and create a happy condition in education for students to learn English.

From the above-mentioned extracts, it can be deduced that Self-awareness can impact teachers' immunity in classroom contexts.

### **Effective Communication**

Another teacher (female, MA in TEFL) stated that effective communication is very important in that it can aid EFL teachers address conflicts and misunderstandings in their classes.

**Extract 3:** In my view, effective communication is so important in improving my immunity in class. Being able to communicate clearly and empathetically with my students can help me or any other EFL teacher to build trust and understanding. It also allows me to address conflicts and misunderstandings in English classes. Because of these reasons I always prioritize this factor in teaching English.

This theme was repeated as EFL teachers explained their opinions during their semi-structural interviews.

### **Building a Good Rapport**

Going through the words of the female EFL teachers revealed that building a good rapport with students in EFL classes is another factor related to teachers' Emotional Intelligence that can predict their teacher immunity in classes. To confirm this theme two of the teachers stated that:

**Extract 4:** I think one of the most important factors that I always prioritize in my English classes is to build a good rapport with my students in all my classes. Because building a strong connection with students can help them to easily connect with their teacher. And it can encourage students to ask their questions without hesitation and stress. When I build a good rapport with my students and when I can create stress-free environment in my English classes, I feel that I have more immunity in class and students can learn better.

**Extract 5:** In my view, teachers should respect their students. Respecting and using humor can greatly help us to build a good rapport in our EFL classes. When I show respect to my students, it creates positive environment and when they feel valued and respected, they can energetically cooperate in their class interactions.

The above-mentioned statements elucidate the significance of cultivating a strong rapport with students for EFL teachers seeking to enhance their teacher immunity within the classrooms.

### **Conflict Management**

The final theme extracted from the responses of the female EFL teachers, was conflict management. As EFL teachers mentioned:

**Extract 6:** As far as I know the challenge of many teachers in English classes is conflict management. For example, when in my class, students, especially male students, conflict or argue with each other, at that time I always try to find respectful ways to manage disagreements

and disputes. I consider this skill as an important factor in controlling my English language learners and when I have peaceful classes under my control, I think that my immunity is high.

**Extract 7:** My perspective is that controlling class and students is one of the most important factors that any teacher should pay particularly attention to it. Because when we, as teachers, control students and their arguments and conflicts, it can help us to improve our sense of immunity in our classes. I can say that to my knowledge if teachers can control their classroom contexts, their outcome can be excellent for that class.

These EFL teachers stated that their overall immunity in the classroom can be positively impacted by their ability to manage conflict, which was a component of their emotional intelligence. Because they felt more secure and impervious in educational settings when they were able to handle conflicts and arguments in their classrooms.

The objective of qualitative research question 2 was to examine and investigate the factors associated with the self-efficacy of the female EFL teachers, with an emphasis on their functions as predictors of their teacher immunity in EFL settings. The participants were asked to share their thoughts through comments and statements during the interview process in order to achieve this goal. Four major themes that shed light insight on the factors influencing female EFL teachers' self-efficacy as a predictor of their teacher immunity emerged from thematic data analysis of their replies on the questions. In Table 2 a list of major themes emerged from responses of EFL teachers is provided.

**Table 2:** List of Themes Related to Self-Efficacy Factors as Predictors of Teacher Immunity

Number	Themes
1	Confidence in Teaching
2	Availability of resources and materials
3	Teaching Experience
4	Persuasion of Teacher

### Confidence in Teaching

One of the major themes extracted from the EFL teachers' comments in semi-structural interview was confidence in teaching. EFL teachers considered this element of self-efficacy as a key factor that can positively affect their immunity in EFL classes as they stated:

**Extract 8:** I have studied TEFL and I think that if teachers want to teach English with self-confidence, they should study methodology in teaching and to become more familiar with various teaching techniques and methods for example GMT, TPR, DM and post-method. I think they are very crucial because these methods can help instructors to know how to teach English based on their students' needs and it is my idea that learning about how to teach can affect their immunity in EFL classes.

**Extract 9:** I taught English for several years and when I compare my teaching ability and my immunity in classes with my first years that I started to teach, I think that English language Proficiency of teacher has an important role in improving my self-efficacy. During these years my proficiency level in English language improved and the reason is that I always repeated grammatical structures and words in my classes as I taught English books for different levels.



That why nowadays when I go to class, I go with high self-confidence and because of it, I think my immunity improved, too.

Another EFL teacher with MA in TEFL mentioned:

**Extract 10:** I feel I was born to be an English language teacher and have ability to control my class and students. When I teach English to students, I believe that I can do my best and that gives me the feeling of being especial and different in teaching. Because of confidence that I have, I think my immunity in class is high and any teacher who wants to have this feeling and be successful in teaching should believe in her talents and abilities.

Investigating EFL female teachers' comments and statements showed that most of the participants considered confidence in teaching as an important factor and it can positively be associated with their teacher immunity in their EFL classes.

### **Availability of Resources and Materials**

Another theme found in the words of the participants, EFL teachers, was that availability of resources and materials that could help the participants in their classes to be ready for the texts and contents of these materials. As one of the novice EFL teachers' with BA in TEFL expressed:

**Extract 11:** I believe that availability of resources and materials related to each level is essential for my self-efficacy and my students' success in that level. When I have access to variety of teaching materials, technology tools and resources related to English language, then these materials enable me to plan engaging and effective lessons. I think feeling well-equipped and prepared positively impacts my self-confidence and immunity as a female teacher.

Another female teacher with BA in TEFL mentioned:

**Extract 12:** When books and tools are available for my English classes, I can prepare myself by reviewing the lessons related to each session and this preparation can boost my confidence, and my ability to present the lessons well enough to the students. I remember I had a course and the books were not available by that time and I did not know how to prepare myself for the classes and it affected my immunity in classroom contexts, and even the results of the final exam were not what I expected to be.

This view of self-efficacy was expressed by teachers with BA in TEFL, who teaching English for two or three years in English language Institutes.

### **Teaching Experience**

A teacher commented the following words about teaching experience and its impact on teachers' immunity:

**Extract 13:** Personally, I believe that teaching English for five years did help me to improve my self-efficacy. The reason is that teaching experience can enhance confidence in subject knowledge and improve familiarity with teaching strategies. Because we always learn from our past mistakes, I think that for teachers who want to improve their self-confidence, experience in teaching English language will provide great opportunities. Also, teaching experience can reduce stress and the instructor can have a relaxed and stress-free condition after a period of

time teaching for different levels of proficiency. I think this can help teachers to have immunity in English classes.

According to the extract presented above, it can be inferred that teaching experience as a significant theme, can positively predict and affect EFL instructors' teacher immunity.

### **Persuasion of Teacher**

The last emerged theme pertained to persuasion of teachers. This final theme was extracted from words of several EFL teachers as they stated:

**Extract 14:** As an EFL teacher, using persuasion helped me to improve my immunity and self-efficacy in the classroom. When I persuade my students, I use my word and actions to influence their thoughts and behaviors in English classes. By effectively persuading my students, I can create a positive and engaging learning environment that promotes cooperation and respect among my English language students.

**Extract 15:** I think one of the main challenges I encounter in my classroom is that the majority of my students are teenagers who attend English classes because their parents want them to study English. I always try to persuade and convince my students that learning English can be incredibly beneficial for them. When I actively engage with my students, they can be able to learn more effectively, which ultimately enhances the overall atmosphere and success of my English classes. And I think it affects my immunity in educational contexts.

Another female teacher with MA in TEFL expressed:

**Extract 16:** I personally think that teachers should be persuasive if they want to have high immunity. When teachers are persuasive, they are able to effectively manage the classroom and students and they can address challenges and handle them. By using persuasive strategies, like setting clear expectations or using suitable teaching methods, teachers can create supportive environment for their students. This can help teachers to minimize disruptions and create a friendly atmosphere for students.

Investigating these EFL female teachers' comments revealed that persuasion of teachers can be a significant factor that predict EFL teachers' immunity in educational contexts. Teachers can persuade and influence their students in order to encourage the EFL learners to study well. Furthermore, teachers can effectively manage their students in the EFL classes.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the current study, the researchers explored the aspects of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in female instructors that might positively predict and influence their teacher immunity. The results of the current study provide new insights into self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and teacher immunity of female EFL teachers in Iranian educational contexts.

This Qualitative research revealed that various factors related to female EFL teachers' emotional intelligence (i.e., self-awareness, effective communication, building a good rapport, and conflict management) and the EFL instructors' self-efficacy (i.e., confidence in teaching, availability of resources and materials, teaching experience, and persuasion of teacher) can positively predict their teacher immunity in educational contexts. In the related findings achieved by Haji Jalili, Sepehri and Shafiee (2024), the EFL teachers clarified key factors of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence that can affect their overall immunity in educational

centers. To achieve this objective, 100 EFL instructors from both public schools and language institutes of Isfahan city, Iran were chosen through convenience sampling. In another study, Noughabi, et al., (2020) concluded that autonomy, emotions, and engagement might play crucial roles in predicting language teachers' immunity. Particularly, the results highlighted that teacher autonomy was the most influential factor in explaining teachers' immunity of experienced in-service EFL teachers.

The study discovered that emotional intelligence among female EFL teachers related positively with their teacher immunity. In other words, female EFL teachers' emotional intelligence could positively predict their teacher immunity in EFL contexts. Regarding other studies on the same issue, Rezapoor and Mohammadzadeh (2024) concluded in their study that there is a positive relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their teacher immunity. Furthermore, their research highlighted a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among EFL teachers in educational settings.

Furthermore, the study's findings indicated that the self-efficacy of female EFL teachers can positively predict their teacher immunity in Iranian EFL settings. As to other related studies which investigated the same issue, Khazaenezhad and Davoudinasab (2022) concluded that There is a positive relationship between different aspects of teacher immunity and personality traits. Among aspects, teacher self-efficacy and conscientiousness emerged as the most prevalent facets of both teacher immunity and personality types. For this study, 50 participants (19 male and 31 female) through random sampling were chosen from different Iranian EFL institutes.

The researchers attempted to investigate factors that only positively contribute to the female EFL teachers' self-efficacy, emotional intelligence as predictors of their teacher immunity, and negative factors were eliminated. Furthermore, the participants for interview section were chosen through convenience sampling in Urmia city, Iran. Another limitation was gender of the participants. This study attempted to investigate only female EFL teachers and male EFL instructors were not included in the current investigation. Also, in this research, the age of the EFL teachers served as a boundary for participant selection. Individuals who fell below the age of 19 or surpassed the age of 28 were not included. The chosen participants were limited to an age range between 19 and 28 years and two years of experience in teaching English.

Further studies are required to investigate the impact of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and teacher immunity on EFL teachers within their educational settings, as these factors hold significant importance for EFL instructors.

Since the current study specifically investigated the self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teacher immunity of female EFL teachers, it is suggested that future researchers conduct similar investigations pertaining to male EFL instructors or consider both genders within EFL settings. Also, it is suggested that findings of this study pave the way for doing more similar studies on how other factors (e.g., Intelligence Quotient, Resilience, Aptitude, Motivation) can predict EFL instructors' teacher immunity in EFL classes.

Furthermore, the main focus of the current study was only on female EFL teachers and how their self-efficacy can affect their teacher immunity. However, it is recommended that other researchers explore how English as a foreign language (EFL) learners can impact the teacher immunity of these EFL instructors. Conducting further investigation in this area would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between EFL learners and the teacher immunity of their instructors.

## CONCLUSION

In the present study, an attempt was made to investigate how the self-efficacy and emotional intelligence of female EFL teachers related to their immunity in EFL classrooms. The study also sought to investigate whether self-efficacy and emotional intelligence of female EFL instructors could predict their teacher immunity. Additionally, the qualitative study delved into the factors of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence that could positively predict female EFL instructors' teacher immunity in EFL classes. Furthermore, to achieve the objectives of the investigation, one instrument (i.e., semi-structural interview questionnaire) was used to interview 15 female EFL teachers which were chosen through convenience sampling from Urmia city, Iran. Thematic Data Analysis was employed to extract key themes from the comments and expressions of the female EFL teachers. based on themes emerged from EFL teachers' words and comments, self-awareness, effective communication, building a good rapport and conflict management factors of emotional intelligence could positively predict their teacher immunity. In addition, confidence in teaching, availability of resources and materials, teaching experience and persuasion of teacher factors of female EFL teachers' self-efficacy could positively predict their teacher immunity in EFL contexts. Based on the outcome of the study, it can be concluded that female EFL teachers' Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence can positively predict instructors' Teacher Immunity in Iranian educational settings. Our results can also benefit female EFL teachers and educational policymakers as they can be informed that what factors of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence can affect teacher immunity. This insight can inform targeted strategies to enhance these constructs, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of educational quality in EFL contexts.

## PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The outcome of this study held substantial implications for female EFL teachers. Since self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teacher immunity are the most influential factors for EFL instructors, the findings of the current study carry noteworthy implications for female EFL teachers. Three influential factors (e.g., self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and teacher immunity) bear significant weight and can greatly impact the teaching experiences and outcomes of EFL instructors. While both EFL teachers and students share responsibility for English language teaching and learning success, teachers, especially female EFL instructors, may encounter anxiety and stress in educational settings. Recognizing their self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and how these factors may affect their teacher immunity can assist the female EFL educators in effectively managing challenges within EFL classrooms.

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## APPENDIX

### Consent Form

#### Investigating Female EFL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of their Teacher Immunity

I participant name, agree to participate or agree to participate in the research project title Investigating Female EFL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of their Teacher Immunity, conducted by the researchers Farhad Khabazian and Seyyed Hossein Kashef who has discussed the research project with me.

I have received, read and kept a copy of the information letter/plain language statement. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this research and I have received satisfactory answers. I understand the general purposes, risks and methods of this research.

I consent to participate in the research project and the following has been explained to me:

the research may not be of direct benefit to me  
my participation is completely voluntary  
my right to withdraw from the study at any time without any implications to me  
the risks including any possible inconvenience, discomfort or harm as a consequence of my participation in the research project  
the steps that have been taken to minimise any possible risks  
public liability insurance arrangements  
what I am expected and required to do  
whom I should contact for any complaints with the research or the conduct of the research  
I am able to request a copy of the research findings and reports  
security and confidentiality of my personal information.

In addition, I consent to:

audio-visual recording of any part of or all research activities (if applicable) publication of results from this study on the condition that my identify will not be revealed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_