MEASURING THE SELF-EFFICACY OF EFL TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY GOVERNMENTAL SCHOOLS IN KUWAIT: EXPLORING YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT: *Teachers' self-efficacy has been identified as an important concept that not only influences the way in which teachers teach, but also students' learning outcomes. A review of the current literature shows that EFL teachers' self-efficacy is influenced by many factors, including teaching strategies, professional development training, active mastery experience, teachers' practical knowledge and language proficiency, as well as the length of teaching experience. The last factor is relevant to the current study. There have been inconclusive findings regarding the effect of years of teaching; while some studies have reported a positive relationship between years of teaching experience and self-efficacy, other studies have reported the opposite. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the effect of this factor on EFL teachers' self-efficacy in terms of classroom management, students' engagement and instructional strategies. The study was conducted with 200 EFL female teachers in governmental elementary schools in Kuwait. Data were collected through online surveys and quantitatively analysed using SPSS. The findings suggest that there were no statistically significant differences (at 0.05 level) between the means in the study sample in terms of self-efficacy in student engagement, classroom management and instructional strategies in relation to the years of teaching experience variable. Based on these findings, it is argued that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may remain stable once they are formed. Therefore, there is a need for teacher training courses that raise teachers' awareness of the importance of their self-efficacy.*

KEYWORDS: Self-Efficacy, Efl Teachers, Governmental Schools, Kuwait, Teaching Experience

INTRODUCTION

The importance of self-efficacy as a concept has captured researchers' attention in the field of second language acquisition as a result of its effect on teachers' behaviour and practices, which consequently affects learners' performance (Anderson, 2004; Darling- Hammond, 2000). The term was pioneered by Bandura (1986), who defined it as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (p. 391). According to his social cognitive theory, Bandura (1997) emphasizes the important roles of both human agency and environmental factors in determining human adaptation and behavioural changes.

In educational contexts, the concept of self-efficacy is widely associated with teachers' behaviours, practices and students' achievement (Pajares, 1996). Gavora (2010) defined it as "the teacher's personal (i.e., self-perceived) belief in ability to plan instruction and accomplish instructional objectives. It is in effect the conviction the teacher has about his/her ability to teach pupils efficiently and effectively" (p.2). According to Gavora, teacher self-efficacy should not be confused with teacher competence or professional knowledge or skills. Gavora believes that teacher self-efficacy is the driving force or key factor governing teacher competence because it is a strong self-regulatory characteristic that encourages teachers to

fully use their potential. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) defined it as teachers' judgments in their ability to achieve the desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even with students who might be hard to motivate. However, a belief in self-efficacy does not represent the actual capacities of teachers but rather represents their perceptions of those capacities. Therefore, teachers may underestimate or overestimate their real abilities (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

It has been suggested that teachers' self-efficacy is influenced by contextual and demographic factors (Ross, 1994). The former suggests that self-efficacy is a kind of context-specific construct (Chacon, 2005; Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier & Ellett, 2008) in the sense that their self-efficacy can be shaped according to the environment or the context in which teachers work, including the school environment, principal leadership, supportive colleagues and students' characteristics. The latter prioritises demographic factors, including variables such as gender, age, experience, and academic degrees. Reviewing the literature on self-efficacy indicated that these variables have a powerful impact on different aspects of teaching and learning, including teachers' classroom management skills (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), students' future learning, achievement, motivation, teachers' views regarding literacy instruction (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011) and instructional strategies (Allinder, 1994; Wenner, 2001; Witcher et al., 2002).

While some studies have reported a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and teachers' self-efficacy (Penrose, Perry, & Ball, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Gu & Day, 2007), others have reported contradictory findings, suggesting that teaching experience does not have a significant impact on the level of teachers' self-efficacy (Bejarano, 2000; Chacon, 2005; Gaith and Shaaban, 1999; Howell, 2006; Wallick, 2002). Therefore, there is a need to investigate the effect of this variable on self-efficacy in terms of three fundamental aspects of teaching, namely classroom management, instructional behaviours and students' engagement, by addressing the following research questions:

1- What is the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers in elementary schools in Kuwait in terms of students' engagement?

2- What is the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers in elementary schools in Kuwait in terms of instructional strategies?

3- What is the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers in elementary schools in Kuwait in terms of classroom management?

4- Are there any statistically significant differences at (0.05) level between the means of the responses in the study sample on self-efficacy in relation to the number of years of teaching experience variable?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature associated with the study of self-efficacy draws its theoretical frameworks from the ideas of two scholars, Bandura and Rotter. Therefore, the literature review will firstly highlight the main theoretical assumptions of these theories. This is followed by a discussion of empirical studies on EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their findings in relation to teachers'

practices, including classroom management, students' engagement and instructional strategies. This will be discussed alongside the findings of the current study in relation to the effect of years of teaching experience as a variable in relation to EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

Social cognitive theory

Before discussing the concept of self-efficacy from Bandura's social cognitive theory, it is worth mentioning that the construct of teachers' self-efficacy was first initiated in RAND (Research and Development) studies exploring whether teachers can control the reinforcement of their actions. This was based on Rotter's (1966) locus of the control concept, which refers to the extent to which teachers believe that they can control the reinforcement of their actions; that is, whether control of reinforcement is found within themselves or in the environment. The degree of self-efficacy is a product of both external factors, such as environmental ones, and internal factors, such as cognitive, affective, biological and behavioural ones (Evers et al., 2002). Rotter's theory assumes that there are two types of direction control, namely internal and external control. Some people are of the opinion that results depend on their own behaviour or on what they have inside themselves ("internal control"), while others are influenced by external factors ("external control") (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

The concept of self-efficacy has also been considered in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The main theoretical assumption of social cognitive theory is its emphasis on the idea that human behavioural change is influenced by human thoughts rather than just by external stimuli. In other words, Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on human agency and external environmental factors in human adaptation and behaviour changes (Bandura, 1997). Human agency is socially constructed through interacting with people and the environment (Bandura, 2006). Bandura's theory deals with the study of the system developed by the individual in self-development and its processes, and the individual's awareness of his own competence. This describes his or her control of his or her activities and management of his or her abilities and various skills in the face of situations he or she encounters (Hibbs, 2012; Bryant, 2017). According to Bandura (1997), efficacy has two components: efficacy expectation and outcome expectancy. Efficacy expectation is the conviction that one has the ability, knowledge, and skills to successfully accomplish the actions with desired outcomes. The outcome expectancy represents a person's estimate of the likely impact of performing a task at the self-expected level of performance.

According to Schwarzer and Hallum (2008), Bandura's unifying theory of behaviour change hypothesizes that expectations of self-efficacy determine whether instrumental actions will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and failures. For example, people with low-self efficacy may report feelings of helplessness, depression and anxiety, which are reflected in their way of thinking in the sense that they carry pessimistic thoughts about their capacities and abilities. This kind of feeling and way of thinking reflect on their actions in the sense that they prefer not to initiate any work, develop themselves, or solve a problem. This is because with low self-efficacy the level of motivation will be affected negatively. On the contrary, when setbacks occur, people with high self-efficacy recover more quickly and maintain commitment to their goals.

Bandura (1997) argued that there are four main sources of information that individuals use to construct self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, physiological and effective state. Mastery experiences refer to the situations in which

teachers experience their successes and prove to themselves that they are competent teachers. Bandura (1997) believes that "success builds a robust belief in one's personal efficacy" (p. 80). Vicarious experiences represent the observations of the success of other teachers. Successful teachers can be a model for other teachers in the sense that the former can increase the positive self-efficacy of other teachers. Social persuasion refers to the coaching and encouragement that teachers can receive from their colleagues, supervisors and headteachers. The last sources of self-efficacy are physiological and effective states, which concern the physiological and effective state of teachers and how the excitement, passion and enthusiasm they experience can predict their success; while the anxiety and stress that they may suffer can affect their self-efficacy negatively.

This study considered social cognition as a theoretical framework. Rotter's locus of control is general and focuses on the control of behaviour (what is perceived to determine behaviour and affect outcomes), whereas Bandura's social cognitive theory focuses on self-efficacy by exploring people's cognition and feelings regarding their confidence and performance level in terms of their ability to perform a specific task. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is goal-directed, and domain- and task-specific depending on the context.

The effect of self-efficacy on teachers' performance and students' achievement
Studies on self-efficacy in the educational field focus on two main aspects: teachers' performance and students' achievement. Starting with teachers' performance and teaching practices, it could be argued that without true belief-based personal self-efficacy in teaching, teachers will be less effective at teaching their subject (Gist and Mitchell, 1992). This is because teachers' beliefs about their efficacy affect their teaching effort, the goals they set, and their level of ambition (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002). Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to exhibit high levels of planning, organization, and enthusiasm (Allinder, 1994). This happens when teachers become open to new ideas, and more willing to experiment with new teaching methods that better meet the needs of their students, as well as welcoming their students' questions, even when these tend to be difficult ones (Wenner, 2001). Furthermore, Witcher et al. (2002) found that low-efficacy teachers prefer to use lecture-driven and teacher-dominant methods of teaching, whereas high-efficacy ones prefer to use more student-centred methods of teaching. In addition, Gordon (2001) found that low-efficacy teachers are more likely to use severe punishments and negative consequences than high-efficacy teachers. High self-efficacy teachers are also more willing to create a supportive student-centred classroom environment, support students' autonomy and to be more attentive to low-ability students (Woolfolk et al., 1990; Brouwers & Tomic, 2003; Ross & Bruce, 2007), and have a less interventionist attitude towards the classroom (Henson, 2001).

Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) studied the relationship between the self-efficacy of teachers in Syria and Germany, job stress and burnout, focusing on mediation. They found out that "the path from earlier self-efficacy to later burnout (.26) was higher than the one from earlier burnout to later self-efficacy (.00)" (p. 167). They explained their results by stating that latent self-efficacy predicted job stress, which in turn predicted burnout. This shows the importance of self-efficacy in teachers' work in the sense that it can protect them in from experiencing job stress in the first place, which in turn makes teachers less vulnerable to burnout.

Regarding the effect of teachers' self-efficacy on students' achievement, many studies have shown that high self-efficacy teachers increase students' engagement, motivation and academic achievement. For example, Good and Brophy (2003) found that efficient teachers

tend to maintain high levels of student engagement. Nelson (2007) also emphasized this when he demonstrated that teachers' self-efficacy and students' level of interest and enjoyment in academic subjects are predictors of motivation towards learning. In a recent study of over 14 OECD countries, Fackler and Malmberg (2016) found a correlation between teacher efficacy and student learning achievement. Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran et al. (2002) noted that teachers with high self-efficacy are believed to be better able to enhance their students' motivation and help them raise their success level by considering their needs and adopting student-centred approaches.

It is worth noting that some researchers further examined whether there is a relationship between teachers' efficacy, students' learning satisfaction and learning outcomes and found a strong association between the three elements (Tai, Hu, Wang and Chen 2012). Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, and Malone (2006) examined teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of their job satisfaction and the academic achievement of 75 students at Italian junior high schools. They found that teachers' beliefs in their self-efficacy affected their job satisfaction, as well as students' academic achievement. Many more recent studies have provided further evidence of the relationship between the performance of efficacious teachers and students' academic achievements (Shaughnessy, 2004; Tournaki & Podell, 2005; Wallik, 2002).

Years of teaching experience as one of the major variables affecting self-efficacy

Many researchers have investigated the self-efficacy of teachers in more depth to answer the question, "What makes some teachers efficacious while others are not?" Researchers have come to the conclusion that many factors may influence a psychological construct such as self-efficacy. As mentioned above, these factors have been classified into two broad categories, contextual and demographic.

Years of teaching experience is one of the demographic factors that has been reported to have a significant impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Klassen and Chiu (2010) investigated the effect of years of experience on the self-efficacy of 1,430 teachers in three specific domains, namely instructional strategies, student engagement, and class management. The key new finding of their study was that teachers' self-efficacy is influenced by years of experience; those who are in their early and mid-career stages have a high efficacy level, but this declined for teachers in their late career stage. According to the result of their study, teachers' self-efficacy peaked at about 23 years of experience in the three domains and then declined as they reached the late-career stage. Gu and Day (2007) obtained similar results, showing that most mid-career teachers experience an increase in motivation and commitment, whereas teachers who are at a later stage of their careers report a decline in motivation and commitment, thus reducing their self-efficacy. Some researchers have suggested that novice teachers actually exhibit high levels of self-efficacy the first few years of teaching due to the support and mentoring experiences they receive during the student teaching process (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008; Whittington, McConnell, & Knoblock, 2006). Furthermore, a study of teachers and principals in selected governmental schools in Victoria by Penrose et al. (2007) showed that the length of teaching experience had a significant direct effect on predicting teachers' self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) compared the self-efficacy of novice and experienced teachers using the TSES tool. They claimed that career teachers had significantly higher overall self-efficacy than novice teachers.

Some researchers have come to the conclusion that teaching experience has nothing to do with teacher self-efficacy. Tweed (2013) studied 321 teachers in 18 different schools from kindergarten through to fifth grade in two school districts in East Tennessee in the US. He found out that there was no significant correlation between years of teaching experience and the self-efficacy of teachers. Chacón (2005) investigated the self-efficacy of 100 teachers of English as a foreign language in middle schools in Venezuela to pinpoint the most powerful sources of self-efficacy. He argued that there was no correlation between engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management and years of English language teaching experience. However, there was a correlation between staff development and teachers' self-efficacy in terms of engagement and instructional strategies. Chacón summarized his findings by stating that, "the more in-service training the teachers reported having, the higher their efficacy to design instructional strategies and to engage students in learning English" (p.266). Meanwhile, Gaillo and Little (2003) examined differences in self-efficacy in behaviour management between graduate teachers (54 primary education teachers with less than three years of experience) and student-teachers (25 teachers in their final year of primary education training). They found that both graduate and student teachers reported feeling only moderately prepared and self-efficacious, with 83.5% of the total sample indicating that they would like to receive additional training in the area of behaviour management.

Despite these findings, there is still a need to explore the effect of years of teaching experience on teachers' self-efficacy due to these contradictory findings in previous research. The scarcity of research on self-efficacy in the field of teaching English specifically in the Kuwaiti context is another rationale for pursuing this study. Thus, there is a need to investigate the relationship between "self-efficacy" in three main domains, namely classroom management, students' engagement and instructional behaviour, and the effect of teaching experience as a variable among English language teachers at governmental elementary schools in Kuwait.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was employed using a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Adopting a quantitative perspective in educational research has many benefits as it is considered more reliable and objective. Quantitative analysis can use statistics to generalize findings, and researchers' subjectivity is reduced in this type of research paradigm (Dörnyei, 2007).

The study sample:

The participants in the current study were selected using convenience sampling. This means selecting research participants who are willing and available to be studied (Creswell, 2005). This sampling strategy was practical as it saved time and enabled willing participants to be recruited (Dörnyei, 2007). In total, the study sample included 200 teachers of English working in governmental elementary schools in different educational zones in Kuwait. All the teachers in the sample hold a bachelor's degree in education, specialising in teaching English. They either graduated from the College of Education at Kuwait University or the College of Basic Education in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). In terms of the years of experience, 52 teachers indicated that they had between

one and five years of experience, 56 teachers indicated that they had between six and 10 years of experience and 92 teachers indicated that they had more than 10 years' experience.

Research instrument:

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) conducted research in which they reviewed all the research instruments and discussed their features as well as disadvantages. They then presented the need for a new measure of self-efficacy of teachers that offers more reliability and validity. Their tool is called the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). It comprises three subscales: Instructional Strategies, Student Engagement, and Class Management. TSES includes 24 items rated on a 9-point Likert scale, one indicating nothing and nine indicating a great deal (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002; Yoo, 2016)

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) instrument was adopted in this study for several reasons. First, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) noted that out of Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy described earlier, mastery experiences are the most powerful sources in the sense that these relate to teachers' actual work and their accomplishments with their students. The better they perform as teachers with students, the higher their self-efficacy and vice-versa. This research attempted to concentrate on measuring self-efficacy as it relates to teachers' teaching experiences in particular. Second, although Bandura developed a 30-item scale measuring seven dimensions of self-efficacy, including influencing decision-making, influencing school resources, instruction and discipline, enlisting parental involvement, enlisting community involvement, and creating a positive school climate, Skaalvik and Skaalvik pointed out that Bandura's instrument includes some aspects that are not directly related to the daily work of teachers. Third, Pajares (1996) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) argue that global or general instruments obscure what is being measured and state that, "Omnibus tests that aim to assess general self-efficacy provide global scores that decontextualized the self-efficacy-behaviour correspondence and transform self-efficacy beliefs into a generalized personality trait rather than the context-specific judgment" (p. 795). At the same time, they tried not to be specific, since specificity may hinder the predictive power of anything beyond what is supposed to be measured. This is exactly what Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) tried to avoid in developing their instrument. They tried to avoid both extremes of specificity and generality. Furthermore, the validity and reliability were checked through three studies they carried out. In addition, the validity and reliability of TSES were demonstrated in different contexts in five countries (Klassen et al., 2009).

Although there are two main factors that influence teachers' level of self-efficacy, namely contextual and demographic, this study aimed to pinpoint demographic rather than contextual factors, specifically years of experience. This variable, rather than age, gender or academic status, was selected for the following reasons: 1) elementary teachers of English were targeted, all of whom were female teachers holding a Bachelor's degree in English education, which the Ministry of Education in Kuwait requires of all teachers of English in elementary schools. Thus, most elementary teachers of English are females holding the same degree. Second, one of the main studies that investigated age as variable that may affect self-efficacy showed that there is no relationship between the age of teachers and their self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002). This might be because age, as a variable, covariates with another variable, namely teaching experience. Older teachers are thus normally considered to have more experience. Third, Bandura (1997) describes mastery and vicarious experiences as one of the major sources of self-efficacy beliefs of teachers. Tsui (1995) described experiences as the key ingredient in teachers' self-efficacy, and found that "years of teaching

experiences in a teaching setting is an overriding factor in moulding one's feelings of teaching efficacy" (p.37).

The questionnaire was converted into an online version using Google Docs and was administered online to teachers. Administering the questionnaire online has several benefits, including access to individuals in distant locations, and the convenience of automated data collection, which reduces the amount of time and effort required from the researcher.

Instrument credibility:

The credibility of the internal reliability of the tool was verified by calculating the correlation between each question and the total score of the domain to which it belongs and the correlation between each domain and the total score of the tool obtained from the survey. This was applied to a sample consisting of 65 English language teachers in Kuwait. The Statistical Package (SPSS) was used to calculate correlation using the Pearson correlation.

The results showed a statistically significant correlation at (0.01) level between each question and the domain it belongs to, which shows the internal reliability and credibility of construction. The correlations between the first domain questions (Efficacy in Student Engagement) and the overall score of the domain ranged from 0.512 to 0.706. The correlations between the second domain questions (Efficacy in Instructional Strategies) and the overall score of the domain ranged from 0. 612to 0.771, while the correlations between the third domain questions (Efficacy in Classroom Management) and the overall score of the domain ranged from 0.537 to 0.740.

The results also showed that the correlations between each domain and the overall score of the tool is at a high level (0.01), and ranged from 0.842 to 0.890, demonstrating internal reliability and credibility of construction.

Instrument Reliability:

Tool reliability was calculated by finding the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for each domain in the tool using the Statistical Package (SPSS) after being applied to the survey sample. The results showed that the domains of the tool were statistically stable between 0.80 and 0.84, and therefore, the results can be trusted when applied to the sample in the basic study. The results were used to determine the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers according to the categories of the Nona-scale tool used to answer the tool questions. The responses of teachers were classified into five levels for easy interpretation of the results using the following equation:

Category length = range ÷number of levels (very high, high, moderate, low, very low).

Range = highest value for the answer categories (9) - lowest value for the answer categories (1) = 9-1 = 8.

Therefore, category length = 8 ÷5 = 1.6. The answer (1.6) was then added to the score of each category.

Therefore:

A- Very low = 1 + 1.6 = 2.6

B- Low = 2.6 + 1.6 = 4.2

C- Moderate = 4.2 + 1.6 = 5.8

D- High = 5.8 + 1.6 = 7.4

E- Very high = 7.4 + 1.6 = 9

The weights become as follows:

- A mean ranging between (7.4- 9) means that the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers is very high.

- A mean ranging between (5.8– 7.4) means that the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers is high.

- A mean ranging between (4.2– 5.8) means that the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers is moderate.

- A mean ranging between (2.6– 4.2) means that the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers is low.

- A mean ranging between (1– 2.6) means that the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers is very low.

Data Analysis

This section presents the results of the study following the statistical analysis of the data. In order to answer the study questions, the responses of the members of the sample were collected and statistically processed using the Statistical Package (SPSS). Means and standard deviations for each question of the scale tool were calculated.

FINDINGS

Teachers' self-efficacy and students' engagement:

Referring back to the first research question, which explores the level of teachers' self-efficacy in terms of students' engagement, the results shown in Table 1 suggests that the level was moderate.

Table (1): Percentages, means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample on Self-Efficacy in Student Engagement

No	Teacher Beliefs	How much can you do? (%)									Mean	Std. Deviation	Order according to mean	The Level
		Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite A Bit		Great Deal				
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)				
1	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	1	4	12	60	23	0	0	0	0	3.72	1.28	8	Low
2	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	0	0	9	33	58	0	0	0	0	4.49	0.66	5	Moderate
4	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	0	1	1	19	79	0	0	0	0	4.76	0.51	1	Moderate
6	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	2	3	15	43	37	0	0	0	0	4.10	0.90	7	Moderate
9	How much can you do to help your student's value learning?	1	1	5	28	65	0	0	0	0	4.55	0.73	4	Moderate
12	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	0	0	6	25	69	0	0	0	0	4.63	0.60	2	Moderate
14	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	0	1	6	25	68	0	0	0	0	4.60	0.65	3	Moderate
22	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	0	1	7	36	56	0	0	0	0	4.42	0.81	6	Moderate
	the general mean of the domain										4.41	0.77	-	Moderate

The previous table shows that the level of Self-Efficacy in Student Engagement in English language teachers is moderate, as the general mean of the domain reached (4.41 of 9) and standard deviation (0.77). This domain includes seven questions, to which the responses were moderate; means for these questions ranged between 4.10 and 4.76. These means came in the third category for self-efficacy, which indicates that the level is moderate. It was noted that there were differences between the responses of the members of the study for the following questions: Question 4 came first ("How much can you do to motivate students who show

little interest in school work?") with a mean of 4.76 and standard deviation of 0.51. Question 12 came second ("How much can you do to foster student creativity?") with a mean of 4.63 and standard deviation of 0.60. Question 14 came third ("How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?") with a mean of 4.60 and standard deviation of 0.65.

In addition, the previous table shows that the responses were only low for question (1) ("How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?") with a mean of 3.72 and standard deviation of 1.28.

Teachers' self-efficacy and instructional strategies:

While Question 1 was concerned with the level of self-efficacy in relation to students' engagement, Question 2 focuses on the level of self-efficacy of English language teachers in elementary schools of Kuwait in terms of instructional strategies. The following results shown in Table 2 were obtained from teachers' responses to the survey.

Table (2): Percentages, means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample on Self-Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

| No | Teacher Beliefs | How much can you do? (%) | | | | | | | | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Order according to mean | The Level |
		Nothing (1)	(2)	Very Little (3)	(4)	Some Influence (5)	(6)	Quite A Bit (7)	(8)	A Great Deal (9)				
7	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	0	1	9	50	40	0	0	0	0	4.29	0.67	7	Moderate
10	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	2	2	16	46	34	0	0	0	0	4.08	0.87	8	Moderate
11	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	0	1	12	34	53	0	0	0	0	4.39	0.74	5	Moderate
17	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual Students?	0	1	3	26	70	0	0	0	0	4.65	0.59	1	Moderate
18	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	0	0	6	41	53	0	0	0	0	4.47	0.61	2	Moderate

20	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	0	3	3	46	48	0	0	0	0	4.33	0.83	6	Moderate
23	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	1	0	6	33	60	0	0	0	0	4.46	0.83	3	Moderate
24	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	0	1	7	39	53	0	0	0	0	4.44	0.67	4	Moderate
	the general mean of the domain										4.39	0.73	-	Moderate

Similar to the results for Question 1, the previous table shows that the level of Self-Efficacy in Instructional Strategies of English language teachers in Kuwait is also moderate. The general mean of the domain reached 4.39 of 9 and the standard deviation was 0.73. It was noted that this domain included eight questions, to which moderate responses and means for these questions were obtained (ranging between 4.08 and 4.65. These means come under the third category for self-efficacy, which indicates that the level is moderate. Some differences between the responses of the study participants were observed for the following questions: Question 17 was first ("How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?") with a mean of 4.65 mean and standard deviation of 0.59. Question 18 was second ("To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?") with mean of 4.47 mean and standard deviation of 0.61. Question 23 was third ("How well are you able to implement alternative strategies in your classroom?") with a mean of 4.46 and standard deviation of 0.83. Question 10 came last ("To what extent can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?") with a mean of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.87.

Teachers' self-efficacy and classroom management

As for the third question, which focuses on the third domain concerning with classroom management and the level of teachers' self-efficacy, similar responses from the participants were obtained, as illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table (3): Percentages, means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample on Self-Efficacy in Classroom Management

No	Teacher Beliefs	How much can you do? (%)									Mean	Std. Deviation	Order according to mean	The Level
		Nothing (1)	(2)	Very Little (3)	(4)	Some Influence (5)	(6)	Quite A Bit (7)	(8)	A Great Deal (9)				
3	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	1	0	8	26	65	0	0	0	0	4.54	0.73	4	Moderate
5	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	0	2	4	25	69	0	0	0	0	4.61	0.67	3	Moderate
8	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	0	0	1	17	82	0	0	0	0	4.81	0.42	1	Moderate
13	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	0	1	4	25	70	0	0	0	0	4.64	0.61	2	Moderate
15	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	0	1	4	37	58	0	0	0	0	4.47	0.77	6	Moderate
16	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of Students?	0	0	14	45	41	0	0	0	0	4.27	0.69	8	Moderate
19	How well can you keep a few problem students form ruining an entire lesson?	0	0	7	33	60	0	0	0	0	4.53	0.63	5	Moderate
21	How well can you respond to defiant students?	0	1	10	48	41	0	0	0	0	4.29	0.69	7	Moderate
	the general mean of the domain										4.52	0.65	-	Moderate

The level of teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management was moderate; the general mean of the domain was 4.52 of 9 and standard deviation was 0.65. It was noted that this domain included eight questions, to which the responses were moderate. The means for these questions ranged between 4.08 and 4.65, and were thus categorised in the third category for self-efficacy. This indicates that the level is moderate. Some differences between the responses of the study participants were observed for the following questions: Question 8 was first ("How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?") with a mean of 4.81 and standard deviation of 0.42. Question 13 came second ("How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?"), with a mean of 4.64 and standard deviation of

0.61. Question 5 was third ("To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behaviour?") with a mean of 4.61 and standard deviation of 0.67. Question 16 was last ("How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?" with a mean of 4.27 mean and standard deviation of 0.69.

Comparison of the three domains

The following table shows the means and standard deviations for all domains. It aims to compare the participants' responses in the three domains as a whole.

Table (4): Means and standard deviations for the responses of the study sample for all domains

Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation	Order according to mean	Level
Efficacy in Student Engagement	4.41	0.77	2	Moderate
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	4.39	0.73	3	Moderate
Efficacy in Classroom Management	4.52	0.65	1	Moderate

As illustrated in Table 4, efficacy in classroom management was placed first, with a mean of 4.52 and standard deviation of 0.65, followed by efficacy in student engagement, with a mean of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.77, followed by efficacy in instructional strategies, with a mean of 4.39 and standard deviation of 0.73.

Years of teaching experience as a variable:

Are there any statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the means of the responses of the study sample on self-efficacy in reference to the number of years of teaching experience variable?

To identify the statistical differences according to the number of years of teaching experience variable, the Analysis of Variance test (ANOVA) was used. The results are shown in the following table.

Table (5): Result of the Analysis of Variance test to measure the differences between the means of the study sample on self-efficacy according to the number of years of teaching experience variable

Domain	Years of experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Efficacy in Student Engagement	1-5 years	52	4.57	35.92	Between Groups Within Groups Total	15.550 1368.160 1383.710	2 197 199	7.775 14.105	0.55	0.578
	6-10 years	56	3.06	34.92						
	More than 10 years	92	3.62	35.10						
	Total	200	3.73	35.27						
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	1-5 years	52	4.91	35.42	Between Groups Within Groups Total	4.363 1491.427 1495.790	2 197 199	2.182 15.376	0.14	0.868
	6-10 years	56	3.34	34.85						
	More than 10 years	92	3.60	35.08						
	Total	200	3.88	35.11						
Efficacy in Classroom Management	1-5 years	52	4.33	36.34	Between Groups Within Groups Total	1.374 962.066 963.440	2 197 199	0.687 9.918	0.06	0.933
	6-10 years	56	2.50	36.03						
	More than 10 years	92	2.68	36.13						
	Total	200	3.11	36.16						

The above table shows that there were no statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the means of the study sample for Self-Efficacy in Student Engagement in relation to the years of experience variable; the (F) value was 0.55 and the correlation level was 0.578. There were no statistically significant differences between the study sample for Self-Efficacy in Instructional Strategies in relation to the years of experience variable; the (F) value was 0.14 and the correlation level was 0.868. In addition, there were no statistically significant differences between the study sample for Self-Efficacy in Classroom Management in relation to the years of experience variable; the (F) value was 0.06 and the correlation level was 0.933.

DISCUSSION

Using teachers' self-efficacy as a theoretical framework (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001), this study explored Kuwaiti EFL primary school teachers' beliefs. It has previously been argued that teaching experience is one of the main demographic factors that influences the level of self-efficacy of language teachers. This study examined this factor amongst Kuwaiti EFL teachers from different government primary schools. The findings, which relate to the level of teachers' self-efficacy in the three domains, namely classroom management, instructional strategies and students' engagement, suggest a moderate level in general. For students' engagement, the general mean reached 4.41 of 9, and the standard deviation was 0.77. For the second domain, the general mean of the instructional strategies reached 4.39 of 9, and the standard deviation was 0.73, while for the last domain, classroom management, the general mean of the domain reached 4.52 of 9 and the standard deviation

was 0.65. The results of this study showed that Kuwaiti EFL teachers perceived themselves to be more efficacious in terms of classroom management than for instructional strategies and student engagement. These findings can be attributed to the nature of the skills required by teachers to perform their duties in each domain. As Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) indicate, self-efficacy beliefs are goal-directed and domain- and task-specific. Teacher' tasks relating to classroom management, such as controlling disruptive behaviour, motivating students, giving verbal warnings or using eye contact, and other tasks that are related to engaging students, such as using discussion techniques to elicit students' answers or assigning responsibilities to students, appear to be much easier for teachers. Teachers may thus have a high level of self-efficacy due to the hierarchical power relationship between them as teachers (authoritarian/expert) and students (non-authoritarian/novice). However, when it comes to instructional strategies, it appears that teachers need competence and prior preparation, which may be demanding for both expert and novice teachers. This is due to the fact that issues related to understanding subject content (namely the English language) may emerge during the teaching process. This not only requires teachers to be competent, but also involves ongoing pedagogical training from policy-makers and curriculum designers.

It has previously been argued that teachers' self-efficacy is influenced by contextual and demographic factors (Ross, 1994). This study examined one demographic factor (years of experience) and found no significant relationship between years of experience and the level of self-efficacy. Despite the fact that other studies did not report any significant relationship between teachers' level of self-efficacy and the three domains (for example Gaillo & Little, 2003; Chacon, 2005; Tweed, 2013; Gaith and Shaaban, 1999; Howell, 2006; Wallick, 2002), the findings of this study suggest a moderate level of self-efficacy. That is, the main finding suggests that there are no statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the means of the study sample on self-efficacy in student engagement, classroom management and instructional strategies referred to years of teaching experience. This finding contradicts other studies (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Gu & Day, 2007, Penrose et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), which suggested both low and high levels of self-efficacy, and those which reported a significant direct relationship between self-efficacy and years of teaching experience (for example Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Gu & Day, 2007; Penrose et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

These discrepancies in the results might be because of the differences in the educational environment of each research setting, differences in the tools used in measuring self-efficacy, or the difficulty to control for the interference of other demographic or contextual factors. The insignificant effect of the years of teaching experience factor reported in this study is supported by other researchers' findings. For example, in line with the findings of other studies (for example Tweed, 2013; Chacon, 2005; Gaillo and Little; 2003), this study found that both novice and expert teachers had the same level of self-efficacy regardless of their years of teaching experience. It seems that in this case, it is possible that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs remain stable once they are formed.

Based on the findings of the current study, it also appears that years of teaching experience as a demographic factor does not have a significant impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Instead, other contextual factors, such as support from colleagues, school principals and supervisors may have greater impact. In studies that reported a relationship between years of experience and self-efficacy (for example Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Gu & Day, 2007), it was found that although self-efficacy peaks at specific ages, such as 23, it subsequently declines. In addition,

even novice teachers who showed high-self efficacy in the first three years of their career showed a decline afterwards (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008; Whittington, McConnell, & Knoblock, 2006). Therefore, it is reasonable to think of the second group of variables, which are contextual factors, as having more effect on self-efficacy than demographic factors in the sense that the years of experience is disregarded. Teachers who find themselves, for example, in the right teaching context, with the right support from colleagues, principals, supervisors and parents or with all supplementary equipment and materials that they need, and with enough training and developmental sessions and workshops, their self-efficacy might be noticeably affected. This is exactly what Chacon (2010) found when he declared that there was no correlation between engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management and years of English language experience. However, there was a correlation between staff development and teachers' self-efficacy in terms of engagement and instructional strategies.

CONCLUSION

Considering the powerful impacts of teacher self-efficacy on teaching and learning, the purpose of this study was to explore EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in an EFL teaching context in Kuwaiti primary schools through adopting a quantitative perspective. In order to do so, the perceived levels of teachers' self-efficacy regarding (a) engaging students; (b) classroom management; and (c) instructional strategies were measured. In addition, the relationship between years of teaching and teachers' self-efficacy was investigated.

The findings have some practical implications for teacher training and teacher education programmes at universities. The study found that there is a moderate level of self-efficacy when it comes to classroom management, instructional strategies and students' engagement, and there is thus a need therefore to introduce the self-efficacy concept in teacher education programmes. Furthermore, since the study found that years of experience as a variable has no significant effect on teachers' level of self-efficacy, not only should the concept be introduced to teacher education programmes, but there is also a need for on-going professional development programmes that will help student teachers and qualified teachers to reflect on, change and re-construct their self-efficacy beliefs.

The findings of this study suggest some directions for future research. First, the study sample focused on female teachers due to some contextual issues in the selected primary school in Kuwait; there is therefore a need to replicate the study using a more general population of EFL teachers with a mixed gender sample. Furthermore, the findings suggested that there is no significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and years of teaching experience. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a mixed design study that uses qualitative data to contribute to a better understanding of why years of experience did not have a strong impact on EFL teachers in the Kuwaiti context. Furthermore, it is argued that it is possible that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are stable once they are formed. Further longitudinal qualitative studies are thus needed to follow teachers over a long period of time in order to explore this claim.

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