

## EFL Teachers' Writing Performance and Writing Self-Efficacy across Teaching Experience and Gender

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**Abstract:** Writing poses a daunting challenge not only for learners but also for teachers who are assumed to have achieved native-like dexterity in and held self-efficacious beliefs about writing as a prerequisite for a promising teaching career. The present study, hence, set to explore Iranian EFL teachers' writing performance and writing self-efficacy (WSE) in the light of their gender and teaching experience. To this end, a stratified sample of 80 EFL teachers (40 males and 40 females) was selected from a research population of about 120 at Shokouh-e-Iran and Jihad-e Daneshgahi English Centers in Urmia. The two groups were further subdivided based on their teaching experience into three groups of novice (N = 15) 1-4 years of teaching experience, developing (N = 13) with 5-9 years and experienced (N = 12) with over 10-years of teaching. The group members were requested to do a writing task and also complete the Teachers' WSE Scale, the results of which were further analyzed through two-way analysis of variance tests (ANOVA) and a correlational analysis. The findings revealed a lower-than-expected average for the teachers' writing performance score with novice teachers as the weakest with no significant difference between male and female participants' WSE. However, teaching experience was found to significantly impact the participants WSE and further correlational analyses supported the significantly positive relationships between experienced and developing teachers' writing performance and their WSE. The findings highlight the need to enhance ELT teachers' writing if any significant improvement is expected to occur in their WSE.

**Keywords:** ELT Teachers, Gender, Teaching Experience, Writing, Writing Self-Efficacy

### Introduction

As stated by Crystal (2003), English as a foreign language (EFL) is the primary foreign language taught in schools in the majority of nations and is the most widely used language in over 100 countries. One important skill out of other skills (listening, speaking, and reading) and systems (grammar and vocabulary) in EFL teaching is writing. This productive skill has been defined as the communicative conversion of ideas to written language (Chastain, 1988) which is partly dependent on one's range of ideas to be communicated, his knowledge of language and compositional skills (Brown, 2002). Although this statement underscores the primary prominence of thoughts and ideas, what augments the formidable challenge is the need to master the lexical, grammatical and organizational norms of the target language. According to

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Pourmandnia, Mohseni, Rahmanpanah, and Abusaeedi (2021), writing from the viewpoint of teaching as a language skill among other skills is identified as a very effective medium for the development and expression of thoughts and feelings. Yet, viably owing to the intricacy of this skill, it is also considered as one of the most anxiety breeding activities (Heidarzadi, Barjesteh, & Mouziraji, 2021). Despite the complexity of the writing process, nevertheless, it has been found to be strongly correlated with academic success (Bakhshi, Weisi, and Yousofi, 2019, 2020).

Evidently, the teaching of such a convoluted skill entails adequate training on the part of efficient teachers who have already developed the skill and are well aware of adequate ways of helping their learners learn how to write. Chastain (1988) highlighted the significance of writing in relation to language proficiency and its contribution to language learning; She suggested writing as the distinctive characteristic skill that any educated individual has. Similarly, Wolfe (2001) claimed that it is crucial for educators to have best practices in the teaching of writing. The administrative efficiency of teaching writing is particularly contentious in EFL contexts where although English is not used or necessary in everyday conversations (Salma, 2015), it is recognized, as suggested by Ismail (2011), as one of the primary instruments to evaluate EFL learners. This is quite convincing with respect to the role the capacity to compose in English can play not only for academic purposes but also in long-lasting careers.

What can mediate development of writing among EFL learners to the quality of the instruction they receive from their teachers. Thus, a perfectly legitimate question to ask might concern the writing proficiency of English teachers particularly those who have learned it as a foreign language. This is a worthwhile question for two reasons. Firstly, scrutiny of teachers' expertise in writing can provide new insights into the way teachers are educated and trained and shed light on their needs. Secondly, English teachers' level of proficiency in various language skills might contribute to teachers' self-efficacy (SE) in general and their writing expertise might to some extent determine their writing self-efficacy (WSE). SE refers to individuals' beliefs about the extent to which they can organize and carry out their exercises to realize desired results (Bandura, 1997). Zimmerman (1995) considers this trait as one's self-initiated judgmental view on the control he has over his resources and the degree to which he can adequately allocate these resources to accomplish a goal. By the same token, Teacher SE encompasses teachers' perceptions in regard to their percipience, and expedite students' attainment in academic settings (Schunk, 1995). A later examination by Zee and Koomen (2016) of 165 instructor self-efficacy studies backed these claims, illustrating that instructor self-efficacy straightforwardly and in a roundabout way impacts classroom hones, student results, and teachers' well-being. TSE has intrigued researchers (e.g., Aleo, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Chan & Elliott, 2004; Djigic, Stojiljkovic, & Mila, 2013; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998) because this affective factor influences various skills and takes the form of personal attitudes such as *writing self-efficacy* (WSE) or the teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute their writing and teaching it in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran, et al, 1998). As such, it seems quite sensible to assume a close link between teachers' WSE and their mastery of this productive skill. Perceptions related to domain-specific efficiency like WSE emerge first when student teachers learn through indirect varied classroom experiences like interactive observation and comparison with competent peers (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). In other words, an instructor's WSE can play a critical part in promoting not only their writing skill but also the way they teach writing, and thereby, maximizing learners' SE (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988), motivation (Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Midgley, Feldlaufer, Eccles, 1989), and reliably predict teacher practices and student outcomes (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001).

As rightly highlighted by Bandura (1999), these traits are situated in a nexus of individual variables in which they affect and are modified by a multitude of other factors (Bandura, 1999). Hence, any investigation of teachers' skills and characteristics like writing and WSE need to take into account the wide range of various individual differences such as gender and teaching experience which, according to Pajares (2003), are the most primary and predominant teacher variables that may influence one's practice and

modify the impact of other factors (Matthews, 2010). That is to say, language teachers, particularly those who are non-native and learned and taught in English as a foreign language context, may attain varying levels of proficiency both in the subject they are teaching and the way they teach it. This mastery may be interrelated with the very individual traits they bring to the task of teaching. Hence, as suggested by Bandura (1981), self-efficacy convictions may also shift depending on circumstance, instructional activity or subject range. This legitimates the viability of assuming a similar shift in English teachers' WSE as a result of the skill they have developed in producing written texts which may be subject to fluctuate depending on gender and teaching experience.

Existing literature on teacher education is replete with examination of teachers' SE and its relation to their teaching of writing (De Smedt, van Keer, & Merchie, 2016; Gilbert & Graham, 2010), the extent to which it can account for the change in reported writing hones (Brindle, Graham, Harris, and Hebert, 2016; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Hsiang, Graham, & Wong, 2018) and teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of the way they teach writing (Graham, 2019).

Numerous analysts have paid attention to Bandura's caution, analyzing educator self-efficacy in particular scholarly spaces such as writing, math, or reading (e.g., Graham, et al., 2001; Midgley, et al., 1989; Yildirim, 2012), distinctive societies (e.g., Bañales, Ahumada, Graham, Puente, Guajardo, & Muñoz, 2020; Hsiang & Graham, 2016), or with particular bunches of instructors (e.g., Graham Skar, & Falk, 2021; Rietdijk, van Weijen, Jassen, Van Cave Bergh, & Rijlaarsdam, 2018). The current study might be the first investigation to our knowledge to specifically examine the abovementioned issues with Iranian EFL teachers writing performance regarding their experience and gender.

### Literature Review

Achieving high levels of proficiency in writing presents a formidable challenge to the plethora of EFL learners who feel obliged to master not only a new linguistic system but also quite unknown compositional skills and organizational patterns for the expression of their thoughts. Failure in managing all these seemingly chaotic elements is usually accompanied by aversive emotional variables like low levels of SE amid the complex and thorough composing process (Kavanoz & Yu'ksel, 2016; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Berdanier & Lenart, 2020).

Existing research is replete with investigation of teacher SE and students Writing skill and WSE. The link between teacher SE and enhanced instruction and learning has already been clarified (Tschanne-Moran, et al, 1998). In contrast, lower SE levels have been shown to be the reason for the increased likelihood of quitting teaching particularly for novice teachers (Duffin, French & Patric, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The reason for this was found to be the emergence of novice teachers' more profound perception of sophisticated functions they were to perform while teaching. This expansion of understanding can be explained on the basis of four sources of efficacy beliefs presented by Bandura, including verbal influence, authority experience, physiological arousal, and vicarious experience.

The investigation of WSE, however, has been more primarily focused on English learners and positive relationship between WSE and writing execution has been widely affirmed (Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman, McKim, & Zumbunn, 2013; Daniels, McCurdy, Whitsitt, Skinner, SchwartsMicheaux, & White, 2019; Pajares & Valiante, 1999; Teng, Sun, and Xu (2018); Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zumbunn, Broda, Varier, & Conklin, 2019). In this regard, WSE was found to be negatively correlated with writing apprehension of 188 Turkish EFL understudies (Erkan & Saban, 2011) and positively correlated with writing performance of 51 junior English students (Hetthong & Teo, 2013). Similarly, the examination of 244 Cambodian university ELT students' WSE in relation to their Writing Goal Orientation (WGO) and writing accomplishment (Chea & Shumow, 2014) indicated the one-dimensional WSE and WGO and supported the positive correlation between WSE and writing mastery.

Teng, et al. (2018) linked the fruitful composing of language forms to self-regulating learning behavior and positive self-efficacy in connection to utilizing information. Another examination of WSE in relation to writing Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) was carried out among 319 Chinese EFL students supported the contribution of WSE and SRL strategies to the prediction of writing proficiency and the infrequent use of SRL strategies by participants at moderate level of WSE (Sun & Wang, 2020). Various studies have contended that self-efficacy could be a key variable that impacts learners' engagement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Schunk & Mullen, 2012; Sharma & Nasa, 2014). More as of late, Tsao (2021) investigated how EFL learners' L2 WSE influenced the level of their engagement with instructor and peer composed corrective feedback among 227 Taiwanese senior high school understudies. The results appeared that the participants self-reported a low-to-moderate level of L2 writing self-efficacy.

As claimed by Butter (1990), gender is something we perform and findings emerging from gender studies have corroborated the impact this characteristic can have on varying aspects of performance. With respect to writing self-efficacy and execution, gender contrasts are especially common (Hansen, 2009). For instance, to check the development on writing tasks, the data obtained from the school performance of students between ages 11 to 25 revealed that females consistently outperform males regardless of the same level of confidence in their own effectiveness (Wigfield, Eccles, & Pintrich, 1996). Greene (1999) reported gender differences in writing performance of college freshmen with females surpassing the males. These differences can start at an early age (see Crain, 1996; Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993), and may lessen or switch as students get more established.

Research findings from gender studies in WSE bore on common gender differences regarding WSE and performance (Hansen, 2009). Researchers have previously determined that boys have lower WSE scores than girls in the schoolchildren's discovery, in contrast to the fact that boys' writing ability tends to overestimate it. (Pajares, 2002). Pajares and Valiante (2001) report that these gender orientations and assignment introduction are related; in other words, writing becomes the domain of women. In WSE, when task orientation was controlled, gender differences become vague. (Pajares & Valiante, 2001; Pajares, Valiante, & Cheong, 2007).

In spite of the fact that information plays an essential part for a language teacher, there are certain educating principles that can be accomplished as it were within the classroom environment and during the process of teaching while one is gaining experience. Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2010) state that through experience, a teacher learns how to bargain with distinctive learners coming from different foundations and desires. They propose that experience can compensate for possible insufficiencies in information.

Even though the last decade has been empirically fruitful in providing valuable insight into methods of classroom instruction, most of the existing research concerns either students or teachers' SE not WSE. Moreover, more than 115 explorations of teachers' SE were reported between 2005 and 2016 and 41 of these were undertaken in Iran (Wyatt, 2018). However, research exploring teacher self-efficacy as teachers' way of writing is still lacking (Whitacre, 2019). Considering the abovementioned issues, almost all studies in Iranian context, to the best of our knowledge, have scrutinized EFL learners and their writing components (Seifoori, 2013; Birjandi & Seifoori, 2009), their writing performance, self-efficacy, and attitude (Sarkhosh, 2013), their self-efficacy, writing achievement, and motivation (Fatemi, Pishghadam, & Vahidnia, 2013), their self-efficacy and paragraph writing (Ebrahimzadeh, Khodabandehloo, & Jahandar, 2013), and their self-efficacy, writing performance and gender (Hashemnejad, Zoghi, & Amini, 2014). Rarely has there been any investigation of teachers' success in achieving features of language (Karimnia, 2013) or teachers' gender and their success as perceived by their learners (Dordinejad & Porghoveh, 2014). What still awaits further scrutiny, however, is exploration of the extent to which EFL teachers' WSE may vary across teaching experience and gender and the extent to which this skill might be correlated with those personal characteristics. Hence, the present study aimed to bridge this gap and explore Iranian EFL

teachers' writing performance and WSE across gender. To serve the objective, these research questions were formulated:

**Research Question One:** Do Iranian EFL teachers' gender and teaching experience have any interactive effect on their writing performance?

**Research Question Two:** Does Iranian EFL teachers' gender have any significant main effect on their writing performance?

**Research Question Three:** Does Iranian EFL teachers' teaching experience have any significant main effect on their writing performance?

**Research Question Four:** Do Iranian EFL teachers' gender and teaching experience have any interactive effect on their WSE?

**Research Question Five:** Does Iranian EFL teachers' gender have any significant main effect on their WSE?

**Research Question Six:** Does Iranian EFL teachers' experience have any significant main effect on their WSE?

**Research Question Seven:** Is there any significant correlation between the participating novice, developing, and experienced teachers' writing performance and their WSE?

## Methodology

### Design of Study

Creswell and Clark (2011) pointed out that, in survey designs the researchers utilize questionnaires, tests, or interviews to collect data on the perspectives, attitudes, capabilities, or skills of a sample or a population of participants. He further pointed out that, most of these designs are cross-sectional due in large to the fact that they enable the researchers to gather data on the relevant variables at a specific point in time. Considering these issues, it can be argued that, the study is a cross-sectional survey.

### Participants

A stratified sample of 80 EFL teachers participated in this descriptive survey including 40 male and 40 female teachers from a research population of about 120 EFL teachers at Shokouh-e-Iran Language Institute and Jihad-e Daneshgahi English Center in Urmia, a metropolitan city in the North-West of Iran. All participants have passed the TOEFL exam with a minimum score of 500 and have been admitted to the Initial Teacher Training Courses (TTCs) at these institutes to teach at different skill levels. All applicants who had actively participated in the TTC course, had participated in a final mini-teaching performance (TP) where they were required to teach part of a general English coursebook. Those who had passed the TP successfully were later invited to join the teaching staff at Jihad-e Daneshgahi and had been teaching there for at least a year. This was the main teacher selection criterion. Prior to attending this workshop, they had attended institutionally designed teacher training program at the beginning of teaching and were supposed to have developed required teaching and management strategies.

The two groups of male and female members were isolated into three bunches based on their teaching experience. Those with teaching experience years of 1-4 were assigned as the novice group (NG) (N = 15), those within the experience range of 5-9 were considered as developing (DG) (N = 13) and those over 10-year teaching experience were regarded as experienced (EG) (N = 12).

## Instruments

### *Writing Task*

A writing task was employed to collect data on the members' teachers' writing performance. The topic reflected a tangible problem and a major issue in Urmia (Iran) with which the participants were closely concerned:

“Traffic is one of the most common problems especially in metropolitan cities that cause many problems for citizens. There are different views about the causes of traffic and the effects on people. Write your idea about some of the causes and effects of traffic in your city and give some suggestions concerning how this problem can be mitigated.”

They were required to write at least 250 words on the topic in 45 minutes. The written texts were collected and further scored based on the writing rating scale developed by the Michigan Language Assessment Department of University of Michigan updated in 2018. This scale comprises four different sections including a) content and development that taps relevance of content to task as well as quality of ideas used to develop the response, b) organization and connection of ideas related to how language is used to link ideas and arrangement of content, c) linguistic range and control which is concerned with variety and precision of grammar and vocabulary and d) communicative effect that measures to what extent communicative goals are accomplished. Since the focus of the study was on accuracy, complexity, and organization of the participants' writing performance, the first three categories were employed in the scoring process each of which was rated on a scale of 1 to 5. Each written text was assigned a score of 1 representing the minimal level to 5 representing the highest level. Accordingly, each participant's score could range between a minimum of 3 to 15, with 7.5 as indicating an average performance. Of course, since in this study, the participants were EFL teachers, they were expected to achieve scores well above the mean and close to maximum score.

Two independent raters reviewed the rating scale and operationalized some controversial words. For instance, words like little, inadequate, adequate, and fully developed in the development subcomponent were analyzed based on the review of some IELTS writing samples downloaded from the internet. Then, each of the raters scored the 80 writing samples independently and recorded each participant's sub-scores and the total score. The two sets of total scores were further correlated to check the interrater reliability of the scoring procedure. The results of analysis showed that Cohen's inter-rater Kappa reliability index for study raters is 0.82, is considered to be a satisfactory reliability index.

### *Writing Self-Efficacy Scale*

Moreover, to examine the participants' instructor self-efficacy, we employed the writing self-efficacy scale created by Graham, et al., (2001) which is a self-report questionnaire adapted from Gibson and Dembo's (1984). It comprises 16 items evaluated on a 6-point Likert scale, from emphatically oppose this idea (level 1) to emphatically concur (level 6). However, items 2, 4, 8, 11 and 16 are scored reversely since the wording in these items are intentionally changed to check if teachers assume the responsibility of teaching writing or transfer it to learners' parents and family background. This was assumed to enhance response validity of the questionnaire.

Graham et al., (2001) argued that the reliability and validity indexes of this questionnaire were 0.90 and 0.84, respectively and argued that it was a reliable and valid metric for assessing teachers' self-writing effectiveness. Nonetheless, this questionnaire was initially guided with a bunch of 20 EFL teachers' sharing the characteristics of the participant teachers; Cronbach's alpha index of reliability of this measure was .89 and found to be satisfactory.

## Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, members were to begin with an essay on “traffic” which is a tangible problem and a major issue in Urmia (Iran) in 45 minutes. Then, the members were inquired to complete Teachers’ WSE scale developed by Graham et al., 2001. The information collection process was carried out in 4 sessions due to the fact that the collection of 80 teachers from two institutes in one place was not feasible. Each session, 20 teachers (10 male & 10 female) were invited to write an essay in 45 minutes and then complete the questionnaire of the study (WSE) in approximately 15 minutes. Finally, SPSS 20 was employed to analyze the collected data on the writing tasks and the questionnaires in the study. In this regard, two-way ANOVA was used addressing the dependent effect of each independent variable as well as their interactive effect on the dependent variables. Moreover, a correlational analysis was also conducted to identify any passible relationships between the independent variable (teaching experience with 3 sublevels of novice, developing, and experienced) and 2 dependent variables (writing performance and WSE).

## Results

Having collected the research data, the primary step in quantitative investigating was to check the normality of the research data. This was carried out with the information obtained from two liker-scale questionnaire tapping the participants’ WSE as well as the writing samples collected from them. Table 1 depicts the outcomes of the Normality test.

**Table 1**

*Tests of Normality of the WSE and Writing Score Distributions*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Writing Self-Efficacy	.135	80	.001	.947	80	.002
Writing Performance	.154	80	.000	.951	80	.004

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

## Effects of Gender and Teaching Experience on Teachers’ Writing Performance

The first three research questions were concerned with the interaction and independent impact of gender and teaching experience on the participants’ writing performance. The participating teachers’ written texts were thus analyzed via another two-way ANOVA test to answer these questions. To obtain total writing scores, the participants’ scores within three regions of substance and improvement, organization and association of thoughts and linguistic extend and control were added up making a total of 15. Table 2 shows the expressive insights.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Teachers’ Writing Scores across Gender and Experience*

Gender	Teaching Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	NG	6.66	.975	15
	DG	9.076	1.656	13
	EG	11.00	1.651	12
	Total	8.750	2.284	40
Female	NG	6.66	1.175	15
	DG	9.38	2.218	13
	EG	11.75	1.912	12
	Total	9.07	2.739	40

Total	NG	6.66	1.061	30
	DG	9.23	1.924	26
	EG	11.37	1.789	24
	Total	8.91	2.511	80

Table 2 reveals that female teachers with over 10 years of educating involvement achieved the most elevated mean in SE ( $M = 11.75$ ,  $SD = 1.91$ ) taken after the second group (5-9 years of involvement) ( $M = 9.38$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ); the lowest writing scores were obtained by the novice teachers with experience of 1-4 years ( $SD = 6.66$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). The same order in writing scores was also observed for males with slight differences with the most experienced group at the top ( $M = 11$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ), followed by the less experienced group ( $M = 9.07$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) and the novice teachers ( $M = 6.66$ ,  $SD = .975$ ). Further the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances was performed as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances in the Participants’ Writing Scores*

Dependent Variable: Writing Performance				
	F	df1	df2	Sig.
	1.383	5	74	.240
Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.				
a. Design: Intercept + Gender + TEXP + Gender * TEXP				

The analysis results showed a non-significant result ( $Sig. < .05$ ) showing that the fluctuation of the subordinate variable between the bunches is equal. Therefore, the significance level of 0.05 is set to evaluate the two-way ANOVA results presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Teachers’ Writing Performance*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	303.471 <sup>a</sup>	5	60.69	23.043	.000	.609
Intercept	6555.400	1	6555.40	2488.754	.000	.971
Gender	2.465	1	2.46	.936	.337	.012
TEXP	299.480	2	149.74	56.849	.000	.606
Gender * TEXP	1.878	2	.939	.356	.701	.010
Error	194.917	74	2.634			
Total	6853.00	80				
Corrected Total	498.388	79				

a. R Squared = .609 (Adjusted R Squared = .582)

As table 4 presents, the interaction effect, as displayed in Gender\*TEXP row; shows the value of .701 ( $Sig > .05$ ); this implies that the interaction effect between gender and teaching experience was not measurably noteworthy,  $F (2.74) = .356$ ,  $p = .701$ . In other words, the impact of educating experience on writing did not differ significantly for males and females. Therefore, the first research question is answered negatively and we are able to securely decipher the main impacts.



Research question number two addressed the main effect of gender on teachers’ writing performance. The results show no statistically significant difference,  $F(1.74) = .939$ ,  $p = .701$ . Hence, this research question is also negatively answered and the related null hypothesis is verified.

Research question three delved into the effect of instructing involvement on the participant teachers’ writing. The results revealed a measurably noteworthy fundamental impact for teaching experience,  $F(2.74) = 56.849$ ,  $p = .000$ ; and the impact measure was huge (partial eta squared = .61). Another Tukey HSD Post hoc test was conducted to compare the three experience groups and locate the difference; Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5**

*Multiple Comparisons of the Effect of Teaching Experience on Writing Scores*

(I) Teaching Experience	(J) Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Novice	(5-9)	-2.56*	.43	.000	-3.60	-1.52
	(over 10)	-4.70*	.44	.000	-5.77	-3.64
Developing	(1-4)	2.56*	.43	.000	1.52	3.60
	(over 10)	-2.14*	.45	.000	-3.24	-1.04
Experienced	(1-4)	4.70*	.44	.000	3.64	5.77
	(5-9)	2.14*	.45	.000	1.04	3.24

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 2.634.

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test demonstrated noteworthy contrasts among all three groups of experience. That is to say, the experienced group outperformed the developing group that, in turn, outperformed significantly the novice group. Hence, the third research question is answered positively. In other words, the participating teachers’ writing seem to improve as they gain more teaching experience.

**Effects of Gender and Teaching Experience on Teachers’ Writing Self-Efficacy**

The second three questions addressed the interaction and independent impact of gender and instructing experience on the participants’ WSE. Another two-way ANOVA test was run to answer these questions. However, since the WSE scores were found to violate the equality of the variance, following Pallant (2010), a more precise significance level of 0.01 was established to evaluate the outcomes of examination. The results of the WSE scores can be found in table 6.

**Table 6**

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Teacher WSE scores*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	5677.441 <sup>a</sup>	5	1135.488	14.845	.000	.501
Intercept	300028.271	1	300028.271	3922.599	.000	.981
Gender	121.411	1	121.411	1.587	.212	.021
TEXP	5510.903	2	2755.451	36.025	.000	.493

Gender * TEXP	53.726	2	26.863	.351	.705	.009
Error	5660.046	74	76.487			
Total	306461.000	80				
Corrected Total	11337.487	79				

a. R Squared = .501 (Adjusted R Squared = .467)

Table 6 presents the value of .705 (Sig > .05) for the interaction effect in Gender\*TEXP row suggesting that the interaction impact between gender and instructing experience was not factually noteworthy for WSE,  $F(2,74) = .351$ ,  $p = .705$ ; that is, difference in the impact of teaching experience on WSE for male and females did not reach significance level. Therefore, the fourth research question is answered negatively and we can securely interpret the major impacts.

As for the impact of gender, as posed in the fifth research question, no statistically significant difference was observed,  $F(1,74) = 1.58$ ,  $p = .212$ , suggesting that both gender (males and females) did not vary in terms of their WSE scores. Thus, the fifth research question is answered negatively and the associated null hypothesis is verified.

Regarding the effect of teaching experience on WSE, as posed in the sixth research question, Table 7, however, indicates the value of .000 (Sig > .05) which reveals that instructing involvement had a significant effect on the participant teachers' WSE,  $F(2,74) = 36.025$ ,  $p = .000$ .

**Table 7**

*Multiple Comparisons of Teachers' WSE Scores across Teaching Experience*

(I) Teaching Experience	(J) Teaching Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Novice	Developing	-13.72*	2.34	.000	-19.32	-8.11
	Experienced	-19.48*	2.39	.000	-25.21	-13.75
Developing	Novice	13.72*	2.34	.000	8.11	19.32
	Experienced	-5.76	2.47	.058	-11.68	.158
Experienced	Novice	19.48*	2.39	.000	13.75	25.21
	Developing	5.76	2.47	.058	-.1583	11.68

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 76.487.

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test presented that the mean score for the 1-4 Group ( $M = 50.43$ ,  $SD = 5.76$ ) was significantly lower than the 5-9 Group ( $M = 64.15$ ,  $SD = 10.38$ ) and the over 10 Group ( $M = 69.91$ ,  $SD = 9.70$ ). That is, the novice group ( $N=15$ ) of teachers, regardless of their gender, reported significantly lower levels of WSE compared to the developing and experienced groups.

**Correlation Between Participating Novice, Developing and Experienced Teachers' Writing and WSE**

Having found a significant main effect of teaching experience on the three groups of teachers' writing and WSE, in research question 7, we examined any possible relationship between these two sets of scores among the participating teachers from the three groups of experience. To this end, first the preliminary assumptions

of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity were checked and then the novice, developing, and experienced teachers' writing scores were correlated with their WSE. Table 8 presents the results.

**Table 8**

*The Relationship Between Novice, Developing and Experienced Teachers' Writing and WSE*

Novice Teachers		Writing	WSE
Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	-.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.730
	N	30	30
WSE	Pearson Correlation	-.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.730	
	N	30	30
Developing Teachers		Writing	WSE
Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	26	26
WSE	Pearson Correlation	.581**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	26	26
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
Experienced Teachers		Writing	WSE
Writing	Pearson Correlation	1	.477*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
	N	24	24
WSE	Pearson Correlation	.477*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	24	24

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As it is indicated in Table 8, the novice teachers' writing and WSE were not significantly correlated ( $r = -.66$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p = .00 < .730$ ). Yet, strong and positive relationship was detected between the developing teachers' writing and WSE scores ( $r = .58$ ,  $n = 26$ ,  $p = .00 < .002$ ) and the determination coefficient of .33. Average positive relationship was detected between the experienced teachers' writing and WSE scores ( $r = .48$ ,  $n = 24$ ,  $p = .00 < .018$ ) with a determination coefficient of .22. That is, overall writing can explain 33 percent of the WSE variance among the developing teachers and 22 percent of the WSE variance among the experienced group.

### Discussion

The findings from the present enquiry indicated that gender did not influence teachers' WSE and significant differences were found solely among the novice group compared to the developing and experienced groups. The findings suggest that the viable difference in participants' WSE can fade away as they pass their initial

years of teaching practice. Experts have underscored early-career experience in terms of the clear professional payoff it has in teaching effectiveness (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vogdor, 2007a, Ladd, 2008; Sass, 2007).

Although no previous research has been conducted on English teachers' WSE and writing performance, the findings lend indirect support to the those reported by concerning lack of significant distinction in 250 students' recognition of their 48 male and female English teachers' success. Unlike this study yielding no significant difference in gender, Saleh Mahdi and Al-Dera, (2013) examined the impact of teachers' age, experience and gender on the integration of data and communication innovation in language teaching and reported noteworthy gender contrasts in the use of data and communication innovation in which men claim to use more data and communication innovation in their instructing.

However similar to this study including the same independent variables of experience and gender couldn't show the significance of gender effect logically because of difference in dependent variables of application of data and communication innovation in one and writing performance and WSE in this study. Likewise, considering the cognitive factor of WSE in this study similar to Iranian English teachers' attitudes towards the utilize of the technology in Hadidi, Seifoori, and Jahanban's (2020) article, they reported that females held significantly more positive attitudes compared to males which might be explained in terms of the equal access to technology and awareness of its benefits in enhancing teaching effectiveness as a result of the socio-economic growth in later years (Yadolahi & Rahimi, 2011), while in this study gender variation did not reflect any significance in the teachers' WSE.

Also, the findings highlighted the noteworthy effect of instructing experience on the participants' writing regardless of their gender. Both experienced and developing EFL teachers beat the novice group on the writing test. This is incompatible with the findings confirming gender differences among English teachers. According to Bruning and Horn (2000), male teachers tend to be more motivated in comparison with the female teachers due largely to the structure of the language learning courses and classrooms. More specifically, as Cleary (1996) explained, female teachers' attitudes towards their skills of language including writing may be ascribed to the fact that they recognize the practical challenges which are present within the setting of the classroom and the method of instruction.

Similarly, Pajares, et al. (2007) pointed out that, male language teachers tend to be surer in regard to their capacity to cope with the instructional difficulties and problems in academic contexts. They noted that, male teachers' higher level of self-efficacy stems from their competitive attitudes towards the educating of the target language. In other words, male teachers are inclined to compete with their peers in order to pick up a sense of self-fulfillment in the instructional settings including the language classroom. Finally, Pajares and Valiante (1999) stated that, male teachers' stronger performance and higher level of self-efficacy might be attributable to their sense of self-actualization. To put it another way, male teachers are intrinsically motivated to make an endeavor to utilize various instructional techniques in order to attest their supremacy in the teaching of the target language.

The positive effect of teaching experience on writing, nevertheless, is congruent with research findings that borne on the paramount importance of teachers' engagement in the process of teaching in broadening their understanding of the profession and prerequisite skills as well as enabling them to get the teaching process in perspective (Clotfelter, et al., 2007a, 2007b; Harris & Sass, 2007; Kane, Rodkoff & Staiger, 2006, Ladd, 2008; Sass, 2007). In explaining the positive impact of teaching experience, Pajares and Johnson (1996) contended that teaching experience might affect teachers' attitudes and beliefs with regard to their professional capability and skills. As they claimed, this liberates the teachers from the practical difficulties in the context of the classroom and empowers them to focus on their technical knowledge and skills in a systematic way.

Similarly, Cleary (1996) emphasized the preoccupation that majority of the novice teachers have with the pedagogical and managerial issues within the handle of classroom instructing and disregard the

significance of technical knowledge and professional skills such as writing in their profession. Consequently, as he noted, the novice teachers might have a low level of efficacy with regard to skills such as writing. Corresponding to the result of this study regarding teachers' experience, their writing performance, and their low WSE, it can be concluded that institutes in order to avoid novice teachers' quitting the profession can improve their writing performance and following their WSE to improve their teaching performance.

Although the effect of teaching experience on teachers' writing did not differ significantly for males and females in this study, their writing seems to improve as they gain more teaching experience. The findings indicated significant differences among all three groups of experience regarding teachers' writing and their WSE. That is to say, the experienced group outperformed the developing group that, in turn, outperformed significantly the novice group in writing.

In addition, the novice groups of teachers, regardless of their gender, reported significantly lower levels of WSE compared to the developing and experienced groups. As mentioned before, knowledge plays a pivotal role for a language teacher. However, there are certain teaching principles that can be achieved only inside the classroom environment. Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2010) state that experience can compensate for possible deficiencies in knowledge as well as the personality of the teacher. As teachers get more experience in time, their beliefs, like WSE, about their teaching abilities start to rise (Bandura, 1997, 1986; Schunk, 1987, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007) as well as their skills such as writing.

The relationship between self-efficacy and a written item was studied by McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985); they found that more proficient essays belonged to those with high writing self-efficacy. As the teachers continue through their teaching career, they experience different circumstances through their own instructing of understudies, going to workshop, proficient improvement cooperation, and in some cases proceeded coursework, all result in making an experiential base that persistently shapes and re-forms their convictions, namely, WSE, about their capacity to educate (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Therefore, based on the findings, since the groups (novice, developing, experienced) in this study had an improving manner both in their writing performance and WSE due to experience, as discussed, the discoveries were congruous with other research findings in the field that teachers' experience do have positive effect on their level of WSE and the improvement of their writing.

### Conclusion and Implications

This study explored the Iranian EFL teachers' writing performance and WSE in the light of their gender and experience. Despite the confinements and delimitations of the study in terms of sample size and limited scope of data collection instruments, the study presented a positive impact of teaching experience on teachers' writing performance and their WSE. In this research, writing provides evidence for the need to raise novice teachers' awareness of the ingredients of writing. So, in-service writing teacher training courses can spell out the prerequisite components of writing for improvement. This might be carried out institutionally if professional teacher trainers are available locally and can run focused teacher training courses to improve teachers' understanding of and performance in writing.

Alternatively, teacher education programs might furnish the in-service EFL teachers with appropriate instruction to empower them to sharpen their writing skill after they start their teaching career. However, the more sensible solution seems to be reconsidering and realigning the content of writing courses offered at universities level by incorporating more practical activities so that student teachers can actually benefit from such courses and reach acceptable levels of proficiency in writing before graduating from university that can promote their writing performance and WSE even during the initial years of teaching.

Furthermore, training instructors in composing activities regularly centers entirely on methodologies for execution. We regularly accept that giving instructors with guidelines materials,

composing prompts, and rubrics is adequate. In any case, sometime recently we center on execution, we got to start by evaluating teachers' recognitions of themselves as writers and writing instructors. In arrange to cultivate these activities, extraordinary consideration ought to be paid to supporting those instructors who don't see themselves as solid writers. This requires making proficient advancement openings that back their individual development as writers and writing instructors. It moreover recommends that these instructors require continuous bolster as they work to execute composing activities in their classrooms.

As Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) type in, "Teachers' self-efficacy may be a small thought with a huge impact" (p. 954). Hence, as we look for to integrate more composing in classrooms, we ought to point to create authority encounters where instructors can gather a sense of victory and construct their certainty as writing teachers. Aside from needing to implement a writing venture, a instructor moreover must accept that he or she is competent of effectively doing so.

In addition, syllabus designers should contribute to the EFL teachers' individual, academic, and professional development through the development of materials which empower them to make informed and systematic choices in terms of the nature of classroom learning tasks and their performance. The teachers' involvement in this procedure as active participants within the prepare of educational modules advancement may impede the fossilization of their inefficient pedagogic practices, escalate their instructing self-efficacy in the classroom context, and prompt them to endeavor to gain knowledge of the various aspects and skills of the target language. These issues may ameliorate the EFL teachers' levels of second language skills including writing and their self-efficacy.

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